

# Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair Handbook

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## Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair

The Connecticut Agriscience Fair is an opportunity for students interested in scientific principles and emerging technologies in the agricultural industry. The Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair provides high school students the opportunity to achieve local, state and national recognition for their accomplishments in agriscience. This program also gives students a chance to demonstrate and display agriscience projects that are extensions of their agriscience courses and/or their supervised agriculture experience project

When selecting a topic for your agriscience fair project, consider your ongoing SAE program as a good place in which to begin. Quality experimental SAE projects/activities are well suited for all students and can be easily incorporated into any SAE program. Experimental SAE activities can provide valuable learning experiences for students with agriscience-related career goals (as well as those with other career interests).

### *Developing a quality agriscience project includes or requires:*

- Focusing on an important agricultural/scientific issue, question or principle.
- Specific research objectives.
- Using a number of steps.
- Following a scientific process to collect and analyze data.
- Student commitment to a moderate or substantial amount of time.
- Teacher supervision.

### *Divisions*

The National FFA Constitution provides flexibility to meet the needs of students enrolled in non-traditional programs. For the purposes of participating in national FFA events, a student needs to be enrolled in at least one course during the year they qualify to participate.

Competition is open to all FFA members in grades 7-12. There are four divisions:

- Division I – individual member in grades 7, 8 and 9.
- Division II – individual member in grades 10, 11 and 12.
- Division III - team of two members in grades 7, 8 and 9.
- Division IV - team of two members in grades 10, 11 and 12.

Grade is determined by the grade level of the member at the time of qualification at the state level.

Each member and/or team may enter only one project. Exhibited projects and project reports will be the result of the students' own efforts. A team is a maximum of two members working cooperatively on the same project. Teams can be made up of two students in different grades but will compete in the division in which the older participant would qualify. Team members must be from the same chapter at the time of qualification.



### *Category Description and Examples*

#### *Animal Systems (AS)*

The study of animal systems, including life processes, health, nutrition, genetics, management and processing, through the study of small animals, aquaculture, livestock, dairy, horses and/or poultry.

##### *Examples:*

- Compare nutrient levels on animal growth
- Research new disease control mechanisms
- Effects of estrous synchronization on ovulation
- Compare effects of thawing temperatures on livestock semen
- Effects of growth hormone on meat/milk production

#### *Environmental Services/Natural Resource Systems (ENR)*

The study of systems, instruments and technology used in waste management; the study of the management of soil, water, wildlife, forests and air as natural resources and their influence on the environment.

##### *Examples:*

- Effect of agricultural chemicals on water quality
- Effects of cropping practices on wildlife populations
- Compare water movements through different soil types

#### *Food Products and Processing Systems (FPP)*

The study of product development, quality assurance, food safety, production, sales and service, regulation and compliance and food service within the food science industry.

##### *Examples:*

- Effects of packaging techniques on food spoilage rates
- Resistance of organic fruits to common diseases
- Determining chemical energy stored in foods
- Control of molds on bakery products

#### *Plant Systems (PS)*

The study of plant life cycles, classifications, functions, structures, reproduction, media and nutrients, as well as growth and cultural practices, through the study of crops, turf grass, trees and shrubs and/or ornamental plants.

##### *Examples:*

- Determine rates of transpiration in plants
- Effects of heavy metals such as cadmium on edible plants
- Compare GMO and conventional seed/plant growth under various conditions
- Effects of lunar climate and soil condition on plant growth
- Compare plant growth of hydroponics and conventional methods

#### *Power, Structural and Technical Systems (PST)*

The study of agricultural equipment, power systems, alternative fuel sources and precision technology, as well as woodworking, metalworking, welding and project



planning for agricultural structures.

*Examples:*

- Develop alternate energy source engines
- Create minimum energy use structures
- Compare properties of various alternative insulation products
- Investigation of light/wind/water energy sources

### *Social Systems (SS)*

The study of human behavior and the interaction of individuals in and to society, including agricultural education, agribusiness economic, agricultural communication, agricultural leadership and other social science applications in agriculture, food and natural resources.

