



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs Reminds Young Photographers to Submit Entries for 2023 Cream of the Crop Photo Contest

Contest Showcases Photographers' Vision of Illinois Agriculture

SPRINGFIELD – As many schools get ready to wrap up the academic year, State Treasurer Michael Frerichs reminds young Illinois photographers to submit photos for the 2023 *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest*. The contest, for students ages 8 to 18, provides an opportunity for young people to demonstrate their creative skills and highlight agriculture in our state. The Treasurer's Office is accepting electronic submissions for the contest until the entry deadline of June 12.

"Illinois is an agricultural leader, thanks to its dedicated professionals in the industry, millions of acres of rich soil, and diversity in products," Frerichs said. "For more than a decade, our state's young photographers have done a wonderful job of capturing the beauty that Illinois has to offer through the Cream of the Crop Photo Contest. We're confident that this year's contest participants will continue that tradition. I encourage students to grab their phones or cameras, explore Illinois agriculture, and share their vision."

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**.

Now in its 11th year, the photo contest provides a way for Illinois students to showcase 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. Winning photos will be featured in Ag Invest marketing material and the 2023-2024 Cream of the Crop calendar, as well as at the 2023 Illinois State Fair.

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Ag Invest, one of the nation's largest agricultural linked deposit programs, is celebrating 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](#).

About the Illinois Treasurer

As Illinois State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'-iks) is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$52 billion. The portfolio includes \$26 billion in state funds, \$17 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 to 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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