

2020 Farm-City State Essay Contest

The Alabama Farm-City poster, essay, and video theme for 2020 is “**Sweet Grown Alabama.**”

The state’s new agricultural brand, Sweet Grown Alabama, provides a perfect palette for students to create artwork, essays, and videos in celebration of Farm-City Week.

Shoppers increasingly want to know the origin of their food, and studies indicate they prefer locally grown over organic, non-GMO, antibiotic-free or other marketing strategies. Sweet Grown Alabama aims to strengthen the connection between farm and fork by helping consumers identify Alabama-grown products and the families who produce them.

Launched last fall to farmers, Sweet Grown Alabama is a membership-based promotion and marketing program available for any Alabama agricultural product or experience. From juicy peaches and farm-fresh eggs to pumpkin patches and homegrown cotton sheets, Sweet Grown Alabama touches all sectors of farming. It also gives grocers, restaurants, and manufacturers a way to distinguish Alabama products from those imported from other states or even overseas.

Organizers, sponsors, and members of Sweet Grown Alabama believe the brand will add value to farm products, increase consumer demand and, ultimately, enhance the profitability and sustainability of Alabama farmers.

A consumer-facing website was set to launch in spring 2020, giving shoppers a searchable database for farms, farmers markets, restaurants, grocers, and others featuring Sweet Grown Alabama products. With over 100 farms purchasing memberships in the first eight months, the program is expected to blossom into the go-to source for Alabama agricultural products.

Similar programs in other states already are paying dividends for farmers and shoppers alike. Georgia Grown and Kentucky Proud are two examples right here in the Southeast.

Students and Farm-City Committees using Sweet Grown Alabama as a theme will find a wealth of resources online. To begin, follow Sweet Grown Alabama on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Also, check out SweetGrownAlabama.com as well as AlfaFarmers.org and agi.alabama.gov.

Young artists, writers and video storytellers also may find inspiration from the Sweet Grown Alabama tagline — Connecting Alabama Farmers & Families.

As you explore the breadth of Sweet Grown Alabama, be sure to focus on more than fresh fruit and vegetables. While farmers market fare is certainly a big part of the Sweet Grown menu, there’s also catfish, beef, peanuts, cotton, grits, honey, jellies, candies and so much more. If it is grown or experienced on an Alabama farm, it can be part of Sweet Grown Alabama.

Other resources include:

American Farm Bureau Federation — fb.org

US. Department of Agriculture — usda.gov

Census of Agriculture and National Agricultural Statistics Service — nass.usda.gov

Feeding the Economy — feedingtheeconomy.com

Farmers for a Sustainable Future — www.fb.org/land/fsf

U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance – usfarmersandranchers.org

American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture — agfoundation.org

Alabama Ag in the Classroom — alabamaaitc.org

The contest is sponsored by the Farm-City Committee of Alabama, P.O. Box 11000, Montgomery, AL 36191-0001, in cooperation with Alabama Ag in the Classroom and Alabama Farmers Cooperative. More information for teachers and students is available online at www.AlfaFarmers.org, www.AlabamaAITC.org and www.AgEducate.org or by contacting your local Alabama Cooperative Extension System office.

State winners in the poster, essay and video contests will be featured in the Alabama Farm-City Committee’s 2022 Farm-City Calendar.

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Eligibility and Rules

1. Division I - open to all students in grades 7 – 9.
Division II - open to all students in grades 10 – 12.
2. First- and second-place winners will be named.
3. Essays must relate to the theme. The name of the theme must be stated in the essay.
4. Each student is required to complete the enclosed information form and attach it to the essay entry.

All entries will be judged first at the county Farm-City committee level with the first place winner in each county being submitted to the State Farm-City Committee. One entry per division, per county may be submitted for judging at the state level.

5. Criteria: Essay should be 500–1000 words, neatly typed, and double-spaced, on 8 ½ x 11, white paper. They will be judged on:
 - a. Content
 - Topic Sentence
 - Adherence to theme
 - Accuracy of information
 - Supporting details
 - Originality
 - Reader Appeal
 - b. Mechanics
 - Grammar
 - Punctuation
 - Sentence Structure
 - Capitalization
 - Spelling
 - c. Organization
 - Clarity
 - Flow of material
 - Conclusion
6. **Deadline for entry at the state level is February 5, 2021. State winners will be notified by mail no later than March 5, 2021. Award winners will be announced at the state Farm-City Awards Luncheon and Program on April 8, 2021.**
7. All entries may be used at the discretion of the Ag in the Classroom Steering Committee and Farm-City Committee of Alabama without further permission or monetary consideration.

Awards in Each Category

1st PLACE: \$300 Cash

Student's Classroom: \$300 Cash

2nd PLACE: \$200 Cash

Student's Classroom: \$200 Cash

For further information, contact your local Farm-City Committee or the State Farm-City Committee at 1(800)392-5705 or 1(334)613-4410. E-mail: pculver@alfafarmers.org. Fax: 1(334)284-3957. Mailing address: Alabama Farmers Federation, Attn: Jeff Helms, P.O. Box 11000, Montgomery, AL 36191.