*Examples:*

- Investigate perceptions of community members towards alternative agricultural practices
- Determine the impact of local/state/national safety programs upon accident rates in agricultural/natural resource occupations
- Comparison of profitability of various agricultural/natural resource practices
- Investigate the impact of significant historical figures on a local community
- Determine the economic effects of local/state/national legislation impacting agricultural/natural resources

### **Rules**

#### Plagiarism

An agriscience fair project must be the result of a student's own effort and ability. However, in securing information as direct quotes or phrases, specific dates, figures or other materials, that information must be marked in "quotes" in manuscripts and identified in the Literature Cited or Reference section of the written report. Non-compliance represents plagiarism and will automatically disqualify a participant.

Students MAY NOT:

- In any way falsify a permission form, scientific paper or display.
- Use another person's results or thoughts as their own even with the permission of this person. This includes work done by a family member or a mentor.
- Use information or data obtained from the Internet without proper citation.
- Re-enter a project with only minor changes.

#### Ethics Statement

Scientific fraud and misconduct is not condoned at any level of research or competition. Plagiarism, use of presentation of other researcher's work as one's own and fabrication or falsification of data will not be tolerated. Fraudulent projects will result in elimination from the Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair. Unethical behavior will result in notification to the student's local school administration.

#### Multiple Student Research Projects

If more than one agriscience project is entered from the same chapter and/or school, then projects must differ in:

- Research hypotheses (questions or objectives).



- Findings related to the research hypothesis (questions or objectives).
- Conclusions.
- Recommendations.

Each of the published authors must have made a unique and substantial contribution to the research endeavor. It is standard that peripheral contributions be acknowledged (i.e., The Researchers would like to thank Mrs. Smith's 7th Period Animal Science Class for their assistance in...). If there are any questions regarding the above policies and procedures, contact the Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair program manager prior to beginning the research: harold.mackin@ct.gov or 860-713-6779.

### ***Safety Rules***

1. If an exhibit becomes unsafe or unsuitable for display, it will be removed and deemed ineligible for any awards.
2. Projects involving vertebrate animal subjects must conform with the following statement and have a fully completed non-human vertebrate endorsement form submitted:  
*Experiments on live animals involving surgery, the removal of parts, injection of harmful chemicals and/or exposure to harmful environments are not acceptable at the Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair. Live vertebrates may not be exhibited at the fair.*
3. Hypodermic needles, syringes, crystals [other than sucrose (sugar) and sodium chloride (salt)] and/or toxic and hazardous chemicals are prohibited from display at the Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair. Students should substitute colored water, photographs, three dimensional models or drawings for chemicals and crystals.
4. All necessary chemical glassware must be displayed in a stable manner. The items must be back from the edge of the table and may not be operational at any time.
5. No wild cultures may be incubated above room temperature; no cultures taken from humans or other warm-blooded animals may be used. This includes, but is not limited to, skin, throat and mouth.
6. Only plastic Petri dishes may be used in displays, and they must be sealed.
7. Lasers may not be used in any exhibit.
8. Dangerous and combustible materials are prohibited.
9. No exhibit may have open flames. Any part of an exhibit that can get hotter than 100 degrees Celsius (boiling water temperature) must be adequately protected from its surroundings.
10. If an exhibit includes electrical wiring or devices, they must be safe. For voltages above 20 volts, special precautions must be taken. All connections must be secure and provide suitable protection against short circuits, etc.
11. All wiring carrying more than 20 volts must be well insulated. Also, the connections must either be soldered or secured by UL listed fasteners. The wire used must be insulated adequately for the maximum voltage that will be present, and the wire must be of sufficient size to carry the maximum current you anticipate. Open knife switches or door bell-type push buttons in circuits using more than 20 volts may not be used.
12. If the exhibit will be connected to 120 volt AC power (plugged into a wall outlet), fuses or circuit breakers must be provided to protect not only the exhibit, but also any others that may share the same sources of power. The power cord used must be UL listed for the voltage and current it will be carrying, and it must be at least 1.8 meters (6 feet) long. Connecticut FFA staff must be notified of the need for power at the time of certification so power can be ordered in advance.
13. Exhibits requiring voltage in excess of 120 volts AC are not allowed.



