

## Oral Component Scenario – 2018

### Benefits of Grassland and Pastureland Management

#### **The Scenario:**

A retiring farmer, Mr. Smith, donated a 125-acre crop farm located outside of Citydale, PA to Farmers for a Better Future (FBF). FBF is a non-profit organization striving to keep working agricultural lands productive while optimizing the environmental and community benefits of farming. Mr. Smith has no heirs and wants his land to stay in agriculture as the surrounding area is rapidly developing. Mr. Smith has also donated an adjoining 30-acre woodlot as a part of his farm. Spring Run, a small headwaters stream, begins in the woodlot on the farm and flows through crop and hay fields into Deer Creek, a larger stream that meanders through the eastern portion of the property. While owned and managed by Farmer Smith, the farm was tilled annually and planted in corn, soybeans, and hay. Cover crops were not utilized.

A team of consultants has been hired by the FBF Board of Directors to create a plan for the land. The Board wants the consultants to create a model farm that is agriculturally productive and environmentally sensitive. The FBF board would like the farm to support wildlife populations because open space in the region has been drastically reduced by development. The Board hopes to utilize the new model farm to educate new farmers and the public about agriculture, grazing, and sustainable land management.

The local community is very interested in the potential for this new model farm. The local Audubon Society has petitioned FBF to help increase habitat for ground-nesting birds in the region since their numbers have plummeted under the local development pressures. The Xerces Society has also asked the FBF to do all it can to manage the property to ameliorate the decline in native pollinators. Citydale Watershed Coalition identified the entire Deer Creek watershed as a priority for restoration and protection. Several nearby restaurants regularly feature seasonal, locally-sourced, menu items such as grass-fed meats; these restaurants have expressed an interest in featuring the new farm's potential products. A nearby USDA meat processing facility has the capacity to handle any meat the farm may produce, and local farmers' markets have space for additional vendors.

#### **The Presentation:**

As an Envirothon Team, you will play the role of the team of consultants. Create a ten-minute presentation for the FBF Board of Directors as role-played by the judges. Using the provided farm maps as a guide, create a management plan for how the land should be utilized. Highlight potential opportunities for the future of Mr. Smith's donated land.

Incorporate/cite at least three (3) spoken, relevant, and reputable references as you present, such as a formal publication or information provided in the 2018 Current Issue resources. During the presentation, address the following:

**I. Task 1-** Outline a **basic grazing plan for raising multiple species of livestock**. Describe which livestock species you have chosen to raise on the farm, what you will grow on the farm, and why. Outline changes you will need to make to the land in its current condition to implement your plan.

**II. Task 2-** Describe best management practices and land management techniques you will implement on the farm to **improve water quality and soil health**. Detail approaches to ensure both productivity and environmental sensitivity.

**III. Task 3-** Describe how the farm can **support wildlife and pollinators**. Describe how your management practices will influence wildlife and pollinator populations. What impacts will wildlife and pollinators have on the farm?

**IV. Local Community Benefits-** Describe the ways that agriculture can be beneficial in an urban and suburban setting. How can this site become a model farm to both producers and community members? How will you highlight the sustainable land management on the farm? In what ways will this farm impact the Citydale community?