AS425 NATIONAL SOIL JUDGING CONTEST COMMITTEE

A. **Status:** Special Committee

B. **Composition and Tenure:**

The Committee is composed of seven members, including an Incoming Chair-Elect, Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past Chair (each representing their region), and one representative from each of the other soil judging regions (Region 1–Northeast; Region 2–Southeast; Region 3–Midwest; Region 4–South Central; Region 5–North Central; Region 6–Southwest; Region 7–Northwest; see Section I. #3) Each replacement should be an active coach of a soil judging team and should come from the same region of the retiring member being replaced.

The Chair is the person hosting the national contest that year. The Chair-Elect is the person hosting the contest the following year. The Incoming Chair-Elect is the person hosting the contest the year after that.

The term of office of members is seven years.

The Chair is a member serving the fifth year of his/her term.

C. **Functions:**

1. To initiate and review proposed rule changes for the national contest.
2. To secure institutions to host the national contest within rotation among the regions.
3. To aid host institutions in developing score cards and guidebooks for the contest.
4. To serve as a collection point for results of regional contests.
5. To assist regions in the conduct of regional contests, when asked.
6. To serve as coordinator of activities-efforts between soil judging regions.
7. To nominate coaches and team members for international soil judging competitions, when held.
8. To submit an annual report as requested by the Society.

D. **Presidential Responsibilities:**

1. The SSSA President receives recommendations for appointments from the regions and makes the actual appointments.
2. The ASA and SSSA presidents cooperate with the Committee in its activities.
National Collegiate Soils Contest Rules
Revised March 2014

I. NAME

The contest shall be known as the National Collegiate Soils Contest

II. DESCRIPTION OF CONTEST

The intent of the contest is to encourage team effort as well as individual knowledge in identifying, evaluating, classifying, and describing soil profiles. The award consists of a traveling trophy presented to the first-place winning team and provided by ASA and SSSA. At least the top three teams receive permanent trophies and the five high scoring individuals receive plaques or trophies. The host school provides the trophies and plaques.

III. ELIGIBILITY

A. Colleges and Universities

1. Any college or university that provides a curriculum in agriculture, soils, geosciences, and/or environmental science may enter a team in the National Collegiate Soils Contest if it has an interest in the contest and is selected to represent its region.

2. The number of teams competing in the National Collegiate Soils Contest from each region shall be determined by the number of schools competing in each regional contest. The number of teams from each region shall be determined as follows:

   (a) If three or fewer teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, all teams go to the national contest.

   (b) If four to seven teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, three teams go to the national contest.

   (c) If eight to twelve teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, four teams go to the national contest.

   (d) If thirteen or more teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, five teams go to the national contest.

3. A college or university may enter only one team in the National Collegiate Soils Contest. In case an eligible team does not wish to compete, the next ranking team or teams will be eligible to represent their region in the national contest.

4. If a regional contest is not held, the region may select one or two teams by any means agreeable with the team coaches in the region.

5. The host college or university cannot enter a team in the National Collegiate Soils Contest.

6. International participation in regional and national soil judging contests shall be encouraged by the National Soils Judging Contest Committee (AS425), which is authorized to waive or adjust rules or restrictions for eligible colleges and universities outside the United States.

B. Team Members

1. Each team should consist of four members, although a team may compete with only three.
2. All team members must be undergraduate students in good standing, enrolled in an agricultural, soils, geosciences, and/or environmental science or related curriculum at their respective institution at the time of the national contest; however, any student who has participated in the qualifying regional contest and has received a B.S. degree or equivalent prior to the national contest would be eligible to participate in the national contest provided graduation is not more than one (1) semester or two (2) quarters prior to the national contest.

3. All team members must be eligible to represent their institutions according to the eligibility rules of that institution.

4. A team member may participate in the National Collegiate Soils Contest as long they are classified as an undergraduate student by their institution. Eligibility will be limited to a maximum of four (4) years participation in regional and national soils judging contests.

5. Team alternates will be allowed to use the practice pits, but will not be allowed to participate in the contest. This provision allows more teams to participate, while keeping the student numbers manageable for the host school during the actual competition.

6. All team members will be members of the American Society of Agronomy and/or Soil Science Society of America in the year in which they complete in the national contest. Membership will not be required for participation in regional contests. However, the regional chair will provide the Society offices with a full roster of student participants in the regional contest, including contact/email information, within 30 days of the end of the contest.

IV. LOCATION

A. The National Collegiate Soils Contest shall be rotated from region to region in consecutive years according to the following sequence:
B. The National Collegiate Soils Contest regions shall be as follows:
   Region 1: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Hampshire, Ohio, Maine, New Jersey Rhode Island, Maryland, New York, Vermont
   Region 2: Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Puerto Rico, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky
   Region 3: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin
   Region 4: Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma
   Region 5: Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota
   Region 6: Alaska, California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, New Mexico
   Region 7: Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Montana
C. Any region can change position in the rotational sequence with any other region by mutual agreement.

D. The institutions in the host region for the National Collegiate Soils Contest shall be responsible for selecting a host institution from that region, subject to the approval of the delegates to the annual convention of the SASES.

V. TIME

A. A National Collegiate Soils Contest shall be held in the spring with a minimum conflict between the schools involved. The date will be set by the host school in consultation with other schools involved.

