



# 4-H Agronomy Bowl: Contest Rules *and* Regulations

*The Agronomy Bowl is a team contest that focuses on basic and intermediate knowledge related to agronomic crop production. It is a fast-paced game requiring not only individual knowledge and speed, but also practice and teamwork to win.*

## Rules and Regulations

### Team and Contestant Eligibility

1. Each county may enter as many teams of four or five contestants as it deems appropriate. One team member will be designated as the alternate if the team has five contestants.
2. Teams may be selected by any procedure the county deems appropriate. Team members must be enrolled in 4-H in the county they represent.
3. Senior contestants must be at least 14 years old, but no more than 18, on January 1 of the current calendar year.
4. Junior contestants must be at least 8 years old, but not more than 13, on January 1 of the current calendar year.

### Reference Sources

Illinois Agronomy Handbook (free download)

<http://extension.cropsciences.illinois.edu/handbook>

Penn State Agronomy Guide (digital copy, \$15; hard copy, \$35)

<https://extension.psu.edu/the-penn-state-agronomy-guide>

### Types of Questions

1. One-on-one questions are directed at individual contestants in a head-to-head manner. Questions rotate between seat numbers. Points count toward individual and team scores.
2. Toss-up questions are open to all contestants. Points count toward individual and team scores. Toss-up questions may have bonus questions attached that will be more difficult than the toss-up question.
3. Bonus questions are given to the team that correctly answered the toss-up question. The team is allowed 10 seconds to confer. Questions may have more than one part, and all parts must be answered correctly for bonus points to be awarded. Bonus points count only toward team scores. Only one member of the team will answer, but all team members may provide information to the individual answering.

## Objectives

The purpose of Agronomy Bowl competition is to provide an opportunity for young people to learn basic agronomic knowledge and demonstrate that knowledge in a competitive team setting. This competition will broaden life skills and help prepare participants for a career in agronomy or other natural science fields.

## Equipment

1. Game panels: A buzzer system will provide a clear indication of the first contestant to respond to a question.
2. Scorekeeping devices: A blackboard, flip chart, or electronic display will be used to maintain team scores visible to the contestants. A silent scorekeeper will maintain team and individual scores.

## Officials

**Moderator:** The moderator will direct the matches, ask all questions, and designate contestants to answer questions and accept/reject all answers unless the question/answer is challenged. The moderator will indicate when a contestant has exceeded the allocated time to answer. The moderator will declare the match winner and will be in control of the matches.

**Judges:** Two judges should be available at all matches. Judges must be trained agronomists. Judges rule jointly on the acceptability of a question or answer. In challenges, a majority ruling of judges/moderator must agree on a ruling. If only one judge is attending, both the judge and moderator must agree on ruling.

**Scorekeepers:** At least two individuals shall keep score for each match (one for team scores, one for individual scores). Team scores shall be posted so that all points awarded/removed may be verified. Team scores should be visible to the moderator, contestants, and coaches. The second scorekeeper will maintain team and individual contestant scores.

The Extension specialist directing the bowl competition has final authority over all procedural protests.

## Teams

1. Each team will consist of either four or five team members.
2. Only four contestants will be seated at the panel at any one time.
3. Only one coach will be designated during any match.
4. The coach and alternate member will sit in an area designated by the moderator.
5. During any match, only one team member may be replaced at the panel.
6. The member removed from a match becomes ineligible to return to that particular match.
7. Counties with two teams should not compete against each other in the first round.



# Procedures of Play

## Match Procedures

1. Each match will be divided into two parts based on number of questions (24 questions per round plus three bonus questions).
2. In the one-on-one competition, only one member of each team is eligible to respond to a question. This eligibility will rotate, with each question beginning with the number 1 seat on each team, and passing to the contestants in the number 2, 3, and 4 seats, respectively, until all 12 one-on-one questions have been asked.
3. In the toss-up competition, any individual may respond to any question (12 questions).
4. The contestant activating the buzzer will have 5 seconds AFTER BEING RECOGNIZED BY THE MODERATOR to begin his or her answer. If the buzzer is activated during the reading of any question, the moderator will stop reading the question.
5. If a question is thrown out due to poor reading by the moderator or a decision of the judges, it will be replaced by another question so that the total number of questions asked remains consistent.
6. The team captain, coach, or moderator may call a “time out” for clarification of a rule, to permit replacement of a team member, or to allow for unexpected problems. The “time outs” may be called only after an answer but before the start of the next question.

