



Illinois Agriculture Equity Commission

ANNUAL REPORT

A background image of the John R. Block Building, a large stone structure with a sign that reads "JOHN R. BLOCK BUILDING" and the Illinois Department of Agriculture logo below it. The image is overlaid with a dark green tint.

JOHN R. BLOCK
BUILDING

Illinois
Department of
Agriculture

**20
24**

I. Legislative Mandate for Agriculture Equity Commission

The Agriculture Equity Commission Act was enacted in 2022 in P.A. 102-0973. The Act prescribes the Agriculture Equity Commission (hereafter “Commission”) with various statutory responsibilities. The Commission is charged with ensuring equity in the State’s top job producing industry by recognizing the loss of African American farmers and growers as well as the difficulties other minorities have faced in the agriculture industry and the effect those difficulties have on the food system, health, and economy of vulnerable communities. The Commission reflects the representation of socially disadvantaged communities, businesses, and farmers, and includes academics, policy experts, and legislators who are experienced in agriculture and affiliated matters.

The Commission shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly on its findings, recommendations, and other relevant matters concerning and based upon its duties prescribed under the Act. The Department of Agriculture shall provide administrative support to the Commission.

II. Composition

The Commission shall consist of the following members: (1) eight members appointed one each by the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, President of the Senate, Minority Leader of the Senate, the House of Representatives Agriculture Chair, the Black Caucus Joint Chair, and the Latino Caucus; (2) one member of the Latino Caucus; (3) one member of the Black Caucus; (4) the Director of Agriculture, or his or her designee; (5) the Director of Public Health, or his or her designee; (6) a representative of an agribusiness or small farmer private enterprise, appointed by the Governor; (7) two representatives of nonprofit community based organizations located in a disproportionately impacted area or food desert whose primary mission is helping minorities in the agriculture field and increasing healthy food access, appointed by the Governor; (8) one representative of a nonprofit statewide organization dedicated to policy to improve the conditions for socially disadvantaged farmers, appointed by the Governor; (9) one representative of a nonprofit organization whose primary mission is environmental justice and Increasing healthy food access for minority populations, appointed by the Governor; (10) six socially disadvantaged farmers or agribusiness owners from various areas of the State, including minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and businesses owned by persons with a disability, appointed by the Governor; (11) one person with a background and work experience in journalism, public relations community outreach, and agriculture, appointed by the Governor; (12) one representative of a

nonprofit organization that trains new farmers through apprenticeship programs and increases healthy food access, appointed by the Governor; (13) one attorney or legal expert in property law, appointed by the Governor; (14) one representative of a Fortune 500 agribusiness or a business with a significant presence in agriculture that is headquartered or has offices in the State of Illinois, appointed by the Governor; (15) one representative of an organization dedicated to economic and business development for minorities; and (16) one agriculture teacher or instructor, or a person from an organization dedicated to agricultural education for minorities and underserved communities, appointed by the Governor.

III. Agriculture Equity Commission Meetings

In its first year, the Commission held quarterly meetings on the following dates:

- January 16, 2024
- July 15, 2024
- September 19, 2024
- December 9, 2024.

IV. 2024 Activities and Topics of Discussion

Activities undertaken from January 16, 2024, through December 9, 2024 include the following highlights:

- The Commission elected Rep. Sonya Harper to serve as its Chair at the inaugural January 16, 2024, meeting.
- Introductory remarks from Commission members at the inaugural January 16, 2024, meeting.
- Overview of statutory mandate as prescribed in P.A. 102-0973
- Required State Trainings for State of Illinois Board Appointments
- Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) Report presented by Jennifer McCaffrey
- USDA Equity Commission Recommendations presented by Dakarai Howard
- Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant (RFSI) presented by Heather Bosie
- Local Food Infrastructure Grant (LFIG) Update presented by Hannah McGee
- DHS Farm to Food Bank Program Update presented by Bindi Lessing
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Update presented by Ian Smith
- Agriculture Day Breakfast Announcement to Commission members, 2024 Illinois State Fair
- USDA FSA DEIA Accomplishments in Illinois presented by Scott Halpin

- Specialty Crop Block Grant Update presented by Hannah McGee
- Local Food Infrastructure Grant Update presented by Kristi Jones
- Farmer Kickoff and Grow Gatherings presented by Makala Bach
- Emerging Markets Program and Overview of Compeer Financial presented by Sarah Hoerner
- Invest in Illinois | Ag Invest Program, Office of Treasurer's Michael Frerichs presented by Rebecca Houston
- 2025 Opportunities of Interest Discussion facilitated by Dakarai Howard

Agriculture Equity Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2023

9:00 am – 10 am

Locations:

Illinois Department of Agriculture
John R. Block Building
801 E. Sangamon Ave.
Springfield, IL 62702

Webex Video Conference Service

Join by video:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m69be9d61f511da06d0ffbba3c5c36c915>

Meeting recording: [Agriculture Equity Commission-20240116 1513-1 - Webex](#)

- I. Welcome/Call to order: 9:12 am
 - a. Introductory remarks from members.

