

Agricultural Sales

Nebraska Career Development Event
Handbook and Rules for 2026-2030

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Nebraska Agricultural Sales Career Development Event is to develop communication and problem-solving skills essential for agricultural sales. Students will develop an understanding of the professional sales process. Teams will be given a scenario and asked to identify and demonstrate call planning. Individually, students will sell identified product(s) to a judge posing as a customer.

2. OBJECTIVES

A. Team Pre-Sales Call Planning Meeting Objectives

- a. Overall Objective of Team Activity: As a team, analyze the information given and develop a pre-call sales planning demonstration.
 - i. This will be called the pre-sales call planning meeting; it may also be referred to as the Planning Meeting.
- b. Team members will work together to demonstrate teamwork, group dynamics, problem solving, data analysis, decision making and oral communication.
- c. Teams will be provided a team scenario and asked to develop a pre-sales call plan for a face-to-face sales call. Teams will be using the product(s) which were identified prior to the event. This pre-sales call plan should include:
 - i. Potential questions to build rapport for the scenario.
 - ii. Identifying customer needs and wants through use of questioning techniques.
 - iii. Identifying and demonstrating active listening skills or techniques for determining needs and wants.
 - iv. Identifying and matching potential needs and wants of the customer to the product's features and benefits.
 - v. Identifying potential objections of the customer and demonstrating techniques to address them.
 - vi. Identifying concerns of customers.
 - vii. Students are expected to explain their decisions for the pre-sales call plan based on selling principles.
 - viii. Team identifies common interests that they have with the customer.
- d. Teamwork and involvement of team members will be judged during this event.
- e. As a team, answer questions regarding the methods and strategies presented in the pre-sales call plan demonstration.

B. Individual Sales Activity Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate verbal, written, and interactive communication skills through an individual sales call and creation of sales material.
- b. Students will understand and demonstrate a professional sales process by completing the following tasks:
 - i. Identifying and targeting customers based on given information
 - ii. Understanding customer buying motives
 - iii. Discussing features and benefits of a product with a customer and demonstrating proper product use

- iv. Addressing potential customer objections that arise during the sales call
- v. Developing a sales call that addresses customer needs and concerns
- vi. Attempting to close the sale by asking for the customer's buying decision
- vii. Reassuring customer of decision to buy and build confidence
- viii. Building rapport with the customer
- ix. Demonstrating active listening skills
- x. Demonstrating the use of clarifying questions
- c. Students will demonstrate professional conduct by:
 - i. Being properly groomed
 - ii. Professionally dressed
 - iii. Exhibiting a positive attitude
 - iv. Using appropriate language

C. Test Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the professional sales process through a written exam.
 - i. The written exam will consist of 25 multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank questions.
 - ii. Refer to suggested resource(s) provided to prepare for the written exam.

3. ELIGIBILITY

- a. The top three schools from each agricultural education district will qualify a team to the state event.
- b. Four students per team are required for this event.

4. REQUIRED ATTIRE

Official FFA Dress or other business professional dress is required for this event. Students not in official or business professional dress may be deducted up to five points during the sales practicum.

5. REQUIRED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

- A. The ONLY allowable items include:
 - a. A one-inch prepared binder containing the provided product information and any other information gathered by the participant that may include:

- i. Pricing sheet
 - ii. Product specifications / features
 - iii. The binder may be used during both the individual and team sales activities
 - iv. A blank notepad or blank paper is allowed during the individual and team activities.
 - b. A calculator (separate from a cell phone)
 - c. Writing utensils
 - B. NOTE: Prohibited items will result in a deduction of up to five points during the individual sales practicum.**
 - a. Business cards are NOT allowed.
 - b. The physical product is NOT allowed at the sales event.
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6. EVENT SEQUENCE

- Once State Convention registration and CDE registration have closed, the contest superintendent will create a spreadsheet with both individual and team sales activity times on it. This will be posted on the Ag Sales CDE webpage prior to the State Convention and will be used as the schedule for the contest.
 - Prior to the spreadsheet schedule being created, a school may request a specific time if they have conflicts with additional contests. The superintendent will do his or her best to accommodate these requests.
 - After the spreadsheet schedule is released, if schools notice they have a conflict with their scheduled time, they should contact other schools and switch time slots with them. If schools switch, they must notify the contest superintendent of the change.
 - While actual participation time is about an hour, it may take longer depending on movement of participants through the three parts of the event. If you have special time considerations, please contact the event superintendent as soon as possible.
 - Check the CDE schedule for specific arrival, start and end times, and the event location.
 - On the day of competition, participants will complete the pre-sales call Planning Meeting prior to the individual sales call. The exam may be taken before or after the activities based on scheduling needs.
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7. ANNUAL THEME

Themes from which the product will be selected will rotate on a 5-year basis:

- 2026 Theme: Power, Structure and Technical Systems
- 2027 Theme: Food Products and Processing Systems
- 2028 Theme: Plant Systems
- 2029 Theme: Natural Resources Systems
- 2030 Theme: Animal Systems

Specific Product Information Sheets will be made available on the CDE website in September of the current academic year.