## Starting the Contest

1. Teams are seated at their panels, and each contestant is given an opportunity to check the equipment.
2. A team captain is designated and seated in position number 1.
3. The moderator reads the question until completion of the reading of the question or until a contestant activates a buzzer. If a buzzer is activated during the reading of any question, the moderator will immediately stop reading the question.
4. The contestant activating the buzzer will have 5 seconds AFTER BEING RECOGNIZED BY THE MODERATOR to begin his or her answer. If answering has not begun, it will be ruled as an incorrect answer and points deducted.
  - Repeating the question by a contestant is not considered initiation of an answer
  - The moderator and judges will determine if an actual answer is started within the 5-second period.
5. If the answer to a question is incorrect, that team and individual lose one point.
6. If the answer to a question is incorrect, that same question will be turned over to the other team. If the question was read to completion, it will not be read again. If it was not read to completion, the moderator will reread the question. If it is answered correctly, the appropriate points will be awarded. If answered incorrectly, no penalty points will be imposed on the individual or team.





## One-on-One Questions

1. The moderator will indicate the start of one-on-one play.
2. Each question will be addressed to only one member of each team, beginning with the contestants in seat number 1 and progressing with subsequent questions to the contestants in seats 2, 3, and 4, respectively.
3. The moderator will indicate before each question which contestants are eligible to respond to that particular question.
  - If a team fails to fill all seats after a match has begun, the remainder of the match will be played with less than the full team, and all questions normally addressed to the missing contestant will be addressed only to the opposing contestant.
4. There will be no bonus questions asked during the one-on-one period.
  - If neither contestant signals intent to answer in the 5-second allowed time, neither contestant nor team will lose or gain any points. The answer will be given and the next question read.

## Toss-Up Questions

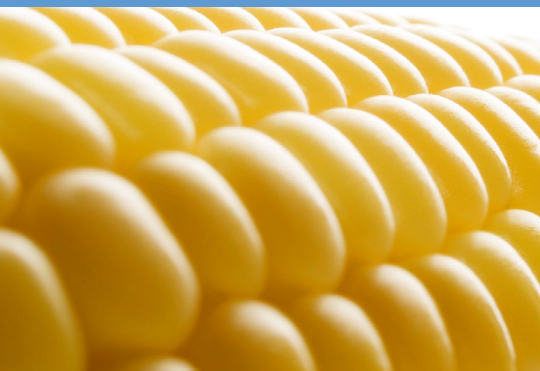
1. The moderator will indicate the start of toss-up questions.
2. Toss-up questions are open to all contestants, but only the contestant signaling intent may answer. No conferring with team members is allowed.
  - If no contestant signals intent to answer in the 5-second allowed time, neither contestant nor team will lose or gain any points. The answer will be given and the next question read.

## Bonus Questions

1. The moderator will indicate that a bonus question is attached to a toss-up question.
2. A bonus question attached to a toss-up question is given to the team whose member has just correctly answered the question.
3. If a bonus question is attached to the correctly answered question, the moderator reads the bonus question, and a 10-second period is allowed for team to confer in determining the answer. After the 10-second period expires, a 5-second period is allowed for the captain or designee to begin the answer. Only one person may provide the answer.
4. All parts of bonus questions must be answered correctly. No partial points will be awarded.
5. No part of a bonus question will be repeated nor any additional information given.

## Team Bonus Points

1. In order to encourage full team participation, bonus points will be awarded after each team member has correctly responded to a question (bonus questions excluded). After earning a team bonus, teams are eligible to earn additional bonus points by repeating the process.
  - To obtain a team bonus, each seated team member must correctly answer a question. If a team member who has answered a question correctly is replaced by an alternate, the alternate must correctly answer a question before bonus points are awarded.
  - Each time team bonus points are awarded, individual credits are cleared, and the team will begin accumulating new credits for additional team bonus points.



## Completing the Contest

1. Following the final question, the team with the highest number of points will be declared the winner of that match.
2. In the event of a tie, five additional toss-up questions will be asked. Bonus questions will not be asked in the overtime period. If a tie remains after the overtime, additional questions will be asked, and the first team to win a point (or the first team to have a one-point advantage because of the loss of a point by the other team) will be declared the winner. Tie-breaker points are NOT added to individual scores.
3. Once the moderator has declared a winner, there will be no protest of questions, answers, or match winner.

