

2026 NACTA JUDGING CONFERENCE ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY



NACTA

NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGES
AND TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE

ILLINOIS STATE

Agriculture

Knowledge Bowl
Contest Official Rules

Contest Chair:
Nicholas Heller
njhelle@ilstu.edu
(309) 438-8095

Hosted by Illinois State University

Contest Director: Nicholas Heller njhelle@ilstu.edu (309) 438-8095

KNOWLEDGE BOWL Contest Official Rules

1. Each participating school may enter one team. A team shall consist of five (5) members, with one member designated as team captain and one member designated as an alternate. The alternate may replace a member at half time. Teams will compete in either the junior (2-year schools) or senior (4-year schools) division.
2. All contestants must be currently enrolled in a two-year or four-year institution and pursuing an undergraduate degree. A competing individual may compete in this contest up to two times as an official contestant in a national NACTA Knowledge Bowl contest. A contestant that placed in the top three in the contest in the previous year is still eligible to compete in the same contest for another year of competition.
3. Teams will participate in a double elimination tournament. Contest organizers reserve the right to alter the tournament format as necessary in order to accommodate the number of teams entered.
4. Each match will consist of two (2) halves, with twelve (12) toss-up questions per half. The set number of questions may be varied depending on the number of teams participating, but will be the same for all rounds and determined in advance. Teams will change sides at halftime.
5. Toss-up questions are worth ten (10) points and must be answered immediately by individuals only, with no conferring among teammates. The first contestant to signal in as indicated by the buzzer system is the only person eligible to answer the question. The contestant must begin to answer the question within three (3) seconds of being called on. If the question is answered correctly, the team is awarded ten (10) points and the opportunity to answer a bonus question.

If an individual answers a toss-up question incorrectly, an individual from the opposing team may answer the question after signaling in and being recognized. If the question was not completely read, the opposing team has the right to hear the entire question. The moderator/host will offer to read the question in its entirety or finish reading the question in this instance. Same rules apply for the toss up rebound – no verbal conferring is allowed. A correct answer earns ten (10) points for the team and the opportunity to answer a bonus question.

6. Bonus questions are worth twenty (20) points and may consist of multiple parts. The team has thirty (30) seconds to confer after the question. The team captain will give the answer to the question. If the team asks that part of the question be repeated, this time will be considered part of the thirty (30) second consultation time. Teams may use note pads and writing instruments. The use of calculators, cell phones, electronic devices and reference materials is prohibited and will result in the team being disqualified.
7. If contest officials determine that an individual has conferred with team members prior to answering a toss-up question, the team will forfeit the opportunity to answer the question and any points associated with it.
8. Score will be kept by contest officials and visible to both teams in real time. If the score is tied at the end of the game, three tiebreaker questions (with no bonuses) will be played. If the score is still tied, sudden-death tossups will be played to determine the winner.
9. Questions will be in the areas of: Agribusiness/Farm Management, Ag Mechanics/Precision Agriculture, Ag Education, Animal Sciences, Crop Sciences/Soil Science, Horticulture, and Current Agricultural Events.
10. All decisions of the judges will be final. If a question is thrown out due to mistakes made during reading or by the judges, it will not count as one of the set number for that half, and a replacement question will be read.
11. Additional technical rules will be implemented to cover the use of the equipment used for the contest. Such rules will be announced at an information session prior to the start of the competition.
12. Audience members and coaches must remain silent during the reading and deliberation of questions. Contestants will be seated with their backs to the audience. Any attempt to relay answers to contestants will result in loss of any points earned and/or disqualification. No electronic devices may be used by contestants or audience members during the competition. Violators will be removed from the room.
13. As specified in the constitution, for the Sweepstakes Award, the first place team will be awarded 1000 points, second - 950; third - 900; fourth - 850; etc. Place 1 - 4 will be determined via the double elimination contest. If teams below this level are not determined by the double elimination format (i.e. eliminated during the same round), the total team score accumulated from rounds played will be used to determine placing.