

# **Guidelines for the 2015 SS-AAEA Undergraduate Paper Competition and the SS-AAEA *Journal of Agricultural Economics***

## Instructions for entering the 2015 SS-AAEA Undergraduate Paper Competition:

1. Submit a Statement of Intent (see web site) to [skenner@aaea.org](mailto:skenner@aaea.org) by **May 31, 2015**.
2. Write the paper using the formatting guidelines on pages 3-4 of this document.
3. Complete the entry form found on the web site.
4. Submit the entry form and the complete paper to [skenner@aaea.org](mailto:skenner@aaea.org) by **June 30, 2015**.
5. Once notification that the paper is accepted has been received, prepare to give an oral presentation of the research on Sunday, July 26, 2015, between 3:00 and 5:30 pm.
6. Students may both enter the paper competition and submit to the *SS-AAEA Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Students who also wish to publish their paper in the *Journal* must also complete the submission form from the web site and complete any editorial changes before publication, if necessary.

## **General guidelines for the SS-AAEA *Journal of Agricultural Economics***

The *Journal* is a peer-reviewed online publication containing research articles produced and written by undergraduate students. Students may submit to the *Journal* without entering the SS-AAEA Undergraduate Paper Competition. Students who write excellent papers for a class or honors project are encouraged to submit their work to the *Journal*. A résumé that lists a published article provides a signal to graduate schools and potential employers that the student possesses self-discipline, intellectual talent, and a strong work ethic.

All articles submitted to the *Journal* will be handled by the editor (typically the SS-AAEA Senior Advisor) and reviewed by one or more professional agricultural economists. All articles on an interesting subject that employ valid research methodologies and polished writing will be published.

## Instructions for SS-AAEA *Journal of Agricultural Economics* submissions:

1. Fill out the submission form and submit it to [skenner@aaea.org](mailto:skenner@aaea.org) with the paper attached to the e-mail.
2. Write the paper using the formatting guidelines on pages 3-4.
3. All papers submitted to the *Journal* will receive a decision of either *accept* or *reject* regarding publication (i.e., no “revise and resubmit”). However, students may be required to complete any editorial changes before publication.
4. Papers may be submitted to the *Journal* at any time; no deadlines exist. Submissions will be reviewed and a decision will be returned within 30 days.

## Undergraduate Paper Competition Rules

Students entering the SS-AAEA Undergraduate Paper Competition are required to give a presentation on their research at the AAEA Annual Meeting. The written paper and the presentation will be judged *separately by different* judges. The written paper comprises 60 percent of the total score and the remaining 40 percent consists of the oral presentation (100-point scale).

Students may submit a paper for potential publication in the *SS-AAEA Journal of Agricultural Economics* without entering the competition. In addition, a paper entered in the competition will only be published in the *SS-AAEA Journal of Agricultural Economics* if approved by the judges and the *Journal* editor.

### Deadlines

- a. *Statement of Intent*: All students entering the competition must submit a Statement of Intent (see web site) to complete and present their paper at the annual meeting to [skenner@aaea.org](mailto:skenner@aaea.org) by **May 31, 2015**. The Statement of Intent should include a tentative paper title.
- b. *Submission of Paper*: Following successful completion of (a) above, students must submit the Entry Form (page *iii*) and their final paper to [skenner@aaea.org](mailto:skenner@aaea.org) by **June 30, 2015**. Authors must submit their paper in Microsoft Word (\*.doc, \*.docx) or other compatible format. Students will be notified by **July 7, 2015**, if their paper has been accepted for the competition.
- c. *Presentation*: All students with accepted papers for written judging will be expected to give an oral presentation at the 2015 AAEA Annual Meeting, on Sunday, July 26, 2015, between 3:00 and 5:30 pm.
- d. *Award*: The author of the paper with the highest overall score will receive a plaque, a \$200 cash award, and be recognized at the AAEA Awards Ceremony (Monday, July 27, 2015, at 6:30 pm).
- e. All papers deemed acceptable by judges and the *Journal* editor will be automatically published in the *SS-AAEA Journal of Agricultural Economics*, unless an author requests otherwise.

