

**AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**Monday May 4, 2026**

**Location: K-State Student Union Ballroom**

**Check-in: 7:00-7:20 a.m.**

**Event: 7:30-10:00 a.m.**

**CDE Coordinator: Katie Starzec; kstarzec@ksu.edu**

**College of Ag Contact: Abby Roth; abbyjohnson@ksu.edu**

**Last updated: January 7, 2026**

**General Information**

*Last updated: January 7, 2026*

Team information: Individuals and/or teams will be eligible to participate in the Kansas FFA Career Development Event in Agricultural Communications. Schools may enter 1, 2, 3, or 4 individuals as a team, and schools may enter only one team each (or a maximum of 4 students from each school). The team members' scores will constitute the team score.

Test form used: In 2026, students complete quizzes on paper that are scored by human judges; practicum activities are completed digitally and scored by human judges.

**Equipment**

**Students should bring:**

- Computing equipment for each participant. It can be any combination of laptops or tablets for word processing and/or design work for creating practicum components. Remember to bring all power cords required for your devices.
  - Outlets will be limited during the practicum activity – be sure your devices are fully charged when you begin the event. Accommodations cannot be made for incomplete submissions/missing opportunities due to device battery failure.
  - In past events, several schools had trouble connecting to K-State's guest WiFi network to submit their practicum activity. There is nothing K-State can do to accommodate those issues. Please be sure your devices allow students to submit their work through the wireless network.
- Pens or pencils
- Headphones of your preference equipped with a microphone (for the broadcast practicum).
- Participants are encouraged but not required to wear FFA Official Dress for this event.

**The following equipment and supplies will be provided:**

- Table and chairs for each team and four team members in the shared team workspaces
- Blank paper or notebooks
- Digital photographs/images
- Digital video files
- Digital audio files

- Information regarding press conference speaker and topic
- Logos
- Any other necessary materials depending on the story topic

**The following Items will NOT be allowed:**

- Desktop computers
- Add-on editing software, such as Grammarly
- Photos and videos that were not supplied by contest officials or created by the students within the contest time frame

**The following activities will not be permitted:**

- Outside assistance during the contest from any person or company
- Text messages, phone calls, emails, or other communication with anyone outside of the contest while the event is in progress
- Leaving the contest area other than a restroom break

**Announcements:**

Our goal for the Agricultural Communications Career Development Event at K-State is to showcase agricultural communications careers to as many FFA members as possible, as well as to select the team to represent Kansas FFA at the national competition. To attain this goal, we have made the following decisions related to the competition.

- The 2026 Kansas FFA Agricultural Communications Career Development Event will be **partially** aligned to the guidelines for the 2026 event at the national level. The national guidelines were used to formulate the Kansas guidelines.
- The Agricultural Communications Career Development Event will combine scores from all **four** team members to calculate the team score. The team with the highest combined team score will represent Kansas at the national level. We will not drop the lowest individual score in calculating team scores. **New in 2026:** In addition to team scores, the three highest-scoring individuals in each practicum area will be recognized.
- The 2026 Kansas event will NOT include the Communications Plan component. Therefore, the winning Kansas team will need to develop those skills to participate at the national competition.

*Taken and modified from the national guidelines:* In agricultural communications, we work as individuals and as a team. This contest is designed to mimic a communications team in the context of a magazine. Almost all agricultural publications now promote stories using social media and supplemental materials on their websites (in the form of videos, audio recordings, podcasts, etc.) in addition to the story and traditional magazine layout.

- During the practicum portion of the event, team members will work collaboratively to create four practicum components - a feature story, a magazine layout design incorporating that story, a broadcast production piece to promote or enhance their story topic, and a social media plan to promote their story.

**Overall CDE Timeline**

1. Testing (45 minutes total for both quizzes)  
Communications Quiz  
Editing Exercise

*10 minute break*

2. Practicum (1 hour and 55 minutes)
  - Speaker/press conference
  - Question and answer session
  - Practicum activity

Total = 2 hours and 30 minutes

## I. Tests

### A. Editing Exercise (25 points)

Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each participant will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed press release containing 25 identified sections of text. Students must determine whether each identified section of text is correct or incorrect. For the incorrect items, participants will be required to correct the mistakes using appropriate copy editing marks. Associated Press (AP) style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes will be included. Participants will **NOT** be able to use a style manual or dictionary during this exercise.

