



Alabama Farm City Essay Contest

Sustaining for the Future

Farmers and timber landowners work with the future in mind. We use forward-thinking practices to reduce inputs, protect land, produce healthy and sustainable products, and ensure the next generation has the resources needed to farm and produce timber. The information below provides several examples of how farmers, landowners, and producers are working creatively to sustain the future.

Alabama's forested landscape delivers critical ecosystem services that benefit our planet and daily lives. Since the 1950s, Alabama forest landowners have planted more trees than they've cut down. According to the Alabama Forest Inventory Analysis, 1.56 trees are planted for every tree harvested.

Farmers embrace new ideas, too. In the early 1980s, growers in Alabama's Black Belt Region started raising catfish. It's become a thriving industry and secured the family farm for the next generation.

Farmers and forest owners join grassroots organizations and associations to glean ideas about more efficient, sustainable growing practices across commodities. Continuing education programs abound. Beef Quality Assurance teaches cattlemen best management practices. Seasonal workshops help poultry farmers manage Alabama's temperature swings. Pesticide applicator courses are required for row crop farmers.

Each year, landowner tours across the state offer natural resource learning opportunities. Loggers attend classes on forestry BMPs, as well.

Forest landowners who manage property for multiple uses and long-term sustainability can receive special certifications, too, including Tree Farm, Stewardship Forest, and TREASURE Forest.

Farmers are innovative in how they share their stories, using social media to share farm practices and answer questions directly from consumers.

They also welcome consumers to the farm via agritourism, including pumpkin patches, strawberry U-pick fields, and petting zoos.

It's all about sustaining the land for the next generation.

Remember: 93% of Alabama's 23.1 million acres of forestland are privately owned. And 97% of Alabama farms are family owned.

Eligibility and Rules

1. Division I is open to all students in grades 7-9. Division II is open to all students in grades 10-12.
2. First, second, and third-place winners will be named for Fayette County. **1st- \$100, 2nd \$50 and 3rd \$25.**
3. Essays **must relate to the theme. The name of the theme must be stated in the essay.**
4. All entries will be judged first at the County Farm-City Committee level with the first-place winner in the 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 1/2x 11, white paper. Essays will be judged on:

A. Content Title	B. Mechanics	C. Organization
Topic Sentence	Grammar	Clarity
Adherence to topic	Punctuation	Flow of Material
Accuracy of information	Sentence Structure	Conclusion
Supporting details	Capitalization	
Appearance	Spelling	
Originality		
Reader appeal		
6. Please email your entry to Ronni Rena Brasher at rrb0006@aces.edu. The entry **deadline is November 3, 2022**. **Please include the student's name, school, teacher, and parent/guardian contact information with the entry.**
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.

For more information, contact Ronni Rena Brasher at 205-442-1097. For a printed copy of the rules, visit the Fayette County Extension Office at 650 McConnell Loop in Fayette.