### ***Eligibility***

#### **Membership**

Each participant must be a current, bona fide, dues paying FFA member in good standing with the local chapter, state FFA association and National FFA Organization at the time of his/her selection and at the time of the event in which he/she participates.

The participant, at the time of his/her selection as a national participant, must be:

- An FFA member. (A graduating senior is considered eligible to compete in state and national events up to and including his/her first national convention following graduation.)
- While in school, be enrolled in at least one agricultural education course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program.
- Once a student places in the top three at the National FFA Agriscience Fair, in a division or a category, he/she can no longer compete in that division and category regardless of the research subject.
  - o Students who wish to continue research on the same topic or who have won a division and category are encouraged to seek additional recognition using the proficiency award or star award, or they compete in another Agriscience research area within the Agriscience fair.

### ***Extension of Agriscience Fair Projects***

The completion of a research project can generate additional research questions that are worthy of investigation. Participants will have the opportunity to conduct this additional research as long as the current year's project could not have been done without what was learned from the past year's research. This project would now be considered an extension project for competition.

1. Students may use findings of previous research to formulate their research hypothesis; however, the student will be evaluated on research they have conducted in the twelve months prior to June 15 annually.
2. Judging will be based on the current year of research, not the entire scope of the research project. The project must document that the additional research is an expansion based on findings of prior work (e.g. testing a new variable or new line of investigation, etc.) Repetition of previous experiments with the same methodology and research question or increasing sample size are examples of unacceptable extensions. The logbook, project display and project report must reflect the current year's work only.
3. Displays and application materials must reflect the current year's work only. The project title displayed in the finalist's booth may mention years (e.g., "Year Two of an Ongoing Study"). Supporting data books (not research papers) from previous related research may be exhibited on the table properly labeled as such.
4. Longitudinal studies are permitted under the following conditions:
  - a. The study is a multi-year study testing or documenting the same variables in which time is a critical variable. (e.g., Effect of high rain or drought on soil in a given basin; return of flora and fauna in a burned area over time.)
  - b. Each consecutive year must demonstrate time-based change.
  - c. The display board must be based on collective past data and its comparison to the



current year data set. No raw data from previous years may be displayed.

5. All extension projects must be reviewed and approved each year and forms must be completed for each year.
6. Successive year projects must indicate change or growth in the project from the previous year(s) in the logbooks and complete the continuation form in the application. Displays must reflect the current year's work only.

NOTE: For an extension project to be eligible for competition in the agriscience fair, documentation must include the project extension form, the current year's abstract and the abstract for all other prior years. The documentation should be clearly labeled in the upper right hand corner with the year (i.e., 2012-2013). Please retain all prior years' paperwork in case event officials request additional documentation.

### ***Causes for Disqualification***

1. Failure to meet any one or more of the eligibility rules set forth by Connecticut FFA.
2. Failure to follow the participation guidelines for this event set forth by Connecticut FFA.
3. Failure to meet certification and form requirements specified by Connecticut FFA.
4. Once judging has begun, any assistance given to a team or participant from any source other than the agriscience fair officials or assistants will be sufficient cause to disqualify participant(s).
5. Event superintendents may remove any participants who are being hazardous either to themselves or others. Such removal will constitute as an immediate disqualification from the agriscience fair.
6. Once a participant starts the event, he/she must complete it or face disqualification, unless prior permission from the event superintendent has been obtained.
7. Other than those approved by the event officials, participants will not be allowed to utilize personal electronic communication devices during the entire course of the event.
8. No advisor, coach, parent or fellow chapter member will be allowed in the judging area once judging officially begins. Any advisor, coach, parent or fellow chapter member found to do so may disqualify their participant.
9. Any participant, advisor or chapter member tampering with another participant's display will lead to their chapter participant's disqualification.
10. The official maximum size for a project is 48 inches wide by 30 inches deep (the distance from front to back) by 108 inches high (from floor to top, including table). Failure to meet these requirements will result in disqualification. See Display requirements for more information.





