SS-AAEA Guidelines for the 2024
Earl O. Heady Decision Sciences Spreadsheet Competition

Instructions for entering the *Earl O. Heady Decision Sciences Spreadsheet Competition*:

1. Submit the Statement of Intent to jweister@aaea.org by **May 17, 2024**.
2. Finalize your spreadsheet and develop a poster using the formatting guidelines on page 3 of this document.
3. Complete the Competition Entry form.
4. Submit the Competition Entry form, the spreadsheet, and the poster (in a PDF file) to jweister@aaea.org by **June 17, 2024**. At this point in the evaluation, the students must remain anonymous so do not include any identifying information, such as name or school affiliation, in the spreadsheet or poster.
5. Once you receive notification that the spreadsheet project is accepted, prepare to give an oral presentation of the spreadsheet project on Sunday, July 28, 2024, between 12:00 and 2:00 pm. You must bring your printed poster to the annual meeting for display during your presentation.

Earl O. Heady Decision Sciences Spreadsheet Competition Rules

Students entering the Earl O. Heady Decision Sciences Spreadsheet Competition are required to give a presentation of their project at the AAEA Annual Meeting. The spreadsheet and poster will be judged by one set of judges, while the presentation will be evaluated by a *different* set of judges. The spreadsheet and poster comprises 80 percent of the total score, and the remaining 20 percent consists of the oral presentation (100-point scale).

Deadlines

a. *Statement of Intent*: All students entering the competition must submit the <u>Statement of Intent</u> to complete and then present their spreadsheet project at the annual meeting to jweister@aaea.org by **May 17, 2024**. The Statement of Intent should include a tentative spreadsheet project title.

b. *Submission of Spreadsheet and Poster*: Following successful completion of (a) above, students must submit the <u>Entry Form</u> and their final spreadsheet and poster to jweister@aaea.org by **June 17, 2024**. Participants must submit their spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel (*.xls, *.xlsx) and their poster in PDF format. Only the Microsoft Excel software and the Microsoft add-ins, such as Solver and the Analysis ToolPak, are permitted for the competition. Third party add-ins, such as @Risk, are not permitted and will disqualify the project. At this point in the evaluation, the students must remain anonymous so do not include any identifying information, such as name or school affiliation, in the spreadsheet or poster. Students will be notified by **June 27, 2024**, if their spreadsheet project has been accepted for the competition.

c. *Presentation*: All students with accepted spreadsheet projects will be expected to give an oral presentation at the 2024 AAEA Annual Meeting, on Sunday, July 28, 2024, between 9:00 and 5:00 pm. You must bring your printed poster with you to the annual meeting for display during your presentation.

d. *Awards*: The student with the highest overall score will receive a plaque, a $200 cash award, and be recognized at the AAEA Awards Ceremony (Monday, July 29, at 6:30 pm). Cash awards of $150 and $100 will be given to the students in second and third place, respectively.

Qualifications for Spreadsheet Competition

Students entering the competition must register for the AAEA Annual Meeting. Students who graduate in Fall 2023 or Spring 2024 must complete a majority of their work on the spreadsheet project *prior* to graduation. Advisors of these students will be asked to submit an email affirming the student's work.

Spreadsheet and Poster (80 percent of total score)

Professional agricultural and applied economists will complete an evaluation of each spreadsheet and poster (in a PDF file) accepted for the competition prior to the annual meeting. The criteria for evaluation are given by:

- a. Statement of the problem and objectives—10%
- b. Proper use of economic concepts—20%
- c. Appropriate use of spreadsheet functionality/features and logical spreadsheet model architecture—20%
- d. A clear demonstration of how the spreadsheet model helped solve the problem—20%
- e. Clarity of presentation of both spreadsheet layout, its internal documentation, and poster—15%
- f. Evidence of student creativity and originality—15%

Oral Presentation (20 percent of total score)

Professional agricultural and applied economists will judge the student presentations, which will take place on Sunday, July 28, 2024, between 12:00 and 2:00 pm. As noted above, these judges will *not* be the same judges who perform the initial evaluation of the spreadsheet projects. Each student must bring a printed copy of their poster for display at the annual meeting and make a 5-minute presentation of their work.

> *Time.* Each student will be allotted 5 minutes for the oral presentation at the AAEA Annual Meeting. For the presentation, the penalty for exceeding 5 minutes is as follows:
> a. Over 1 minute but less than 2 minutes: 5% deduction
> b. If a presentation exceeds 2 minutes, the student will not be allowed to continue and the Q&A period will immediately begin.

> *Questions.* Each student should be prepared to concisely answer one or two questions. Students should be prepared to demonstrate they thoroughly understand the spreadsheet functions/features used in their project and how those operationalized economic concepts necessary to successfully solve their problem.

> *Judging.* The oral presentations will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
> a. Economic content—20%
> b. Mastery of spreadsheet functionality/features—20%
> c. Organization of material—10%
> d. Communication of skills—20%
> e. Ability to respond to questions—20%
> f. Evidence of student creativity and originality—10%

SS-AAEA Poster Formatting Instructions for the 2024 Earl O. Heady Decision Sciences Spreadsheet Competition

File format. Posters must be attached to your email submission in a PDF file format.

Software for creating a poster. The software you choose to construct your poster is entirely up to you. However, the final version must be saved in a PDF file format prior to submission. Incidentally, AgEcon Search from the University of Minnesota has assembled a set of best practices and tips for creating posters. They highlight Microsoft PowerPoint software in their document. It may be found at http://www.aaea.org/UserFiles/file/Poster_Powerpoint_AgEcon_Search.pdf. Students may utilize this resource if they wish.

Author identification. In order for posters (and spreadsheets) to be judged anonymously prior to the annual meeting, authors must not identify themselves anywhere in the body of the poster (or spreadsheet). However, a student's name and school affiliation must be included on the printed poster for display at the annual meeting.

Poster size. The maximum size of the poster is 4 feet high by 8 feet long minus a 1-inch margin. Your actual poster may be smaller than this however. We will provide pushpins for you to hang your poster.

Layout and aesthetics. Use your limited space wisely and strategically when considering how to best address the grading rubric categories. Avoid clutter and non-essential details. Any text in your poster should be readable from 6 feet away. This means no text should be smaller than a 20-point font. The title must be larger and readable from a distance of 12 feet. Use fonts without serif, but bold. Use dark letters on light backgrounds. Use color carefully as very bright colors may fatigue the reader. Maintain a theme of 2-3 colors.