- II. Membership/Roll Call
 - a. Commission members present: Erika Allen, Rodger Cooley, Director Jerry Costello II, Andre Diaz, Bryan Echols, Rep. Sonya Harper, Dakarai Howard, Nyabweza Itaagi, Evera Ivy, Krista Lisser, Chasity Mays, Rep. Charlie Meier, Denise Moore, Alicia Nesbary Moore, Sen. Doris Turner, Heather Whetsell, Gregory Webb, Jifunza Wright-Carter
 - b. Commission members absent: Emma Clouse, Amy Funk, LaToya Greenwood, Rachel Nami Kimura, Lucia Leon, Keith Mussman, Janelle St. John
 - c. IDOA staff present: Director Jerry Costello II, Tyler Bohannon, Kristi Jones, Jeremy Flynn, Dakarai Howard, Clay Nordsiek

- III. Required State Trainings
 - a. Announcement by Deputy General Counsel regarding Ethics, Open Meetings Act, and Discrimination and Harassment Trainings. Instructions to follow.

- IV. Overview of [Public Act 102-0973](#)
 - a. Overview provided by Rep. Sonya Harper. See statutory language [here](#).

- V. Election of Chair

- a. Motion by Director Jerry Costello nominating Rep. Sonya Harper as Chair.
Motion seconded and accepted by a voice vote of Commission members present.

VI. Workgroups/Discussion

- a. Access to Secure Land Tenure
- b. Access to Capital and Financial Planning
- c. Access to Education and Training
- d. Access to Resources, Infrastructure and Business Planning
- e. Market Access and Diversification
- f. Others
 - i. Rep. Sonya Harper provided an overview of workgroups that the Commission has the ability to consider.
 - ii. Discussion among members.
 - iii. Denise Moore offered insights relative to access to capital and financial resources and access to education and training.
 - iv. Andre Diaz mentioned market access and diversification to build and expand markets to places such as school districts.
 - v. Erika Allen discussed historic barriers as well as programs that exist and making any such programs more accessible. Understanding the structural and cultural barriers as a method to guide work moving forward.
 - vi. Director Costello reiterated some of the points discussed.
 - vii. Bweza Itaagi mentioned climate resiliency to plan and strategize for the future as a consideration.
 - viii. Bryan Echols offered the idea of a profile or data to inform the needs of farmers, whether corn, soy, livestock, hemp, cannabis, or specialty crops.
 - ix. Rep. Sonya Harper discussed procurement and accessibility of fresh local food; the pipeline of urban and suburban students entering agriculture-related careers; the need for public input; assistance from land grant universities; policy and legal issues surrounding implementation; understanding the needs of socially disadvantaged farmers; IDOA priorities and institutional structure; and USDAs equivalent of agriculture equity work being done in a similar space.
 - x. Director Costello recognized Rep. Sonya Harper and Sen. Doris Turner for their work as the House and Senate Chairwomen of Agriculture in the General Assembly.
 - xi. Jifunza Wright-Carter mentioned the geographical implications in terms of what this means for various regions across the state.
 - xii. Erika Allen discussed food resilience to humanely feed communities in urban and rural settings and the divide that exists therein.

VII. Development of Workplan for Annual Report

- a. Overview of the development of the workplan for the annual report provided by Rep. Sonya Harper consistent with statutory intent as established in Public Act 102-0973. Report due to the Governor and the General Assembly annually.

VIII. Public Comment

- a. N/a

IX. Next Steps and Adjournment

- a. Details of quarterly meetings will be provided in the weeks ahead.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 am.

Agriculture Equity Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2024
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Locations:

-Illinois Department of Agriculture
John R. Block Building
801 E. Sangamon Ave.
Springfield, IL 62702

-Webex Video Conference Service

Join by Video:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m3ab640b1902e1b298a8d9928edc7ba48>

Meeting Recording:

<https://illinois.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/illinois/recording/0367567b2513103dbff9c28e5e14bee4/playback>

I. Welcome/Call to order: 3:03 pm

II. Membership/Roll Call

- a. 13 Commission members present: Ericka Allen, Emma Clouse, Rodger Cooley, Bryan Echols, Representative Sonya Harper, Dakarai Howard, Nyabweza Itaagi, Lucia Leon, Krista Lisser, Denise Moore, Keith Mussman, Alicia Nesbary Moore and Janelle St. John.
- b. 14 Commission members absent: Andre Diaz, Amy Funk, LaToya Greenwood, Evera Ivy, Rachel Nami Kimura, Chastity Mays, Representative Charlie Meier, Senator Doris Turner, Representative Carol Ammons, Representative Edgar Gonzalez, Senator Willie Preston, Heather Whetsell, Gregory Webb and Jifunza Wright-Carter.
- c. IDOA staff present: Director Jerry Costello II, Tyler Bohannon, Kristi Jones, Jeremy Flynn, Dakarai Howard, Heather Bosie, Hannah McGee, Patty Mabe, and Clay Nordsiek.