### ***Pre-Registration Required Forms***

As a part of the Connecticut FFA competition application process, the following forms are required. These forms must be postmarked to the Harold Mackin, Connecticut State Department of Education 165 Capitol Ave, Hartford Connecticut, 06106 no later than May 1, 2013. The registration form is located in the appendix A:

- Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair Registration form.
- Written Report (see Appendix B for guidelines for the written report)

### ***Recognition***

State Level – Winners from each division in all categories may be selected annually. Each of those winners will be sent to the National FFA Center for prescreening before moving on to compete at the national level fair.

National Level – Selected participants from each state may be forwarded for national competition. A national winner will be selected in each category. National winners will be presented with pins and plaques at the awards reception during the national convention. Additional awards may become available as funded by special project sponsors above and beyond the core sponsorship for the National FFA Agriscience Fair. They may include, but are not limited to, scholarships and cash awards to category/division winners. These awards will be appropriate for each category/division, but not necessarily equal or identical.

## **Project Components**

Please refer to the National FFA Agriscience Fair handbook, <https://www.ffa.org/programs/awards/agrisciencefair/Pages/default.aspx#>, pages 12-14 for information on the project components.



APPENDIX A

**AGRISCIENCE FAIR REGISTRATION - 2016**

**Postmarked to the Agriscience Fair Coordinator by May 5, 2016**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ FFA Membership ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension project?  Yes  No Interpretive Services Needed?  Yes  No

Electricity needed for booth?  Yes  No

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home City: \_\_\_\_\_ Home State: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Email: \_\_\_\_\_

FFA Chapter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

School City: \_\_\_\_\_ School State: \_\_\_\_\_ School Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

School Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Category: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

**If team project: 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Member**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ FFA Membership ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension Project?  Yes  No Interpretive Services Needed?  Yes  No

Electricity needed for booth?  Yes  No

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home City: \_\_\_\_\_ Home State: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***APPENDIX B*** **Written Report**

### Title Page

Your title should be a precise description of the work performed. The title page should include the title of your project, your name, grade, school and school address. This should be all that appears on this page. The title itself should be no more than three lines with a 15 word maximum. Any numbers, chemical elements and compounds should be spelled out. All words should be capitalized except for articles such as “a” or “the” and prepositions such as “of,” “in,” “on,” “during” and “between;” and conjunctions such as “and” and “but” unless they are the first word of the title.

### Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of your paper, which concisely describes your purpose, methods, results and conclusion. Do not include the title in the abstract. Your abstract may include potential research applications or future research. The abstract should not contain cited references. It should be no longer than one page and in paragraph form. Because this is the first page of your project report, it will be where the reader forms an opinion on your work. In your abstract, arrange your points as 1) Purpose 2) Procedure 3) Conclusion. These sections would include materials used, effects of major treatments and main conclusions. Do not include discussion, citations and footnotes, or references to tables and figures or methods.

### Introduction

The introduction answers the question “Why was the work done?” In several paragraphs, provide background on your subject. The introduction should clearly state the problem that justifies conducting the research, the purpose of the research, the findings of earlier work and the general approach and objectives. You must cite sources for statements that are not common knowledge. The last paragraph of the introduction includes the objectives of the study.

