Ohio Beef Youth Council

Beef Industry Issues Creative Writing Contest

Purpose

The Ohio Beef Youth Council Beef Industry Issues Creative Writing Contest challenges youth to explore current topics impacting the beef industry while developing the communication skills needed to become effective advocates for agriculture. Participants will research a selected issue, evaluate multiple perspectives, and communicate their ideas through clear, engaging, and well-supported writing.

Age Divisions

- Beginner (8-10)
- Junior (11-13)
- Intermediate (14-16)
- Senior (17-21)

(Age as of January 1.)

2026 Writing Prompts

Select one of the four topics below and develop an original Beef Brief that thoroughly explores the issue. Participants are encouraged to incorporate factual information, real-world examples, and their own perspectives to support their ideas. The guiding questions and examples within each prompt are intended to help participants develop their writing; not every suggested topic must be addressed. Submissions should demonstrate an understanding of the selected issue and its importance to the beef industry.

Sustainability

Sustainability plays an important role in the future of beef production. What does sustainability mean to the beef industry, and how are today's cattle producers working to protect natural resources while continuing to produce high-quality beef? Explore practices such as land management, water conservation, responsible resource use, and improvements in production efficiency. Discuss how these efforts benefit cattle producers, consumers, and the environment, and explain why sustainability will continue to be important for future generations of beef producers.

Animal Welfare

Providing quality care for cattle is an important responsibility of beef producers. Why is animal welfare important to the beef industry, and what practices do producers use to maintain the health, comfort, and well-being of their animals? Explore topics such as proper nutrition, housing, herd health, low-stress handling, and veterinary care. Discuss how responsible animal care influences cattle performance, consumer confidence, and the reputation of the beef industry. Consider how producers can help consumers better understand the care that goes into raising beef cattle.

Technology

Technology continues to change the way beef cattle are raised, managed, and marketed. How are new technologies and innovations helping beef producers improve efficiency, animal health, and overall production? Explore advancements such as genetic selection, reproductive technologies, precision livestock management, or digital recordkeeping. Discuss the benefits and potential challenges of adopting new technologies and explain how innovation may shape the future of the beef industry. Consider which advancements you believe will have the greatest impact on the next generation of cattle producers and why.

Consumer Trust

As fewer consumers have direct connections to agriculture, building trust and understanding between beef producers and the public is increasingly important. What can beef producers do to educate consumers about where their beef comes from and how cattle are raised? Explore the role of transparency, social media, agricultural advocacy, and personal connections in building consumer confidence. Discuss common questions or misconceptions consumers may have about beef production and how producers can address them using factual, positive communication. Explain how the next generation of beef industry advocates can help strengthen relationships between producers and consumers.

Word Limits

Beginner

250–300 words (Typed submission preferred; legible handwritten entries accepted)

Junior

400–500 words (Typed submission required)

Intermediate

650–700 words (Typed submission required)

Senior

800–1,000 words (Typed required)

Contest Requirements

Entries should:

- Address the selected prompt
- Demonstrate understanding of the topic
- Include factual information
- Support opinions with examples
- Be written in the participant's own words
- Include at least two credible sources (Beginners may use one credible source)
- Be original work
- AI-generated content is prohibited and will be screened before judge evaluation.