



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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State Treasurer Michael Frerichs Announces Winners of 2022 Cream of the Crop Photo Contest

Young Photographers Share Vision of Illinois Agriculture
As Contest Marks Its 10th Anniversary



SPRINGFIELD – Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs today announced the winners of the 2022 *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest*, which encourages young photographers to share their vision of agriculture in our state.

“Thank you to all of the talented young photographers who participated in this year’s Cream of the Crop Photo Contest and helped us to celebrate the contest’s 10th anniversary. Congratulations to the winners, who are being awarded Bright Start scholarship funds that they can use in the future for qualified expenses related to their post-secondary education,” Frerichs said.

“We’re proud of all the students for their initiative and creativity. They did a great job of capturing many beautiful images that illustrate the importance of agriculture in Illinois,” Frerichs added. “We’re excited about the opportunity to meet many of these winners and to admire their work at a reception during the Illinois State Fair.”

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A cake reception will be held at **11:30 a.m. on Aug. 16** at the Illinois State Fair to celebrate the 10th year of the ***Cream of the Crop Photo Contest*** and to honor the first-place winners. Second-place and third-place winners, along with their families, are invited to the reception, which is open to the public and will take place at the Treasurer's Tent on the fairgrounds.

The winning photos in each of the age categories can be viewed [here](#). Winning entries and other photo submissions will be featured in Ag Invest marketing material, including the 2022-2023 Ag Invest calendar. Top photos also will be displayed at the Illinois State Fair and in the Illinois State Capitol.

Students participating in the contest were allowed to submit up to two photos, and a panel of judges selected the winning entries. The judges were Mary Morgan, principal asset quality & assurance officer at Compeer Financial; Scott Rhoads, regional president of Carrollton Bank; Gary Mueller, vice president of Havana National Bank; and Riley Duckworth, associate director of Illinois Foundation FFA.

The contest consisted of three age categories — ages 8-10, 11-14 and 15-18. Top winners were awarded Bright Start scholarship funds, with first-place winners in each age category receiving \$1,000, second-place winners receiving \$500, and third-place winners receiving \$250. The winning students were permitted to receive one scholarship award.

Illinois' Bright Start 529 College Savings Plan is one of the highest-rated 529 plans in the country and has earned a Gold rating from Morningstar for five consecutive years. Money in 529 college savings accounts can be used to pay for tuition, books and other qualified expenses at eligible educational institutions, including public and private, two-year, four-year colleges and universities and certain technical and vocational schools. The investment grows tax-free when spent on qualified expenses. As state treasurer, Frerichs serves as Trustee and Administrator of the Illinois 529 College Savings Programs. For more information about the Treasurer's Office 529 College Savings programs, visit www.illinoistreasurer.gov.

The ***Cream of the Crop Photo Contest*** is part of the Ag Invest program in the treasurer's office. Ag Invest is one of the nation's largest agricultural linked deposit programs, and it helps hundreds of Illinois farmers and agriculture professionals. Through Ag Invest, the treasurer's office partners with eligible financial institutions to offer farmers and ag businesses annual and long-term low-interest loans that can be used for operating costs, equipment purchases, construction-related expenses, and livestock purchases.

8-10 Age Bracket Winners

First Place: Caroline Lee, *Miss Millie Jean*, Wellington, IL (Iroquois County)

Second Place: Adison Oxford, *First Born*, Golconda, IL (Pope County)

Third Place: Adison Oxford, *Olaf*, Golconda, IL (Pope County)

Third Place: Alyssa Taylor, *The Family Farm*, Pontiac, IL (Livingston County)

11-14 Age Bracket Winners

First Place: Grace McCarty, *Harvest Day*, Grayville, IL (White County)

Second Place: Lily DeAth, *Four Generations*, Indianola, IL (Vermillion County)

Third Place: Lucy DeAth, *Young Farmer in Training*, Indianola, IL (Vermillion County)

Third Place: Nolan Lee, *Future Farmer*, Wellington, IL (Iroquois County)

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15-18 Age Bracket Winners

First Place: Waylon Lee, *Best Buddies*, Wellington, IL (Iroquois County)

First Place: Alec Shields, *Wheat Production*, Carbondale, IL (Jackson County)

Second Place: Drew Mickey, *Never Gets Old*, Taylorville, IL (Christian County)

Second Place: Alec Shields, *Afternoon Dusting*, Carbondale, IL (Jackson County)

Third Place: Abby Chamberlain, *The Detailed Stalk*, Nebo, IL (Pike County)

About the Illinois Treasurer

As Illinois State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'-ikz) is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$52 billion. The portfolio includes \$27 billion in state funds, \$16 billion in retirement and college savings plans and \$9 billion on behalf of local and state governments. Frerichs' office protects consumers by safeguarding more than \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property, encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, assisting people with disabilities save without losing government benefits, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. The Treasurer's Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

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