B. The host school for each of the regional contests shall notify the chair of committee AS425 and the faculty chair of the host school for the National Collegiate Soils Contest of the placings of all teams entered in their regional soils contest. This should be done within ten days after the regional soils contest is held using the results form developed by the national committee.

VI. CONTEST PROCEDURES

A. The host institution shall be responsible for all details for the contest.

B. A committee, consisting of both students and faculty members, should be appointed at the host institution to aid the student committee.
C The National Collegiate Soils Contest shall consist of two judging events occurring over two
days. The judging for one event is done on an individual basis, and the judging for the other
event is by group or team.

1. The individual judging portion of the contest shall consist of three pits/sites to be evaluated
by the 4 (or minimum 3) individual contestants.
   a. The individual judging event shall occur on the first day of the two contest days. (This
      provision allows the host school additional time to grade individual scorecards.)
   b. Teams with more than four students must identify the participating team members for
      the individual judging event at least 24 hours prior to the start of the individual judging
      portion of the contest (ideally at the coaches meeting).
2. The group judging portion of the contest shall consist of two pits/sites to be evaluated by all
eligible team members, including alternates.

D. Score Card and Interpretation Sheets

1. The host institution may make minor changes necessary to adapt the score card and
instruction sheets to local conditions.

3. The host institution shall send to all participating institutions and/or regions a copy of the
score card and interpretation sheets at least two months prior to the National Collegiate
Soils Contest.
4. Written materials that will be allowed in the contest must be indicated to all participating
institutions at least one month prior to the contest.

E. Coaches Meeting
A coaches meeting shall occur at least 24 hours prior to the start of the individual judging
portion of the contest. The host institution and representatives for the official judges shall
address questions related to contest content, scoring, and logistics.

F. Team Scoring

1. The individual team score will be the sum of the top three individual scores at each pit/site
in the individual judging event.
2. The group team score will be the sum of the group score at each pit/site in the group
judging event.
3. The total team contest score will be the sum of the individual and group team judging event
scores.
4. The contest manual shall include provisions for handling tie-breakers. They shall not be
used except to break ties between teams or individuals. The normal procedure is as
follows: The clay content of a third horizon at one of the individually-judged sites will be
used to break ties in total team and individual scores. In order to break a tie in total team
scores, the mean clay content will be calculated from the estimates provided by all
members of a given team. The team with the mean estimate closest to the actual value
will receive the higher placing. If this does not break the tie, the next deeper horizon will
be used in the same manner. The clay content of the tie breaker horizon will be compared
to that estimated by the individual in order to break a tie between individuals. If this does
not break the tie, the next lowest horizon will be used in the same manner. In order to
break a tie in the ranking of teams for group judging, the team estimate of the clay
content of a specified third horizon at one of the group-judged sites will be compared to
the actual value. The team with the estimate closest to the actual value will receive the
higher placing. If this does not break the tie, the next deeper horizon will be used in the
same manner. If a different system for tie breakers is used, it must be clearly specified in the contest manual.

F. Conduct

1. At the discretion of the host institution, coaches may be permitted in the area of the pits during the contest. Coaches will be permitted to examine the pits after the contest.

2. No communications between team members or with the coach shall be allowed while the individual judging is underway.

3. During the individual judging event, no more than one contestant from each team shall be permitted at a given pit/site at the same time.

4. During the group judging event, communication between team members is expected. However, communications between the team members and the coach(es) is not permitted.

5. In addition to the score card, contestants may utilize any written materials deemed appropriate by the host institution (provided to institutions one month before the contest, see D3 above). Abbreviation sheets must be provided by the host institution during the contest.

6. Any infraction of the rules by any team or member of a team shall make that team ineligible to receive awards, and shall place them last automatically.

G. Results

Results shall be announced by the host institution as soon as practical after the contest, and will be final.

H. Rules

1. A set of these National Soils Contest Rules shall be sent to each participating institution (or to each region) by the host institution at least two months prior to the contest.

2. A region may develop specific rules for its regional contest. However, all teams and team members in the National Collegiate Soils Contest must meet the eligibility requirements as set forth in the rules of the National Collegiate Soils Contest.

VII. AWARDS

The winning team will receive the large traveling trophy. This trophy was designed and obtained for future national soils contests by Dr. Orville Bidwell (Kansas State) and David Reisig at the 8th National Collegiate Soils Contest hosted May 9 and 10, 1968, by Kansas State University. Permanent trophies or plaques will be provided for the first five teams in overall team scores, the top five teams in the group judging competition, and the top ten individuals.

VIII. QUALIFICATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SOIL JUDGING COMPETITION

In years when the International Soil Judging Competition is held, the National Collegiate Soils Contest will be used to determine the students and coaches nominated to represent the United States as members of the U.S. National Soils Teams.

1. Coaches of the first and second place institutions in the total team competition will be selected to coach the U.S. Team A and Team B, respectively.

2. Two teams composed of 4 students each will be selected from the participants in the National Collegiate Soils Contest. The top eight ranked participants chosen for the U.S. National Team will be nominated based on their ranking in the individual competition. No more than two
members from the same institution and no more than four members from the same region shall be nominated. Up to two alternates can be selected to participate at the discretion of the coaches, but they must be selected using the same criteria as the other team members.

3. In cases where coaches or individuals nominated for the national team are not eligible or choose not to compete, the next highest ranking eligible coach or individual is nominated.