- III.** With only 13 members present a quorum was not established. The minutes from the January 16, 2023, meeting were tabled. Members proceeded with the agenda.
- IV.** Required State Trainings
- a. Announced by Deputy General Counsel regarding Ethics Training, Harassment & Discrimination Prevention Training, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training and Open Meetings Act Training. Instructions will follow.
- V.** Local Food Purchasing Assistance Report
- a. 28.8 million in USDA funds to buy IL grown products from socially disadvantaged growers/producers and distribute it at no cost to community members in need of food.
 - b. Application Fall 2023
 - c. Contracts awarded February 2024
 - d. All contractors are implementing as of June.
 - e. IL EATS - By the Numbers
 - 15 organizations involved as lead agencies.
 - 515 community-based organizations have distributed food.
 - 140 growers and producers involved.
 - \$5.1 million purchased from February - June
 - f. Preliminary Farm Data
 - 60% have been farming for less than 10 years.
 - 20% have been farming 1-3 years.
 - g. Technical Assistance Requests: Farmers (in progress)
 - Infrastructure
 - Business/Marketing Support
 - Market Access
- VI.** Regional Food Business Centers Program Report
- a. Great Lakes regional Food Business Center
 - Hosted by Michigan State University
 - Partners include Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and the Tribal Nations of Wisconsin and Michigan
 - Business Builder Grant Program
 - Collection of database information of grants and assistance programs.
 - Unique entity identifier

VII. USDA Equity Commission Recommendations

a. Nine areas for near- and long-term action

- Advancing department wide equity
- Working with farmers and ranchers' day to day.
- Supporting farm workers and their families
- Strengthening research and extension programs
- Ensuring equitable nutrition assistance to those in need
- Recognizing immigrants and their families
- Enhancing rural development operations
- Supporting rural communities
- Strengthening rural economies

VIII. Resilient Food System Infrastructure

a. Overview of RFSI

b. IDOA awarded \$6,366,000.00.

c. \$860,000 to be used for supply chain coordinator.

d. \$494,000 allocated for the cooperative agreement administration.

e. \$5,011,919.00 remaining will be allocated for applicants to support.

Infrastructure in the middle of the supply chain.

f. IDOA received 93 applications for assistance.

- Overview of application review

IX. Local Food Infrastructure Grants

a. Overview of the grants

X. Farm Food Bank Program

a. Overview of the Farm Food Bank Program

b. \$350,000 dedicated to capacity building grants

c. advisory council has its first meeting scheduled.

d. Core premise is to reimburse farmers for their picking & packing costs.

XI. MANRRS Program

a. Overview/update of the MANRRS program.

XII. Upcoming (Tentative) Meeting Dates and reminders

a. Monday, September 16

b. Monday, December 9

c. Ag Day Breakfast on August 9

XIII. Member Updates

- a. 3rd annual urban ag crawl on September 8
- b. Farm Service Agency has Micro grants available thru November 1

XIV. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 3:41 pm
 - 1. 1st motion – Krista Lisser
 - 2. 2nd Rodger Cooley

Agriculture Equity Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2024
12:00 pm-1:00 pm

Locations:

-Illinois Department of Agriculture
John R. Block Building
801 E Sangamon Ave.
Springfield, IL 62702

-Webex Video Conference Service
Join by Video:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m128256d52ca4f3fca30eb98f7f9b9191>

Meeting Recording:

<https://illinois.webex.com/recording-service/sites/illinois/recording/4bcd38e658d5103db9ffa68f4e561cb2/playback>

- I. Welcome/Call to order: 12:07 pm
- II. Membership/Roll Call:
 - a. 9 Commission members present: Representative Sonya Harper, Erika Allen, Rodger Cooley, Andre Diaz, Bryan Echols, Dakarai Howard, Representative Charlie Meier, Janelle St. John, and Senator Doris Turner.
 - b. 18 Commission members absent: Emma Clouse, Amy Funk, LaToya Greenwood, Nyabweza Itaagi, Evera Ivy, Rachel Nami Kimura, Lucia Leon, Krista Lisser, Chasity Mays, Denise Moore, Keith Mussman, Alicia Nesbary Moore, Representative Carol Ammons, Representative Edgar Gonzalez, Senator Willie Preston, Heather Whetsell, Gregory Webb and Jifunza Wright-Carter.
 - c. IDOA staff present: Director Jerry Costello II, Kristi Jones, Jeremy Flynn, Patty Mabe, Tyler Bohannon, Clay Nordsiek, and Hannah McGee.
- III. With only 9 members present a quorum was not established. The minutes from the January 16, 2023 meeting as well as the minutes from the July 15, 2024 meeting were tabled. Members proceeded with the agenda.
- IV. Scott Halpin, Executive Director, FSA USDA
 - a. Efforts and accomplishments that USDA is working on for the DEIA program.
 1. USDA has focused their efforts on employees and producers.

