

State Treasurer Michael Frerichs Calls On Young Illinois Photographers To Participate in 2023 Cream of the Crop Photo Contest By June 12

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SPRINGFIELD – State Treasurer Michael Frerichs is encouraging young Illinois photographers to submit photos for the 2023 *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* so they can be eligible to receive scholarship prize money. The contest, for students ages 8 to 18, offers an opportunity for young people to display their skills and imagination to

highlight agriculture in our state. The Treasurer's Office is accepting electronic submissions for the contest until the entry deadline of June 12.

Bright Start scholarship funds will be awarded to the top winners in each of the three age categories. First-place winners will receive \$1,000, second-place winners will receive \$500, and third-place winners will receive \$250.

“Our 2023 Cream of the Crop Photo Contest provides a great way for students to showcase their creativity and to help others appreciate the strength, diversity, and beauty of Illinois' rich agricultural landscape,” Frerichs said. “We encourage all eligible students to pick up their phones or cameras, do some exploring, and pursue this opportunity to win Bright Start scholarship funds.”

The Treasurer's Office is accepting electronic submissions for the *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* at www.CreamoftheCropContest.com. Top photographs will be chosen in three age-based categories: ages 8-10, 11-14 and 15-18. Each student may submit up to two photos by June 12, 2023.

Treasurer Frerichs administers Bright Start, the Illinois direct-sold 529 program that provides families with a tax-advantaged investment vehicle to help save for future education expenses at a university or college, community college, trade school or apprenticeship. For more information about the Treasurer's Office College Savings programs, visit ILCollegeSavings.com or call 877.432.7444.

In addition to receiving scholarship funds, top winners in the 2023 Cream of the Crop contest will have their photographs featured in Ag Invest marketing material, including the 2023-2024 Ag Invest calendar, and at the Illinois State Fair in August.

The contest, now in its 11th year, offers Illinois students an avenue for showcasing their most innovative or scenic pictures that depict their vision of agriculture in our state. More than 500 students have participated in the contest since its debut in 2013, and they have submitted nearly 1,000 photos.

The *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* is part of the Illinois State Treasurer's Ag Invest program, which is marking its 40th anniversary this year. Ag Invest is an agriculture-focused impact investment program providing loan opportunities for Illinois farmers and agri-businesses to start, expand or add value to their farm operations. Ag Invest offers affordable financing through two options: the Ag Invest Agriculture Operating Line of Credit and the Long-Term Ag & Value-Added Ag program. The Treasurer's Office partners with eligible financial institutions in Illinois to provide low-interest loans to

Illinois farmers. The loans provided by the financial institution can be used for the purchase of farm equipment, purchase of land, construction-related expenses, operating lines of credit or other costs related to conventional or sustainable farming.

Since 2015, when Frerichs became treasurer, the program has supported more than 5,000 agriculture borrowers and partnered with more than 35 financial institutions.

To read the rules, terms, and legal conditions associated with the *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest*, visit our website at www.CreamoftheCropContest.com or contact Teri Whitfield at 217.900.0075. To learn more about the Ag Invest program, go to [Ag Invest](#).