### Review of Literature

The literature review should detail to the reader what information currently exists concerning your research project. Information listed in your review should be materials that you have used for your research. Material cited could include articles about similar studies, similar research methods, history of the research area and any other items that support the current knowledge base for the research topic and where your project might complement existing information.

### Materials and Methods

**This is the section where you write your hypothesis.** A well-written materials and methods section will enable others to reproduce your results by duplicating your study. Write in third person, in past tense, encompass all of the materials required and explain the technical and experimental procedures employed. With fieldwork, describe the study site. Include any statistical procedures employed.

### Results

This section should be a summary of the results your project has produced, even if they were not what you expected. Do not include discussion or conclusions about the data. Tell the reader exactly what you discovered and what patterns, trends or relationships were observed. Decide on the most meaningful way to present your data (tables, figures) and refer to them in your text.



### Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, draw conclusions from the results of your study and relate them to the original hypothesis. It is helpful to briefly recap the results and use them as a foundation for your conclusions. If your results were not what you expected, take this opportunity to explain why. Give details about your results and observations by elaborating on the mechanisms behind what happened. Tie your study in with the literature, but do not hesitate to offer sound reasoning of your own.

### References

Only significant, published and relevant sources accessible through a library or an information system should be included. All citations in the text must be included in the Reference section. When you use information or facts that are not common knowledge, you must give credit to the source of that information by citing a reference. You should use the APA style recognized citation system throughout your report.

### Acknowledgements

Acknowledge anyone who helped in any aspect of your project in this section.

### Format of Report

The report should be printed on white paper, 8 ½” by 11” white bond paper. The report will have 1” margins. Font size must be 12 using Arial, Courier or Times New Roman. The report should be formatted with APA citations.

### ***Agriscience Fair Interview***

The interview is an opportunity for judges to ask you questions about your project. Interviews for agriscience fair participants will normally be 5-15 minutes. The interview portion is used to help judges determine both the extent to which you actually participated in the project and your knowledge gained. A team project must be presented by a team of two. Judges will ask questions to determine your understanding of your project; how it relates to your SAE and possibly how your project relates to other FFA activities. The following is a list of example questions that may be asked.

1. How and why was the project selected?
2. What was your goal? What did you plan to accomplish in your project?
3. Were there any surprises in your project? How did you deal with them?
4. What did you learn from the experience?
5. How much time did you devote to your project?
6. What kept you from being discouraged?
7. How did you manage time for this project in relation to your other activities?
8. What would you advise others doing a project? What is the value of a project of this type?
9. How can your findings and conclusions be applied in the agriculture, food and natural resources industry?



