Montana Farm Bureau Foundation will once again be holding our annual Youth Speech Contest in conjunction with the Montana FFA State Convention, March 25-28, 2020 in Great Falls. One of our Foundation’s most important goals is to aid in the agricultural education and the leadership development of Montana’s youth. This speech contest fits that goal very well and we are offering great prizes to make this an exciting opportunity. We know that FFA has similar contests for high school students and we want to complement, rather than compete, with those contests. Our Youth Speech Contest will be open to students in the 7th, 8th and 9th grade, who are not able to participate in the State FFA Prepared Speech Contest. Contestants must submit a transcript of their speech by March 13, 2020. Those will be judged prior to the FFA State Convention and the top 20 contestants will be invited to compete during the event.

Here are a few more details, but for more information, judges’ criteria or for a registration form contact Scott Kulbeck at scottk@mfbf.org or 406-587-3153.

Speech topic: As any farmer or rancher can tell you, farm life can be demanding and stressful. It’s even tougher now with trade wars, natural disasters, depressed commodity prices, labor shortages and many other issues weighing heavily on the farm economy. Given these challenges, more and more farmers today are experiencing stress and mental health issues, either directly or by having a friend or family member in distress. No one is immune. How can we address mental health concerns among rural Montanans and improve access to healthcare and mental health education resources?

Students can use any research they feel is appropriate in the preparation of their speech. We’ve provided a couple of resources to get contestants started.

- American Farm Bureau Rural Resilience - https://www.fb.org/programs/rural-resilience/
- Ask In Earnest - http://www.askinearnest.org/

The speech contest is open to students currently in the 7th, 8th or 9th grade. Your prepared speech needs to be between 2.5 - 4 minutes in length. FFA members, 4-H members and any other student in Montana are eligible to enter the contest.

Prizes: 1st place = $400.00, 2nd = $300.00, 3rd = $200.00, 4th = $100 and 5th = $50.
Registration and a copy of your speech must be received by the Montana Farm Bureau Federation office by March 13, 2020.
For this year’s Coleen Barnard’s Most Inspirational Contest, please collect your thoughts on the following prompt into a 2-page maximum essay for a chance to compete for $1,000.

Prompt: What inspires you about the future of agriculture?

The submitted essays will be judged, and finalists will be invited to advance to stage two of the contest at the Montana FFA State Convention. On the Friday of State Convention, finalists will take a test encompassing FFA, general agriculture, motivational techniques, take part in an interview, and participate in a luncheon.

The winner will be awarded $1,000 for furthering their education or building their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project.

Any FFA member is eligible for this award and encouraged to participate. Essays are due to the Montana FFA Foundation no later than March 1st.

Please send essays in PDF or Word format only to trevorm@montanaffa.org and contact Trevor Motley with any questions.