### B. Communications Quiz (25 points)

Each participant will complete a quiz that covers general knowledge of the agricultural communications industry or from any of the preparation materials available on the National FFA Ag Comm CDE website. Questions may come from any section excluding sports guidelines. Participants will **NOT** be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

## II. Practicum

The practicum will consist of four specific activities with **no more than one team member per activity**. Each student team member can participate in one of the following activities:

1. Magazine layout – Develop a magazine layout to communicate the speaker’s topic through appropriate design and use of provided photos and graphics.
2. Broadcast production – Develop a 60- to 90-second story in one of the following formats: television story, online video, radio story, podcast, or narrated slide show.
3. Feature story – Write a 350-500 word feature story about the speaker’s topic. Story must be for an appropriate audience; include a strong focus and lead, including a headline.
4. Social media plan – Develop five social media posts across at least three social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, or others) to accompany and promote their team’s magazine story.

**Each team should assign a member to each of these activities when checking in for the event.** Individuals who are not participating on teams will designate in which activity they plan to participate when they check in for the event.

All team members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicum to last no more than 10 minutes. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert. The press conference with an expert speaker will follow the orientation. The expert will speak on a timely agricultural topic for about 10-15 minutes. Students will be provided with paper for notetaking if they wish. Recording devices are not allowed during press conference.

A 5-10-minute question-and-answer period with the expert (speaker) will take place after the speaker’s presentation. Upon completion of the question-and-answer session, all competitors will be allowed 75 minutes to complete their assigned practicum.

Detailed descriptions of each team member's assignment follows.

### **1. Magazine Layout Design (100 points)**

Designers will use the press packet and information gathered in the press conference to develop a magazine layout using the feature story text written by the news writer. Various photos, graphics, and logos will be provided for use in these layouts. Designers may use any page layout software available (i.e., Canva, Adobe Express, InDesign, etc.) if it appropriately tells the story and represents a design for a magazine. The magazine designer must use the text written by the news writer. Layouts will be saved and submitted as a PDF for judging.

### **2. Broadcast Production (100 points)**

Broadcasters will receive video and/or audio clips, photos, and/or music to create a 60 to 90-second story for the the hypothetical magazine's website. This can be a television story, online video, radio story, podcast, or slide show. This broadcast product can be used to promote readership of the story created by their team, or it can supplement what is in the written story – it is up to the team to decide the best use of these resources. Students will need to provide their own headphones and software. Spotify for Podcasters, Adobe Premiere, Express, Rush, or Audition; Canva Video; iMovie; Movie Maker; Anchor; BounceCast; or PodCastle are all acceptable software for this practicum but are not the only available software options. To be submitted for judging, broadcast productions must be exported to the student's device in a standard format, such as mp4 or mov.

### **3. Feature Story (100 points)**

Writers will write a news story for the magazine using the provided materials and press conference information. It should be written for the magazine's target audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph), and include a headline. Although the news writer will provide their copy to the magazine designer for placement in their layout, news writers must also submit a PDF of their story for judging. Feature stories should be 350-500 words in length.

### **4. Social Media Plan (100 points)**

Social media planners will develop posts to accompany and promote their team's magazine story. The strategy should be for a one-week flight, involve at least three social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, or others), and contain a minimum of five posts. Students may use any design software to create the posts (Canva, Adobe Express, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign). These are all acceptable software for this practicum but are not the only software options available. The plan must be submitted in PDF format, including screenshots, links and/or embedded images of each created post. Downloaded posts and videos may be included in the social media package. NOTE: A social media plan is not a simply a compilation of social media posts, but also a plan for posting. You can find example templates for social media plans online.

### **Scoring**

Team scores are the only scores calculated; individuals will not be ranked.

Editing and communications quizzes: 50 points per team member x 4	200
Practicum activity: 100 points per team member x 4	400
<b>Total possible points per 4-person team:</b>	<b>600</b>