### Qualifications for Paper Competition

Students entering the competition must register for the AAEA Annual Meeting. Students who graduate in Fall 2014 or Spring 2015 must complete a majority of their work on the written paper *prior* to graduation. Advisors of these students will be asked to submit an email affirming the student's work.

### Written Paper (60 percent of total score)

Two to three professional agricultural economists will complete an evaluation of each written paper submitted and accepted for the competition prior to the annual meeting. The criteria for evaluating the written paper are as follows:

- a. Statement of the problem and objectives—10%
- b. Proper use of economic concepts—20%
- c. Logic and conceptualization—10%
- d. Conclusions and implications drawn from the analysis—20%
- e. Writing system and clarity of presentation—20%
- f. Evidence of student creativity and originality—20%
- g. *Note*: Students and advisors sometimes incorrectly believe the papers that win the contest use the most sophisticated mathematical and statistical methods. As a result, in some years a few students use methodological techniques they do not understand. Therefore, students should only use methods taught in their undergraduate courses or that they have learned and understand. A good paper using very simple methods—even simple averages—may outperform a paper using advanced econometric techniques.

### **Oral Presentation (40 percent of total score)**

A panel of three professional agricultural economists will judge all student presentations, which will take place on Sunday, July 26, 2015, between 3:00 and 5:30 pm. (As noted above, these judges will *not* be the same judges who evaluate the written paper.) The room designated for these presentations will be furnished with a computer and projector. Students will only need to bring their own USB drive that contains the file with their PowerPoint presentation (\*.ppt or \*.pptx), and, optionally, any other materials they wish to provide to the judges. Any other presentation file formats (Adobe Acrobat, Apple Keynote, Prezi, etc.) must receive prior approval from the SS-AAEA Senior Advisor.

*Time.* Each student will be allotted twelve (12) minutes for his or her oral presentation at the AAEEA Annual Meeting. Students will receive a signal from the Senior Advisor at the end of ten (10) minutes and again at twelve (12) minutes. Penalties for exceeding twelve minutes are as follows:

- a. Over 12 minutes but less than 13 minutes: 1% deduction
- b. Over 13 minutes but less than 14 minutes: 5% deduction
- c. Over 14 minutes: 10% deduction
- d. If a presentation exceeds 15 minutes, the student will not be allowed to continue.

*Questions.* Each judge will ask each student one or two questions. Students should be prepared to demonstrate they understand any quantitative tool used in their paper.

*Judging.* The oral presentations will be evaluated by a panel of three judges according to the following criteria:

- a. Economic content—30%
- b. Organization of material—10%
- c. Communication of skills—25%
- d. Ability to respond to questions—20%
- e. Evidence of student creativity and originality—15%

## Undergraduate Paper/SS-AAEA JAE Formatting Instructions

The following formatting guidelines are adapted directly from those of the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Please consult recent issues for examples of formatted articles. When in doubt regarding a question about style, please follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed., which is also used by the *AJAE*.

**File format.** Papers should be attached to emails in either Microsoft Word file format (\*.doc, \*.docx) or other compatible file formats.

**Authors' identification and title page.** In order for papers to be reviewed/judged anonymously, authors should not identify themselves anywhere in the body of the paper. A title page in a separate Microsoft Word file should be attached to the email with the paper and include (a) title; (b) author(s) names; and (c) name, address, phone and fax numbers, and email address of the author serving as the contact person.

