



An Inaugural Career Development Event in Sustainable Agriculture

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Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Introduction

Career Development Events (CDEs) provide members of the National FFA Organization with experience related to potential career opportunities and assessing their knowledge and skills (Lundry et al., 2015). The inaugural CDE in Sustainable Agriculture served as a pilot study and was open to all FFA chapters in Texas. The pilot helped FFA members and teachers recognize the *relative advantage* of this new CDE in context of current trends toward a more sustainable food system (Williams, 2000).

Steps/Phases

This contest was formatted and modeled around current CDEs at the Texas FFA level, such as Nursery/Landscape. Rules were emailed to all FFA advisors in Texas along with references and resources with hyperlinks to provide agricultural educators and members easy access to relevant training materials. The Sustainable Agriculture CDE included three components,

- 50 question multiple choice exam
- 20 identification items
- 10 problem solving questions.

A promotional flyer, rules, and resource list were posted to a Facebook Ag Teacher Buddies. Additional phases included obtaining feedback from agricultural educators with teams competing in the CDE, as well as industry experts.

Rogers, E. M. (1983). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: The Free Press.

Results to Date and Implications

The inaugural CDE was held May 3, 2022. Participants included 14 teams with 49 individual team members. The CDE was administered by dividing the contestants into groups, rotating through the three test components. A hospitality room was provided and contest materials were provided to the agricultural educators. An award ceremony was held, awarding the top three teams and top three individuals. Additionally, each of the 49 team members competing and their advisors received a promotional tee shirt. Contest providers expect by hosting this CDE, agricultural educators will include sustainable agriculture into their curriculum.



Lundry, J., Ramsey, J. W., Edwards, M. C., & Robinson, J. S. (2015). Benefits of career development events as perceived by school-based, Agricultural Education Teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 56(1), 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2015.01043>

Future Plans

Contest providers for the Sustainable Agriculture CDE will use input from teachers and industry experts to make minor revisions in contest format and the number items. A goal is the eventual development of an exam test bank consisting of at least 200 items. This CDE will be hosted for the second time during the Spring of 2023 as an invitational event open to all FFA chapters in the state. After the second year we anticipate having enough interest and support from FFA members and agricultural educators for the Texas FFA leadership to consider inclusion in the official list of CDEs.

Costs and Resources

The cost of hosting a CDE is a purposeful investment because it provides agricultural education students with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills. It also allows students the opportunity to visit college and university campuses. Entry fees generated \$515 in revenue. Itemized expenses for this inaugural Sustainable Agriculture CDE are categorized below.

Awards	\$1,178.85
Promotional T-Shirts	1,286.21
Hospitality	201.88
Answer scan sheets	86.00
Total Expense	\$2,752.94

Williams, D. L. (2000). Students' knowledge of and expected impact from Sustainable Agriculture *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 41(2), 19–24. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2000.02019>