2. Diversity is race, gender, crops, agro economics, communities. There is diversity geographically, culturally and crop wise.
 3. The difference between Equity and Equality, they are not the same thing.
 4. No tolerance for bias when it comes to Inclusion, everyone needs to be included in programs the USDA offers.
 5. Required employee training “Ag Learn” offers 4 tracks of continuing Education courses. USDA has roughly 500 employees with an 80-85% completion rate.
 6. On-line programs that make sending, receiving, and signing documents more accessible.
- b. Socially Disadvantaged Farm Loan Program
1. Pot of money set aside for socially disadvantaged famers.
 2. The money will not run out, it spills over into the normal funds.
 3. These loans are offered at a lower percentage rate, usually 2-3 percentage points lower than commercial rate and can be spread over longer terms.
 4. Physical space in Chicago in the future. Staff that has already been hired in the Chicago area that has been going to farms and meeting producers and working to get them signed up and eligible.
 5. The challenge of getting specialty crops/urban type farming to fit into the program with the Bill being drafted for Commodity crops.
 6. Farm Raised Educational hub, available online.
- V. Director Costello spoke about the importance of the DEIA program and the new IDOA DEIA human resources position that is dedicated to hiring in the Department of Agriculture for the first time ever. He also mentioned the emphasis on bilingual hiring whenever possible and wanted to make everyone aware of how far the Department of Agriculture has moved forward in the last 5 years and how proud he was of that.
- VI. Representative Harper opened the meeting up for questions to Scott.
- VII. Hannah McGee spoke on the Specialty Crop Block Grant Update
- a. The Illinois Specialty Crop Block Grant is funding that the agency receives every year from the USDA that are meant to be used for research, education, and accessibility to specialty crops.
 - b. Illinois receives around \$545,000.00 per year to distribute to subgrantees. Eligible applicants are non-profit organizations, local governments, and educational institutions.
 - c. IDOA has 4 cycles of the Illinois Specialty Crop running concurrently with 31 projects awarded. There are 12 research projects and 19 educational outreach projects.

- VIII. Kristi Jones, Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Agriculture spoke on the Local Food Infrastructure grant.
- a. Fiscal year 2024 \$2M in GRF to IDOA to pass through to Illinois Stewardship Alliance to administer program.
 1. Awarded 19 grants.
 2. 250 applications received proposing \$23M in projects.
 - b. Fiscal year 2025
 1. SB3077
 2. Formally established the LFIG program.
 3. Administered by IDOA
 4. Accompanied by FY25 appropriation of \$2M.
 5. Creates LFIG Fund via Office of the State Comptroller
 - c. Eligible Entities
 1. Individual projects
 2. Collaborative projects
 3. Store, process, package, aggregate or distribute value-added products.
 4. Farms, cooperatives, processing facilities, food businesses, food hubs with less than 50 employees
 5. Nonprofit organizations and units of local government
 6. Proposed addition: schools
 - d. Allowable Expenses
 1. Equipment used in the production of value-added products.
 2. Milling or pressing equipment
 3. Creamery or milk product processing and packaging equipment
 4. Food hub development or expansion
 5. Grading, packaging, labeling, packaging or sorting equipment.
 6. Cooler walls and refrigeration units
 7. Custom exempt mobile slaughter units
 8. Livestock processing equipment
 9. Agroforestry processing equipment
 10. Local fish, wild caught fish, and shrimp processing
 - e. Proposed Additional Allowable Expenses
 1. Sanitizing equipment
 2. Honey and syrup processing equipment and packaging
 3. Hydroponic infrastructure
 4. Equipment for school meal scratch cooking
 - f. Matching
 1. Comparable Investments
 2. High need projects – no match required.
 - g. Administrative Rules
 1. Joint Commission on Administrative Rules
 2. Formal and Prescriptive Process
 3. Public comment period
 - h. Application Process
 1. Upon final approval of JCAR Administrative Rules

2. Increasing the availability and accessibility of IL agricultural products among IL communities
3. Adequate and realistic budget projections
4. Meets eligibility requirements.
5. Preference-high need, favorable community support, increase availability and positively impact underserved communities, economic impact.

IX. Makala Bach, University of Illinois Extension spoke on Farmer kickoff and Grow Gatherings

- a. Illinois Eats Program aka Local Food Purchase Assistance.
- b. Had their first Farmer Network kickoff with 50 RSVP's
- c. They will be launching their grow gatherings that are in person events with tours and networking opportunities.

X. Representative Sonya Harper opened the meeting for questions.

XI. Quarter 4 Meeting is set for Monday, December 9th

XII. Public Comment: None

XIII. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 1:28 pm
 1. 1st- Andre Diaz
 2. 2nd – Rodger Cooley

AGENDA

Agriculture Equity Commission

December 9, 2024

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Illinois Room
555 W. Monroe St.
Chicago, IL 60661

Webex Video Conference Service

Join by phone: +1-312-535-8110

Meeting number (access code): 2863 109 3689

Meeting password: 2ymKX9ZXWW9

Join by video:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m1dc8aedd995a0c12b772f6b1cc9fe20e>

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of 1/16, 7/15, and 9/19 meeting minutes
- IV. Emerging Markets Program and Overview of Compeer Financial, Sarah Hoerner
- V. Invest in Illinois | Ag Invest, Office of Treasurer Michael Frerichs, Rebecca Houston
- VI. 2025 Opportunities of Interest Discussion, Dakarai Howard
- VII. Member updates/upcoming events
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Adjournment

Agriculture Equity Commission

Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2024

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Illinois Room
555 W. Monroe St.
Chicago, IL 60661

Meeting Recording:

[12.9.24 Agriculture Equity Commission - Chicago-20241209 1854-1 - Webex](#)