**Text preparation.** All paper components, including references, tables, and any footnotes, should be *double-spaced* and formatted for 8-1/2- by 11-inch paper. Papers should use 1-inch margins and 12-point Times Roman or a similar-style font. Authors should include short headings for each section and subsection, and check that at least one sentence of text occurs between any two headings. All headings and subheadings should be placed flush left, and sections or subsections should be unnumbered. Please write section headings in **bold** and subsection headings in *italics*, and do not indent the first paragraph after any heading. Finally, please do not use a heading before the first paragraph of the paper (i.e., no heading for "introduction"), and do not indent the first paragraph. When referring to your paper within the text, use the word "article."

If a paper reports the results of an economic experiment or survey conducted by the authors, a copy of the experimental instructions or survey instrument should be included as an appendix (and does not count toward the page limit).

**Page limit.** Papers (including the abstract) should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages. Pages containing figures, tables, and references do not count toward this limit. In addition, any appendices included do not count toward the page limit. Please note paper length is not necessarily an indication of quality.

**Abstract.** The first page of the manuscript (not the title page) should list the title of the paper immediately followed by an abstract not to exceed 250 words. The heading "Abstract" should appear in bold, flush left, before the body of the abstract.

**Acknowledgements.** Authors may optionally include any acknowledgements in the title page after the paper title and identifying information.

**Mathematical notation and equations.** Only use mathematical notation and equations when necessary. Simple equations (no ratios or multiple sub/superscripts, etc.) may be written in the body of the paper. More complex equations should be numbered consecutively, placed in parentheses and left-justified on the same line as the equal or inequality sign. Such equations should be inserted using the Microsoft Equation Editor.

**Footnotes.** If footnotes are included in the paper, please use the insert footnote feature in Microsoft Word. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper and not page-by-page. Footnotes should be only explanatory and not for citations.

**Tables and figures.** Each table and figure should be placed on a separate page at the end of the paper. All tables and figures should have a title. Titles for tables should be placed at the top of the table and titles for figures placed at the bottom of the figure. Titles should be fully descriptive, flush left, and bold with no periods at the end. For tables, capitalize the first letter in each major word of the title. For figures, capitalize only the first letter of the first word together with proper nouns and adjectives of the title.

Examples:

**Table 1. Summary Statistics for Pennsylvania Wheat Crops, 1998-2000**

**Figure 1. Annual net sales of Mississippi catfish farmers, 2002-2003**

**In-text citation style of table or figure.** Unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence, use lowercase for the words “table” and “figure” in the text.

**Footnotes to tables.** Place footnotes for specific items in tables below the bottom line of the table in (un-indented) paragraph form, using lower-case English letters. The heading “Note:” may be used to define the use of asterisks (e.g., \* or \*\*) to denote statistical significance levels. For example, “Asterisk (\*) and double asterisk (\*\*) denote variables significant at 5% and 10%, respectively.”

**Footnotes to figures.** Figures typically do not carry footnotes. If necessary, the heading of “Note:” and any explanatory information may be placed below the figure title.

**References and citations.** References should be placed in a list immediately at the end of the paper, double-spaced (without extra blank lines between references). References should be formatted with hanging indentation (first line flush left, second and subsequent lines indented), and only cited works should be included in the reference list. Citations should appear in the body of the paper using the author’s name and year and include page numbers when necessary. These citations should omit any comma or other punctuation between the author name and the year of publication, and can be inserted parenthetically; e.g., (Doe 1998, p. 5). If the author’s name is used as part of the sentence, include year of publication parenthetically, with page numbers if necessary; e.g., “Doe, Smith and Jones (2002) show that . . . .” Use et al. only with four or more authors. For citations listing more than one source, separate each source with a semi-colon: (Doe 1998; Smith and Jones 2000; Smith, Jones, and Erp 2003; Thomas et al. 2004). Do not use et al. in the reference section.

Examples of how to list specific types of references and citations can be found in the [AJAE Reference Guide](#).

**Supplementary data/appendices.** Authors may include appendices if the nature of the material is relevant but does not belong in the body of the paper. Any appendix should be inserted at the end of the paper after all other materials. As noted above, appendices do not count toward the page limit.