



2012 Ag Day Essay Official Contest Rules and Guidelines

Official Topic: "American Agriculture: Feeding the Future, Filling the Gaps"

Sponsored by: CHS Inc., The Council for Agricultural Science & Technology, High Plains Journal, National Association of Farm Broadcasting, National Agri-Marketing Association, Country Living Association and McCormick Company

Section I - General Rules

1. The 2012 Ag Day Essay Contest is divided into two categories of competition: written essay and video essay. Both are national competitions.
2. Contestants must compose an original written essay and/or video essay with limited guidance from adults, teachers or agricultural industry professionals. Interviews with industry professionals are acceptable research; input beyond research is unacceptable.
3. Agriculture Council of America (ACA) will have the right to publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered in the contest, along with the author's name, without payment to the author.
4. All entries must be **received at the Agricultural Council of America office by midnight CST, February 1, 2012.**

Section II – Qualifications for Contestants

1. The contest is open to students in grades 9 through 12 in the 2011-2012 school year. Contestants must be a U.S. citizen. Contestants must meet all requirements to compete.
2. Contestants are eligible for only one written essay entry during any given year.
3. Contestants are eligible for only one video essay entry during any given year.

Section III – Written Essay Contest Rules

1. Each entry must begin with a title page containing: official topic, "American Agriculture: Feeding the Future, Filling the Gaps" number of words, writer's name, address, phone number, date of birth, school name and grade.
2. Essays may be handwritten or typed, double-spaced.
3. Essays must contain 450 words or less. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the bibliography, footnotes identifying non-original material or title and author information.
4. Each page of the essay must be numbered, starting with the first page of the essay, not the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
5. Any quotation or copyrighted materials used in the essay must be properly identified using a bibliography and footnotes or proper citation. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
6. No reference can be made in the essay that will identify the contestant beyond the listing of the name on the title page. The author is allowed to reference a state's name within the essay.
7. Essay must be written in English.

8. The entry must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner with the title page on top. Covers of any type are not accepted beyond the title page information described in Section III, No. 1 above.
9. All essays must be accompanied by an entry form. If e-mailed, it must be in Word or PDF format. Please send by either mail or e-mail – not both. Entry forms are available to download at <http://www.hpj.com/agdayessay/> and <http://agday.org/>. Entry forms and essays must be received by **midnight CST, February 1, 2012**, and sent to:
2012 Ag Day Essay Contest
Agricultural Council of America
11020 King St., Ste. 205
Overland Park, KS 66210

essay@agday.org
10. The ACA cannot confirm receiving entries sent via email.
11. Any protest must be made immediately. The Essay Contest Chair will decide all protests in conformity with the contest rules.
12. The decision of the contest Chair is final and no higher appeals will be recognized.
13. Failure to adhere to the rules may result in disqualification at the discretion of the Sponsor.

Section III.I – Video Essay Contest Rules

1. Video must address the official topic "American Agriculture: Feeding the Future, Filling the Gaps."
2. The file format of all uploaded videos must be .MP4 or .WMV. The maximum length of the video is **TWO (2)** minutes.
3. Each entry must be in English.
4. To submit the video essay, visit <http://agday.leapfile.net> and follow the directions as guided on the page, OR the video may be burned to a DVD or CD and mailed to:
2012 Ag Day Essay Contest
Agricultural Council of America
11020 King St., Ste. 205
Overland Park, KS 66210
5. All video essays must be accompanied by an entry form. If video is uploaded at <http://agday.leapfile.net>, please submit an accompanying entry form to <http://agday.leapfile.net> in Word or PDF format. If the video is burned to a DVD or CD and mailed to the address above, please include an accompanying entry form within the package. Please submit entry via mail or upload site – not both. Entry forms are available to download at <http://www.hpj.com/agdayessay/> and <http://agday.org/>. Entries must be received at the address listed above no later than **midnight CST, February 1, 2012**.
6. Entries must not, in the sole and unfettered judgment of the Sponsor, contain any sexually explicit, disparaging, libelous or other inappropriate content, language or nudity.
7. Entries must not contain any act that is considered dangerous, in the sole and unfettered judgment of the Sponsor.
8. Entries must not violate any copyrights or trademarks, including music used in the video. Applicant must have consent and credit the music or it must be the applicant's original music.
9. Failure to adhere to the rules may result in disqualification at the discretion of the Sponsor.

Section IV – Judging and Timing

1. Judging will be completed by a panel of qualified judges made up of representatives from the sponsoring organizations and experts from the agriculture industry.

2. In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be assigned a number by the essay contest Chair. The assigned number will be placed on the title page and first page of the essay before the title page is removed.
3. Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged.
4. Only judges can assign a penalty or award a point.

Section V – Scoring of Written Essay Contest

1. Material Organization (logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic): 40 points
2. Vocabulary and Style (phrasing and continuity): 25 points
3. Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling: 25 points
4. Neatness: 10 points

Section V.I – Scoring of the Video Essay Contest

1. Logical Interpretation of Subject, Adherence to Topic: 25 points
2. Originality: 25 points
3. Innovation and Creativity: 25 points
4. Visual Esthetics: 25 points

Section VI – Penalties for the Written Essay Contest

Required 5-point deduction

1. Failure to identify total number of words
2. Failure to stay within the 450-or-less word limit
3. Failure to double space

Section VI.I – Penalties for the Video Essay Contest

10% reduction for each penalty

1. Failure to stay within time constraints
2. Failure to submit via proper file format (.MP4 or .WMV)

Section VII – Awards

1. National Video Essay Winner – \$1,000
2. National Written Essay Winner – \$1,000 and trip to Washington, D.C., to be recognized at the Celebration of Ag Dinner held at the Whitten Patio March 8, 2012

First-place winner of the written essay and first-place winner of the video essay will be contacted in February via phone. Both winners will be announced to the public and media following the Celebration of Ag Dinner on National Ag Day, March 8, 2012. Non-winning entries will not be notified. To check if an entry won, check the website www.agday.org after February 15.

For more information, contact essay@agday.org, RE: 2012 Ag Day Essay Contest.