- I. Welcome/Call to order: 1:12 pm
- II. Roll Call:
 - a. 12 Commission members present: Roger Cooley, Bryan Echols, Latoya Greenwood, Representative Sonya Harper, Dakari Howard, Nyabweza Itaagi, Evera Ivy, Lucia Leon, Krista Lisser, Denise Moore, Janelle St John, Representative Carol Ammons
 - b. 15 Commission members absent: Erika Allen, Emma Clouse, Andre Diaz, Amy Funk, Rachel Nami Kimura, Chasity Mays, Representative Charlie Meier, Keith Mussman, Alicia Nesbary Moore, Senator Doris Turner, Representative Edgar Gonzales, Senator Willie Preston, Heather Whetsell, Gregory Webb, Jifunza Wright-Carter
 - c. 6 IDOA Staff present: Director Jerry Costello II, Deputy Director Kristi Jones, Chief of Staff Jeremy Flynn, Legislative Liaison Tyler Bohannon, Deputy General Counsel Clay Nordsiek
- III. Approval of meeting minutes: With only 12 members present, a quorum is not established. The minutes from January 16, 2023, meeting, the minutes from July 15, 2024, meeting, and the minutes from September 19, 2024, meeting were tabled. Members to proceed with the agenda.
- IV. Presentation by Sarah Hoerner – Emerging Markets Lending Specialist at Compeer Financial
 - a. Overview of Compeer Financial and Emerging Markets Program

- i. Member owned Farm Credit Cooperative Lending company serving Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. They provide funding to agriculture entities.
- ii. Provides letters of support to help obtain grant funding and loans. Partakes in a preapproval process to create the letter.
- iii. Sponsors & speaks at conferences, workshops, and training programs to educate on funding.

V. Presentation by Rebecca Houston, Office of Treasurer Michael Frerichs

a. Overview of Invest in Illinois / Ag Invest

- i. Invest in Illinois is a collection of Community Development Linked Deposit Programs offered by the Treasurer's office – Ag Invest, Business, Invest, and Community Invest provide impact investment deposit to lending institutions to assist with farm-related expenses, business expenses, consumer loans, and other important economic community development activities.
- ii. Invest in Illinois incentivizes financial institutions to lend to groups marginalized by limited loans or high-interest rates at a lower cost to borrowers.
- iii. Ag Invest – Remains the largest youth program for Invest in Illinois, which receives annual operating lines of credit.
- iv. Business Invest – This is a community uplift program, which specifically speaks to businesses and those businesses need to be in an enterprise zone, a low-income community, or an opportunity zone.
- v. Community Invest – this program offers our cannabis banking services and Opportunity Illinois.
 - 1. Opportunity Illinois – Used by institutions and that program is a direct deposit to institutions that allows them to help lower the interest rates on consumer products.
- vi. Soon to be launched – loan guarantee program in 2025. The program allows businesses that are in low-income communities (as defined by a 20% or greater poverty level) to get up to a 25% guarantee on those loans.
- vii. 2025 Cream of the Crop – Photo contest to showcase and highlight Illinois agriculture. Students aged 8 to 18 can participate and possibly receive a college scholarship. Winners will also be invited to Ag Day breakfast during the Illinois State Fair. There is also a photograph calendar featuring the submitted photos annually.

VI. Presentation by Dakari Howard,

a. 2025 Opportunities of Interest Discussion –

- i. Dakari stated he wanted to recognize that in the last meeting, it was vocalized that participants wanted a more action oriented. We have speakers that come in and share updates. We have community partners that share updates. We have a lot of questions around some of the programs presented and we want to make this group able to take some of these ideas and bring those back to communities we operate in. For the next meeting, wanted to extend the time to have space for conversations to not lose momentum. And then disseminate information to effectively get the info back into the communities. With that, would like to move forward with an action plan and setting goals.
- ii. The Mission of this commission is to drastically improve support for all socially disadvantaged farmers across the state to provide more locally produced food for underserved regions and communities as well as serve all farmers. Representative Harper is very interested in bridging the urban and rural divide, connecting people to opportunities and land access across the state as well as seeing what ways we can better support and/or advise the agencies that help to implement initiatives, specifically the Department of Agriculture.
- iii. Representative Harper suggested that we collaborate on a database of supportive initiatives to then one day be a live access site for associates to be directed to. Having a place where all the information resides will make it helpful in the continual outreach, implementation, and efficacy of programs, and possibly gather feedback.

VII. Member updates/upcoming events

- a. Denise Moore stated the Minority Business Development center has been designated by the State as an economic empowerment center. This is a minority business listed as the Black Business Alliance.
- b. Rodger Cooley stated the Chicago Food Policy Action Councils' Food Justice Summit is coming up on March 12th, 2025, and has an open call for sessions. If there are any ideas that came out of this meeting or if wanting to do a session, please reach out.
- c. Kristi Jones stated she would like to thank everyone on the commission who volunteered to draft administrative rules. The LFIG grant was referenced earlier on the call, and this is an initiative of Representative Harper and Senator Kaylar. With IDOA administering the grant this year, we wanted to start with this group due to the group being the right people in the right place to look at the rules. The rules feedback is due December 16th, 2024. Once that is wrapped up, changes implemented, we will then take thru the JCAR process.
- d. Tyler Bohannon stated to remind the commission members that the commission is statutorily required to submit an annual report to the governor and members

of the General Assembly. Tyler has been working on a draft report that will be shared with all.

