



November 21, 2025

Greetings Wisconsin FFA Advisors,

My name is Jeremy Beach and I have recently been confirmed as the Superintendent for the 2026 Wisconsin FFA Marketing Plan Career Development Event. I want to use this as an opportunity to introduce myself, share some possible changes and updates for the 2026 CDE, and request your feedback on how I can help grow interest in this valuable opportunity for your FFA members.

At UW-Madison I am currently the Associate Director of the Renk Agribusiness Institute and an Instructional Administrator in the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALS). In these roles I teach classes in agricultural business management, marketing, entrepreneurship, and consulting in the Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics. I also lead experiential learning activities in CALS, known as Case Competitions, which allows teams of undergraduate students to work together on a real-world scenario created by a partnering company or organization.

I had the opportunity to sit in on the State Contest presentations for the 2025 Marketing Plan CDE during the State FFA Convention. I was very impressed by all of the presentations and written plans from each team that competed and am looking forward to assisting where I can to help grow interest in this CDE.

One possible change that I'd like to suggest for the 2026 Marketing Plan CDE includes forming a partnership with a single business who is willing to serve as the 'client' for all competing teams across the state. Each competing team would approach this competition as if they were serving as the marketing agency for this particular business, and with the same goal of delivering marketing insights and potential growth opportunities as in previous years. All competing teams would be provided with the same document in advance that contains background information on the business and the industry/sector, a description of their current marketing strategy and existing challenges, and a request for recommendations to help reach their desired outcomes along with guidance on possible approaches. This resource document may also include the name and contact information for a person at the business who is willing to help answer follow-up questions from competing teams. Several employee representatives from this business would then be selected to serve as the panel of judges for the final presentations during the State Contest at the 2026 State FFA Convention.

I understand there are likely some advantages and disadvantages given this possible structural change, and welcome any feedback on it. This proposed format is what I've been using for my previously mentioned Case Competitions at UW-Madison and it provides a lot of tangible benefits for both the competing students and the partnering business. For example, we just held a competition in partnership with Organic Valley. Students were provided with an opportunity to evaluate and provide recommendations on a real-world marketing plan project that was created by contacts at Organic Valley. Industry stakeholders from Organic Valley received fresh ideas and insights from the students, and the ability to engage with and recruit these students as part of the next generation's workforce. I am currently working with Ellen Schutt, Executive Director of the WI FFA Foundation, on identifying an existing sponsor business who is already interested in becoming more engaged with FFA members and would be willing to serve in this potential role for the 2026 CDE.

In addition to this potential change, I wanted to offer two more ideas to help expand and grow this competition.

First, I wanted to see if Advisors and teams of students would be interested in a type of “practice” event held on the UW-Madison campus (possibly April, May, or June) to allow for a dry run of their presentation. I understand that there are no qualifying competitions for this CDE and wanted to provide an in-person opportunity for teams to practice their presentation and receive feedback from some UW-Madison judges. This would first require selecting a partnering business and having the resource document final and in place by early spring to make it worthwhile, but it is something I thought might be of interest.

Second, I’d be happy to provide some type of workshop program (virtual or in-person) to receive feedback from Advisors on how they currently approach the creation of a marketing plan with their team, as well as covering some marketing concepts and topics in case that would be helpful. This likely wouldn’t take place until sometime after the new year at the very earliest, but I’d be happy to learn how I can assist in this area if there’s interest.

Overall, I’d really appreciate any and all feedback regarding the existing Marketing Plan CDE, the primary change I proposed and outlined here, the additional offerings I described, and anything else pertaining to this competition. Please feel free to email me at jpbeach@wisc.edu and I’d be happy to schedule a phone call or virtual meeting. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Beach

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