8. EVENT FORMAT

- A. The event will be composed of three parts: team pre-sales call planning meeting, individual sales activity, and written exam.
- B. Real world scenarios will be utilized, and students will not be allowed to invent product information to include pricing, packaging, specials, etc. As a salesperson, those decisions typically involve or are at the discretion of management.
- C. To improve consistency of evaluation, a recorded video example of the individual sales activity and the team planning meeting will be made available to judges and teachers in advance of the event. See the Study Materials below for access to these videos beginning in the fall of 2022.
- D. TEAM PLANNING MEETING: The following information will be provided to the team at the event as if they were a group of salespeople working together to develop a pre-sales call plan prior to conducting a sales call.
 - a. Product information (available before the event) will be the same for the team planning meeting and individual sales activity.
 - b. One customer profile will be provided for the team planning meeting . This profile will be different from the profiles used in the individual sales activity.
 - c. The team will be provided with paper and pencils. No presentation equipment such as laptops, flipcharts or dry erase boards will be allowed.
 - d. The team will be given up to 15 minutes to analyze the information and prepare to answer questions about the pre-sales call plan. During this 15 minutes, the team will be judged using the team pre-sales call planning meeting scorecard. At the conclusion of the 15 minutes, team members will have an additional 15 minutes to individually answer questions from the judges and they will answer without assistance from their team members.

- E. INDIVIDUAL SALES ACTIVITY:** Product(s) used in the team planning meeting will be the same for individual sales activity but customer profiles will be different. (Individual activity will be conducted after the team planning meeting .) Participants will directly sell the product(s) to the judge.
- a. Two customer profiles will be provided with two team members assigned profile A and two team members assigned profile B. Each student will have 5 minutes to review their assigned profile prior to meeting with the judge(s).
 - b. The judge(s) will act as the customer which may include not buying the product. Participants will have to establish rapport, ask probing questions to ensure they meet the customer’s needs, and clarify customer information as a part of the sales call. Participants will have 10 minutes to interact with the judge.
 - c. Participants are not allowed to offer discounts or other promotional items which are not included in the original product information sheets.

9. SCORING

Refer to the rubrics in the appendix below. The following represents how team and individual scores are calculated:

		Individual Points	Team Points
INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS			
	Written Exam	50	200
	Sales Activity	150	600
TEAM COMPONENTS			
	Pre-Sales Call Planning Meeting		175
TOTALS		200	975

10. TIEBREAKER

A. Individual

In the event of a tie in the individual scores, the highest individual sales activity score will break the tie. If the tie cannot be broken using the individual sales activity score, the highest written exam score will be used. If a tie still exists, the highest team planning meeting score will be used to break the tie.

B. Team

In the event of a tie in the team scores, the highest team planning meeting score will break the tie. If the tie cannot be broken using the team planning meeting score, then the total individual sales activity scores will be used. If a tie still exists, the top individual(s) on either team will break the tie.

11. RESOURCE MATERIALS

ProSelling: A Professional Approach to Selling in Agriculture and Other Industries, W. Scott Downey, ISBN-13: 978-0978895211 (Excluding Chapter 2, Marketing)

12. STUDY MATERIALS

Previous exams and other study materials will be available in the [Ag Sales CDE resource folder](#) available on the rules page.

13. DEBRIEFING OPPORTUNITY

A debriefing session is not available for this event; however, individualized feedback will be made available to students on the rubrics and provided to teachers in their convention results packets.