VIII. Public Comment

- a. None

IX. Adjournment

- a. Request to adjourn at 2:31pm made by Representative Sonya Harper.
 - i. 1st made by Dakari Howard.
 - ii. 2nd made by Evera Ivy



COMPEER
FINANCIAL™

Compeer Emerging Markets Loan Program

Paul Dietmann (WI), Sai Thao (MN), and Sarah Hoerner (IL)

New Markets

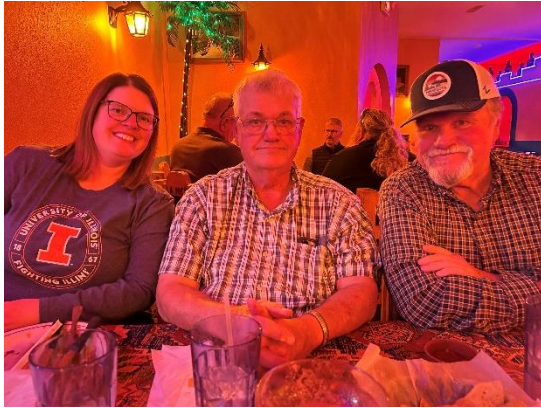
paul.dietmann@compeer.com sai.thao@compeer.com sarah.hoerner@compeer.com



Agenda

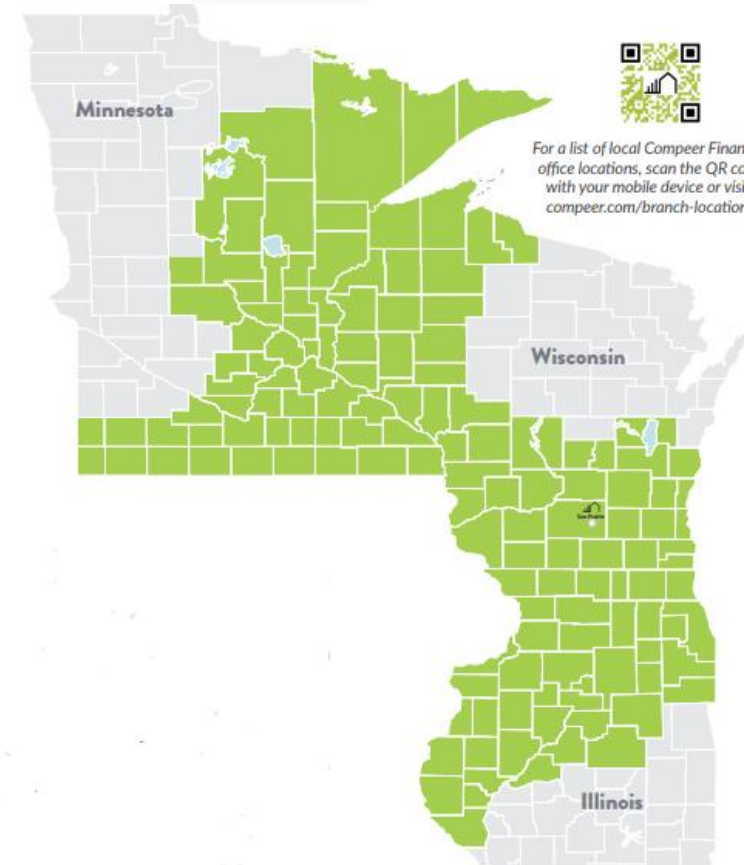
- Who is Compeer Financial?
- What is the Emerging Markets program?

Who Am I?