## Protesting

1. Protest of a question or answer may be made only by the team captain or coach, and only at the time that question is read or the answer is given. The moderator and judges will consider the protest, and their decision is final.
2. When a protest is made, play will suspend until the protest is resolved.
  - The protesting team and coach will have 3 minutes to support the protest.
  - Reference material may be brought into the contest room by each team.
  - A one-point team penalty will be assessed if the protest is not upheld.
3. If a protest is sustained, the moderator will take one of the following actions as deemed appropriate:
  - If question is protested BEFORE an answer is given, the moderator will discard the question. A substitute question will be read.
  - If a question is protested AFTER an answer is given (correctly or incorrectly), a majority of judges and moderator will rule on the protest. The question may be discarded at no loss of points and a substitute question read. OR the question may be allowed with the appropriate gain or loss of points.
  - If an answer is protested (correctly or incorrectly), a majority of judges and moderator will rule on the protest. Points will be added or subtracted as appropriate.
4. Abuse of protest usage may result in one or more of the following actions:
  - Dismissal of team coach from the contest area.
  - Dismissal or replacement of team captain.
  - Dismissal of entire team with forfeiture of all points or standing.
5. Spectators, parents, and visitors are not allowed to protest. Unseemly behavior, unsportsmanlike conduct, or any actions that are generally considered as detrimental to the contest may subject the perpetrators to removal from the contest area.
6. No source of information is infallible. It is possible that an answer agrees with the recommended sources but is incorrect or out of date. Every effort will be made to eliminate such questions. In the event of such an occurrence, the judges and moderator may agree to take one of these actions:
  - Accept the answer and give an explanation of correct/updated information for future use.
  - Accept only the correct answer.
  - Replace the question to the appropriate contestants.



## Scoring

### 1. One-on-one questions

- Correct response: +2 points (individual and team)
- Incorrect response: -1 point (individual and team)
- An incorrect response allows the opposing team to respond. If they answer correctly, they receive +2 points; if incorrect, no points are deducted.

### 2. Toss-up questions

- Correct response: +1 point (individual and team)
- Incorrect response: -1 point (individual and team)
- An incorrect response allows the opposing team to respond. If they answer correctly, they receive +1 point; if incorrect, no points are deducted.

### 3. Bonus questions

- Correct response: +3 points (team)
- Incorrect response: -0 points

### 4. Miscellaneous

- Speak without being recognized by moderator: -1 point (individual and team)
- Failure to answer after signaling intent: -1 point (individual and team)
- Nondesignated contestant responds: -2 points (individual and team)

### 5. Team bonus points

- Each time every seated member of a team has correctly answered at least one question: +2 points (team)
- Each time a team receives the bonus, individual credits return to zero, and a new accrual of points begins.

### 6. Protesting

- Not upheld: -1 point (team)
- Upheld: -0 points
- Abused: dismissal of team and loss of all points





## Awards

### 1. Team awards

- Team awards will be based on a predetermined procedure of play.
  - » The exact procedure will be determined by the number of teams participating in the contest.
  - » Single-elimination brackets will be used for junior contests.
  - » Double-elimination brackets will be used for senior contests.
  - » Rank of teams will be determined after the contest ends.
  - » Teams eliminated in the same round will be placed on the basis of the higher score in the eliminating round.
  - » Ties for team awards will be broken on the following basis: (1) high average score for the entire contest; (2) highest match score; and (3) total score of the matches.

### 2. Individual awards

- The top three individual contestants will receive special recognition.
- Contestants must participate in a plurality of matches to be considered for individual awards.
  - » The three high-match scores for each individual will be used in cases where individuals participate in more than three matches.
  - » Ties for individual awards will be broken on the following basis: (1) highest average score for the entire contest; (2) highest individual match scores; and (3) total points earned in the contest.

## Equipment Failure

1. It is the contestants' responsibility to verify all equipment is operating correctly at the start of the match.
2. If a device stops working during a match or is believed to be malfunctioning, a "time out" may be called by any contestant, coach, or moderator.
3. Scores accumulated up to the point of the "time out" will stand.
  - If judges and moderator deem it advisable, points awarded for the two questions asked immediately before the equipment failure may be recalled and two replacement questions used.
4. Under no conditions will there be a replay of a match due to an equipment failure.

## Recorders, Cameras, Cell Phones, and Beepers

1. NO audio or video recording devices, such as video cameras, movie cameras, or any other type of camera, may be used inside the competition room during a match.
2. Photography will be permitted only before or after a match.
3. TURN OFF cell phones and beepers when in the contest room.
4. Transcribing by any means is prohibited. Affiliated teams will be eliminated from the competition for violation of this rule.



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