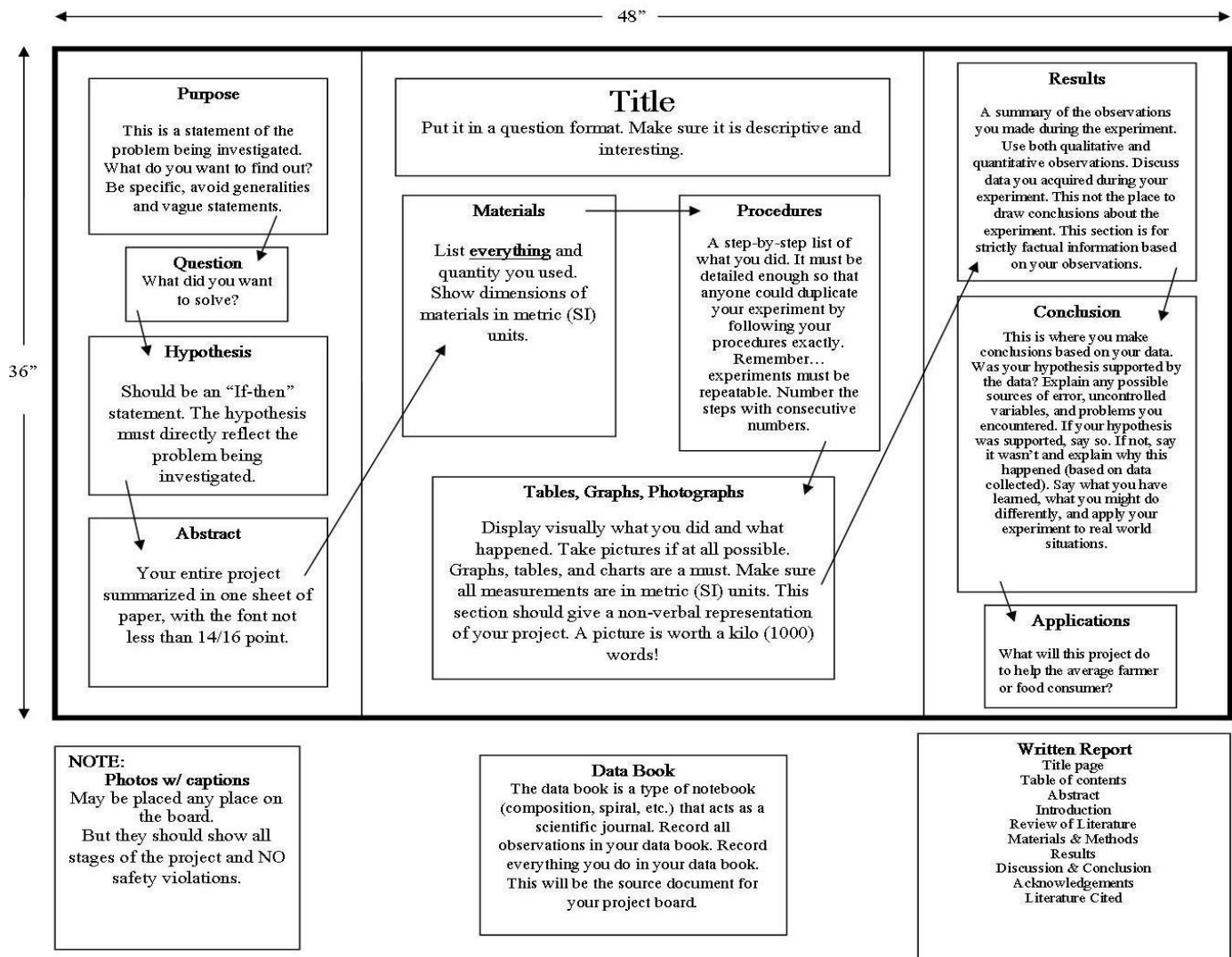
**APPENDIX C**

**Display**

Agriscience Fair displays must follow these guidelines:

- Height: no taller than 108 inches from the floor to the top of the display (this includes the table and display)
- Width: maximum of 48 inches
- Depth: maximum of 30 inches
- Exhibit must be stable and freestanding

The following image will give you a general idea of the types of things that should be included on your display; these ideas are exclusive or all-encompassing.



APPENDIX D

Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair Written Report  
Score Sheet

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Category: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Each category should be scored separately as determined by point values listed. The total possible score for the entire sheet is 100 points.