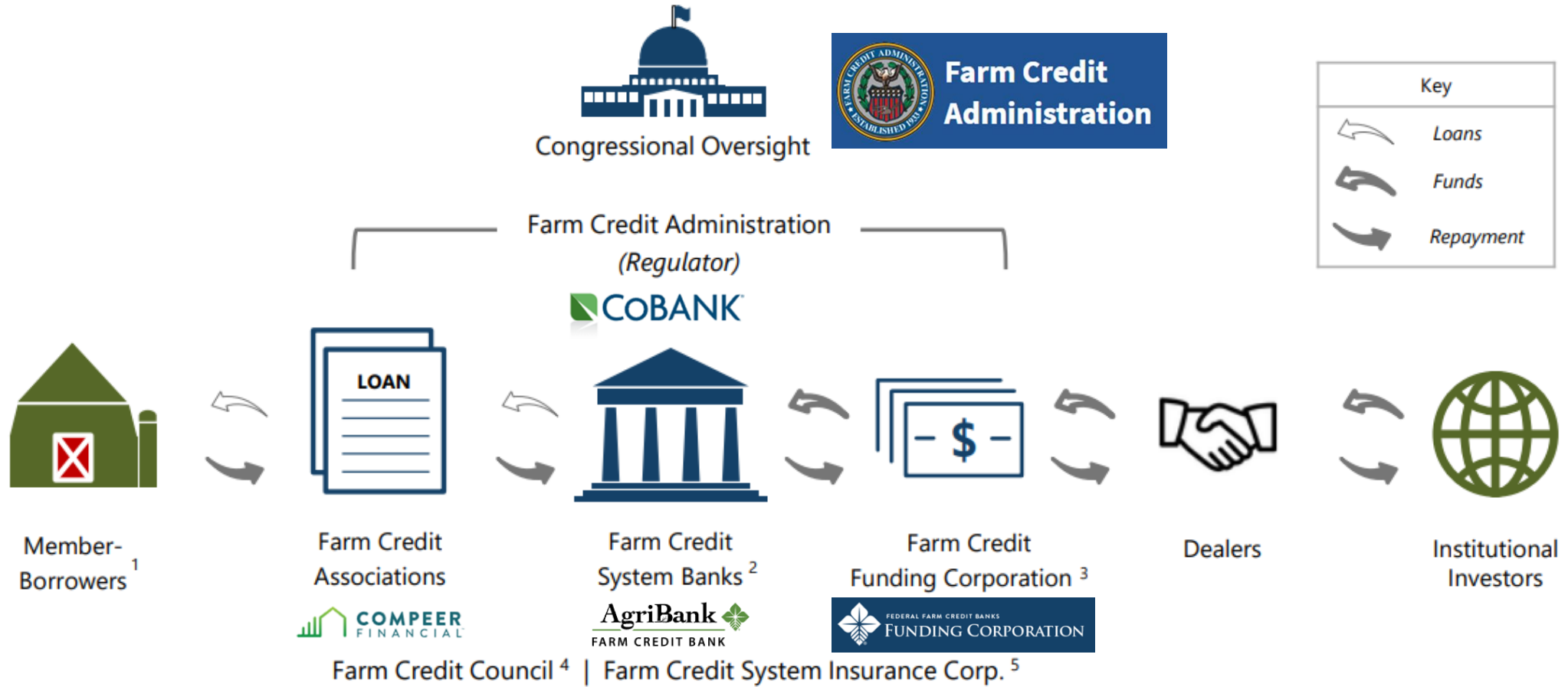


Is Compeer Financial a bank?

- No, Compeer is member-owned Farm Credit Cooperative
- Congress established the Farm Credit System in 1916 to help rural communities with agricultural lending
- Our members are eligible receive patronage every year
- We cover 144 counties in IL, WI, and MN
- We are not the Farm Service Agency (FSA).



OUR STRUCTURE AND OWNERSHIP



Conventional Ag Lenders

- **Farm Credit System**
 - Nationwide network of farmer-owned cooperatives
 - Largest farm lenders in the US holding 45-50% of all farm debt
 - Compeer Financial and Farm Credit Illinois serve the state
- **Commercial banks**
 - Hold approximately 30-40% of all farm debt
 - Some very good community banks that serve urban agriculture
- **Credit unions**
- **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)**

Compeer Financial Products

Operating
Lines

Intermediate
Loans

Real Estate
Loans

Leases

Crop
Insurance

Emerging Markets Program

- For farmers marketing their products directly to consumers or engaged in value-added ag
- Microloan up to \$75,000
 - Easy underwriting
 - Quick loan decisions
 - Low interest rates
 - Lots of business planning help
- Loans from \$75,000 to \$1 million+ too



Whether your farm is a non-traditional operation marketing directly to consumers – or through local and regional food systems – our dedicated and experienced team can provide **financial solutions** designed to help you succeed. And we'll will guide you every step of the way.

COMPEER.COM/EmergingMarkets

Sai Thao
Sr. Lending Specialist
(612) 597-4086
Sai.Thao@compeer.com

Paul Dietmann
Sr. Lending Specialist
(608) 963-7763
Paul.Dietmann@compeer.com

 **COMPEER**
FINANCIAL[™]
(844) 426-6733 | #CHAMPIONRURAL



Compeer Financial can provide assistance with financing and operations based on historical data and industry expertise. Compeer Financial does not provide legal advice or certified financial planning. Compeer Financial, ACA is an Equal Credit Opportunity Lender and Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. ©2020 All rights reserved.

Why did compeer create a loan program for this segment?

- It's a small but rapidly growing segment of agriculture in our territory
- Helps us meet FCA guidance to better serve farmers operating in local and regional food systems (FCA Bookletter 066)
- By helping these farmers succeed when they are new and small, we'll have them as members when they gain experience and grow larger



Emerging Markets Program started in 2017

- Portfolio grew from zero, to \$3 million in early 2020, to almost \$35 million today
- Majority of our borrowers are first-generation farmers
- Many of our farms are primarily operated by women
- Significant number are immigrants
- We're often providing their first farm loan
- Most knew nothing about the Farm Credit System
- Portfolio performance has been excellent



LET'S MAKE YOUR PLANS & REALITY, TOGETHER.

We see potential in your plans. Whether your farm is a non-traditional operation marketing directly to consumers — or through local and regional food systems — our Emerging Markets lending specialists can provide financial solutions designed to give you the tools needed to succeed. And our experienced financial team will guide you every step of the way.

Partner with us to make your goals possible.

[COMPEER.COM/EMERGINGMARKETS](https://www.compeer.com/emergingmarkets)



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Emerging Markets clients include:

- Fresh market vegetable farms
- Grass-fed meat producers
- Small-scale meat processors
- Poultry producers
- Orchards
- Farm-based B&Bs
- Organic specialty grain growers
- Artisan grain millers
- Incubator farm & green burial cemetery
- Cider tap rooms
- Flower farms
- Herb growers/processors
- Greenhouse operations
- Bison ranchers
- Amish sawmills and farm machinery shops
- Amish cheese cooperative
- Organic vegetable processor
- Tannery
- Mushrooms

Beyond loans, we collaborate with many organizations serving the sector in IL, MN, WI

- Nonprofits such as Marbleseed, IL Specialty Growers Association, IL Stewardship Alliance, The Land Connection, & many more
- University Extension in all three states
 - Sponsor & speak at conferences, workshops, training programs
 - Provide direct financial support
 - Write letters of support for grant proposals and participate in projects





Thank you!