APPENDIX I

Rubrics

Team Rubric 175 Points

CHAPTER _____

Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill	Moderate evidence of skill	Weak evidence of skill	Points
Effective listening	7–10 points Clearly evident that all team members are listening	4–6 points Listening occurs but distraction is evident	0–3 points Not listening to each other and/or talking over each other	/10
	6–8 points Clearly evident that all team members are discussing the topic	3–5 points Communication occurs but side conversations are occurring or 2-3 members dominating	0–2 points One member dominating conversation	
Demonstrated cooperation	7–10 points All team members clearly completing tasks, sharing written and oral solutions	4–6 points Tasks primarily completed by two to three members, other members assist occasionally	0–3 points Tasks primarily completed by one member	/10
	7-10 points Clearly all team members respected the input of other team members.	3-6 points Most team members respected the input of other team members.	0-3 points The team members did not respect the input of other team members.	
Participated in the team preparation	6–8 points All team members are clearly engaged, attentive, and making notes for the full term of event	3–5 points Members are engaged and attentive with 2-3 making notes, participation fades over time	0–2 points No members form the primary team, no other members participate	/8
	Completing Team Goal			
Report	11-15 points All questions for building rapport were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	6-10 points Most questions for building rapport were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	0–5 points Questions for building rapport were not appropriate or pertinent to the scenario.	/15
	11-15 points All identified common interests were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	6-10 points Most identified common interests were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	0–5 points Identified common interests were not appropriate or pertinent to the scenario.	
Questions to identify wants and needs	11-15 points All questions and active listening techniques for identifying needs and wants were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	6-10 points Most questions and active listening techniques for identifying needs and wants were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	0–5 points Questions and active listening techniques for identifying needs and wants were not appropriate or pertinent to the scenario.	/15
	11-15 points All potential needs and wants and how the product meets those needs were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	6-10 points Most potential needs and wants and how the product meets those needs were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	0–5 points Potential needs and wants and how the product meets those needs were not appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	
Objections and concerns	11-15 points All potential objections and concerns identified were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	6-10 points Most potential objections and concerns identified were appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	0–5 points Potential objections and concerns identified were not appropriate and pertinent to the scenario.	/15
	Product Knowledge/ Scenario Clarifying Questions	17-24 points All team members questioned were able to provide applicable and correct answers for the customer and the products..	8-16 points Half of team members questioned were able to provide applicable and correct answers for the customer, and the products.	
21-30 points All team members questioned were able to provide applicable and correct answers for the customer and the products.		11-20 points Half of team members questioned were able to provide applicable and correct answers for the customer, and the products.	0–10 points No team member was able to provide applicable and correct answers for the customer and the products	/30
TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF 175 Points				

Individual Sales Call Rubric 150 POINTS

Student		Chapter		
Indicator	Very strong evidence of skill	Moderate evidence of skill	Weak evidence of skill	Points
First impression	4–5 points Individual identifies themselves with a good first impression.	2–3 points Individual mostly identifies themselves with a good first impression.	0–1 point Individual poorly identifies themselves with a good first impression.	/5
	8–10 points Individual asks questions and utilizes information from answers in an attempt to build personal rapport.	4–7 points Individual mostly asks questions and utilizes information from answers in an attempt to build personal rapport.	0–3 points Individual poorly asks questions and utilizes information from answers in an attempt to build personal rapport.	
Personal rapport	11–15 points Individual asks questions to learn about the customer's business.	6–10 points Individual mostly asks questions to learn about the customer's business.	0–5 points Individual poorly asks questions to learn about the customer's business.	/15
	11–15 points Individual asks questions to confirm preliminary customer information.	6–10 points Individual mostly asks questions to confirm preliminary customer information.	0–5 points Individual poorly asks questions to confirm preliminary customer information.	
Needs and wants	8–10 points Individual confirmed and discovered customer needs and wants.	4–7 points Individual mostly confirmed and discovered customer needs and wants.	0–3 points Individual poorly confirmed and discovered customer needs and wants.	/10
	8–10 points Individual applied features and benefits of their product to the customer's needs/ wants.	4–7 points Individual mostly applied features and benefits of their product to the customer's needs/wants.	0–3 points Individual poorly applied features and benefits of their product to the customer's needs/wants.	
Matching needs and wants	11–15 points Individual allows customer to participate in matching their wants/needs to the product features.	6–10 points Individual mostly allows customer to participate in matching their wants/needs to the product features.	0–5 points Individual poorly allows customer to participate in matching their wants/needs to the product features.	/15
	8–10 points Individual uses appropriate sales technique to confirm customer understanding and/ or identify buying signals.	4–7 points Individual mostly uses appropriate sales technique to confirm customer understanding and/ or identify buying signals.	0–3 points Individual poorly uses appropriate sales technique to confirm customer understanding and/ or identify buying signals.	
Objections	11–15 points Individual listens and clarifies customers objections.	6–10 points Individual mostly listens and clarifies customers objections.	0–5 points Individual poorly listens and clarifies customers objections.	/15
	11–15 points Individual applies and discusses the features/ benefits of the product to address the customers objections.	6–10 points Individual mostly applies and discusses the features/ benefits of the product to address the customers objections.	0–5 points Individual poorly applies and discusses the features/benefits of the product to address the customers objections.	
Close or advance sale	11–15 points Individual closes or attempts to close the sale.	6–10 points Individual mostly closes or attempts to close the sale.	0–5 points Individual poorly closes or attempts to close the sale.	/15
	11–15 points Individual actively listens to comments and answers from the customer.	6–10 points Individual mostly listens to comments and answers from the customer.	0–5 points Individual poorly listens to comments and answers from the customer.	
TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF 150				