



Greetings Teachers,

We anticipate the opportunity to see you all again in person at the April spring judging CDE event. Although the National contest includes a much broader set of skills and content knowledge, our Maryland state CDE will provide a smaller scale agronomy challenge related to Maryland plants, soils and the respective environments. This year we will again welcome industry judges to assist in the Agronomy Issues component to the contest. This will be an opportunity for students to demonstrate valuable public speaking and social skills that many professionals in the field have noted as highly desirable functions in an entry level agronomist's job. Quite simply, our students need to be able to distinguish highly credible sources of information, synthesize that information and dialogue with others through civil discourse. We encourage teams to prepare for this event by examining print media from the narrowed list of topics in the agronomy issues description below.

Thus, the 2023 Maryland Agronomy CDE will be individual events consisting of crop, weed, insect, disorders, machinery identification, a written exam and agronomy issues.

The crop plants/crops seeds Weed plants /Weed seeds (150 points)

- The crop identification may include a mixture of live specimens (plants), seeds and color photographs.
- The weed identification may include a mixture of live specimens (plants), seeds and color photographs.

Insect identification (Pest Management) (100 points)

- Identification will be according to insect name, life cycle, economic impact and mouth parts. Color photographs will be displayed.

Disorder identification (Pest Management) (100 points) [10 samples]

- Identification will be according to category, causal agent and damage location. Color photographs will be displayed.

Equipment and Machinery Identification (100 points total)

- Identify 20 samples of equipment (5 points each). Samples may appear as actual equipment, scale models, toys or pictures. Major components that are unique to a certain piece of equipment may also be used. Large machinery will be represented by small scale models.

Written Exam (100 points)

- The written exam has 50 multiple choice questions that cover a wide range of agronomic areas including crop production, soils, pest management, forages and environmental issues.

Agronomy Issues (100 points) (see page 7 of the national handbook)

- Each student will dialogue with an agricultural industry representative about an issue that is important to crop production. The student will be provided with print media on a single topic area the day of the event. Each student will be given 10 minutes and 2- 5x7 index cards to prepare their discussion. The student will then be given a maximum of five minutes to present their views and will be asked questions for an additional maximum of five minutes.
- Potential topics: 1) use of robots or drones in agriculture, 2) decrease in available farm ground and associated zoning challenges, 3) Urban/Agriculture interface (drift, dust, crop dusting, noise, smells), 4) conventional crops vs organic crop production, and 5) invasive species.

Event scoring will be as follows. Individual participants scores are the total sum of each participant's correctly scored responses within each section. The team scores will be the compiled scores of participants according to the declared team members at the start of the event. Once the event starts, team members can't be altered. In the event of a tie the written exam scores will be used to declare the winners. For team ties all written scores will be compiled to achieve one score to compare across the tied teams.

I encourage coaches and advisors to reach out to me with questions. We are looking forward to another outstanding group of students at this year's competition.

Respectfully,



Melissa Leiden Welsh, Ph.D., CFCS, CPFPE
Maryland Agronomy CDE Superintendent