<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Title Page:</b> Title precisely describes the work with no more than 3 lines and 15 words maximum. All numbers, chemical elements and compounds should be spelled out. Page should include student name, grade, school and school address.
<b>10 pts.</b>	<b>Abstract:</b> Abstract is brief and concisely describes the purpose, methods, results and conclusion. Abstract should not include the title or cited references. It should be no longer than one page. Arrangement of information should make the purpose, procedure and conclusion clear.
<b>10 pts.</b>	<b>Introduction:</b> Introduction should answer the question “Why was the work done?” It should clearly state the problem that justifies conducting the research, the purpose of the research, the findings of earlier work and the general approach and objectives. It should include the hypothesis/objectives and/or predictions.
<b>10 pts.</b>	<b>Literature Review:</b> Literature Review should detail what information currently exists concerning the research project. Information listed should be materials used in the research. Material cited would include articles about similar studies, similar research methods, history of the research area and other items that support the current knowledge base for the topic and how the project might complement existing information.
<b>10 pts.</b>	<b>Materials and Methods:</b> The materials and methods section should enable others to reproduce the results by duplicating the study. It should be written in third person and encompass all of the materials required. It should include statistical procedure if employed. The hypothesis is stated.
<b>20 pts.</b>	<b>Results:</b> This section should be a summary of the results the project has produced. Trends and relationships are clearly addressed, but no conclusions should be made. Section should include data (tables, figures) that can stand alone and include headings, labels and proper units of measure. Captions for each table are placed above the table and a caption for a figure is placed below the figure. Both are at least two point sizes smaller than the point size of the figure’s text and are single spaced.
<b>25 pts.</b>	<b>Discussion/Conclusions:</b> This section should show that the conclusions were drawn from the results of the study and how the results relate to the hypothesis. It should contain a brief recap of the results and show how the results were a foundation for the study. Explanations should be clear if the results were not as expected. Sound reasoning is used to make conclusions that rely on both literature and results. Discussion should reference facts and figures from results section. Conclusion should be editorial in nature.
<b>5 pts.</b>	<b>References:</b> References should contain significant, published and relevant sources. APA style recognized citation is used throughout the report.
<b>5 pts.</b>	<b>Acknowledgements:</b> This section should include a list or paragraph acknowledging anyone who helped in any aspect of the project and how they helped.
<b>/100</b>	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>

## APPENDIX E

## Connecticut FFA Agriscience Fair Interview Score Sheet

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Category: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Knowledge Gained</b> - Is there evidence that the student has acquired scientific skills and/or knowledge by doing this project? Does the exhibitor recognize the scope and limitation of the problem he/she has selected?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Scientific Approach</b> - Has the problem been clearly stated? Has the exhibitor solved the problem by using scientific facts as a basis for new conclusions? Is the exhibitor aware of the basic scientific principles that lend support to the methods used and the conclusions reached?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Experimental Research</b> - Has data been gathered from work done by the student, rather than the results from the work of others? Is the exhibitor's equipment effective? Does it do what it was intended to do? Can the research be the basis for further experimentation? Is the project actually a model or demonstration? Have variables been clearly identified and controlled for in the research process?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Individual/Team Work</b> - Has material been gathered and cited using an appropriate format? Is the logbook present for examination? Does the log book contain detailed information about the research process? If this was a team project, is there evidence of collaboration present? Identify the portions of the presentation representing the work of others.
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Thoroughness</b> - Is the exhibitor aware of the empirical method (the necessity of repeating trials) and the importance of controlling the variables in the experimentation in order to reach valid conclusions? Has the analysis of the problem been orderly? Have procedures been outlined in a step-by-step fashion? How successfully was the original plan carried through to completion?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Information</b> - Are known facts and principles stated correctly and used accurately? Have the results of experiments been reported accurately even though faulty experimental methods or conditions may have made the data unreliable? If so, have these errors been noted?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Results/Conclusions</b> - Has the exhibitor started with known facts and drawn their own conclusions? Are the conclusions consistent with the data and/or observations? Is information provided as to what was learned as a result of research?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Interview</b> - Is the exhibitor able to communicate their knowledge of the project?
<b>15 pts.</b>	<b>Visual Display</b> - Has the data been presented in the best manner for the particular type of information involved? Are spelling errors present? Does the exhibit demonstrate a general neatness and attractiveness? Is the display presented in a logical and interesting manner?
<b>45 pts.</b>	<b>Written Project Report – (Scored during prescreening process)</b> Are all components of the written report available? Has the exhibitor made thorough use of the data, literature cited, interviews, correspondence, etc. and noted them properly? Considering the age and experience of the exhibitor, does the project make use of their abilities?
<b>/180</b>	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>