Sarah Hoerner, Lending Specialist Emerging Markets

Email: sarah.hoerner@compeer.com

Cell: 309-386-2584



Invest in Illinois Program Overview

INVESTED
IN you



Michael W. Frerichs
ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER



What is Invest in Illinois



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ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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Invest in Illinois is a collection of Community Development Linked Deposit Programs offered by the Treasurer's Office – (1) Ag Invest, (2) Business Invest, and (3) Community Invest that provide impact investment deposits to lending institutions to assist with farm-related expenses, business expenses, consumer loans, and other important economic community development activities.

By providing access to State investment capital at a lower rate, Invest in Illinois incentivizes financial institutions to lend to groups marginalized by limited loans or high-interest rates at a lower cost to borrowers.



Invest in Illinois



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LINKED DEPOSITS

how they work

Impact Investment Deposits are placed with a participating financial institution based on an application request in one of the following programs:
(1) Ag Invest;
(2) Business Invest; or
(3) Community Invest.

TREASURER'S OFFICE

Financial Institution pays the Treasurer's Office a monthly below-market interest rate for the lending of the funds.



FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Financial Institution disperses low-cost funds to qualified borrowers for use in the program application request.



Borrower pays the Financial Institution either a below-market rate, or a market rate for a loan the borrower would not otherwise qualify for, for the use of the funds based on the program parameters.

BORROWERS



New in 2025!

Business Invest – Community Development Loan Guarantee Program guarantees small business loans who would not otherwise qualify in communities of color and low-income communities.

PROGRAM TERMS AND RATES



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TERMS

Terms may vary by program, but we offer the following terms:

- 1-year term with no renewal option
- 2-year initial with an option of a 3-year extension
- 3-year initial with an option of a 2-year extension

RATES

- Available online at illinoistreasurer.gov
(under the “FinancialInstitutions” tab)
- 1, 2 and 3-year term rates updated on the first business day of the month



HOW TO BECOME AN APPROVED DEPOSITORY



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Visit our website at: illinoistreasurer.gov to learn more on how to become an approved depository.

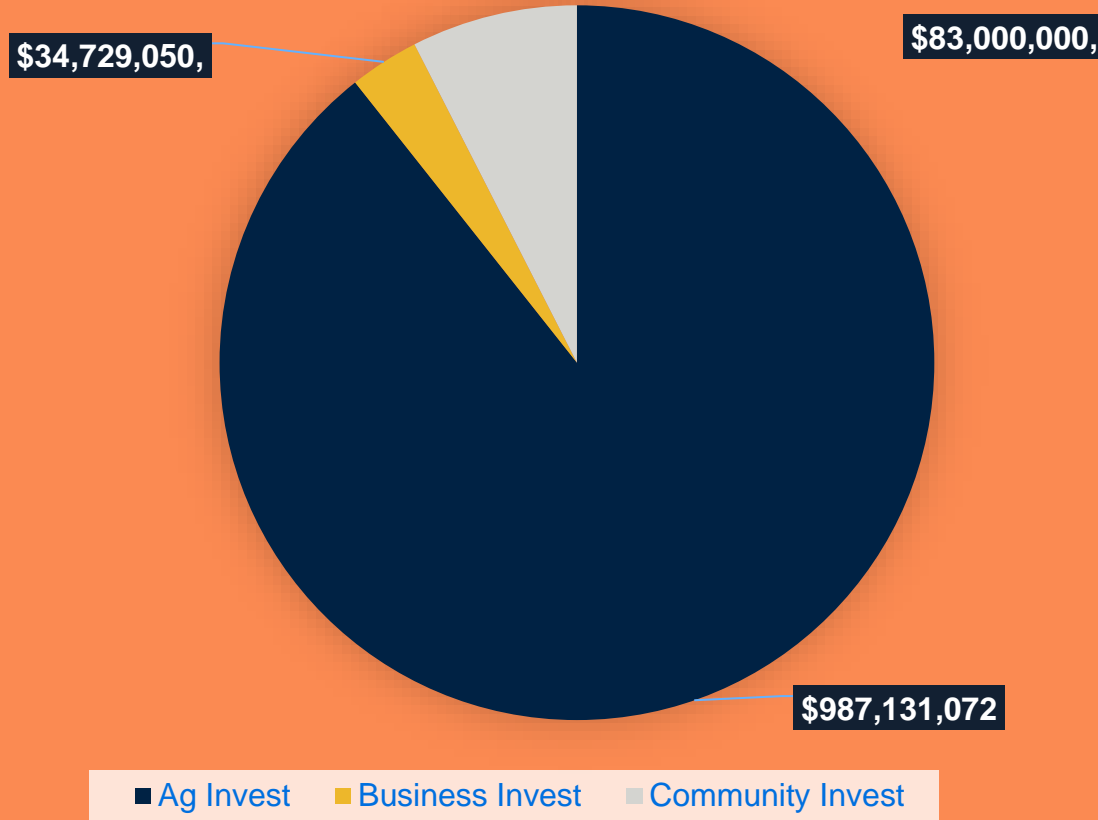
1. IDC rating of 75* or above;
2. CRA (Community Reinvestment Act) rating of Satisfactory or Outstanding (credit unions exempt);
3. A completed MWVD questionnaire

*Minimum IDC rating may vary by Program





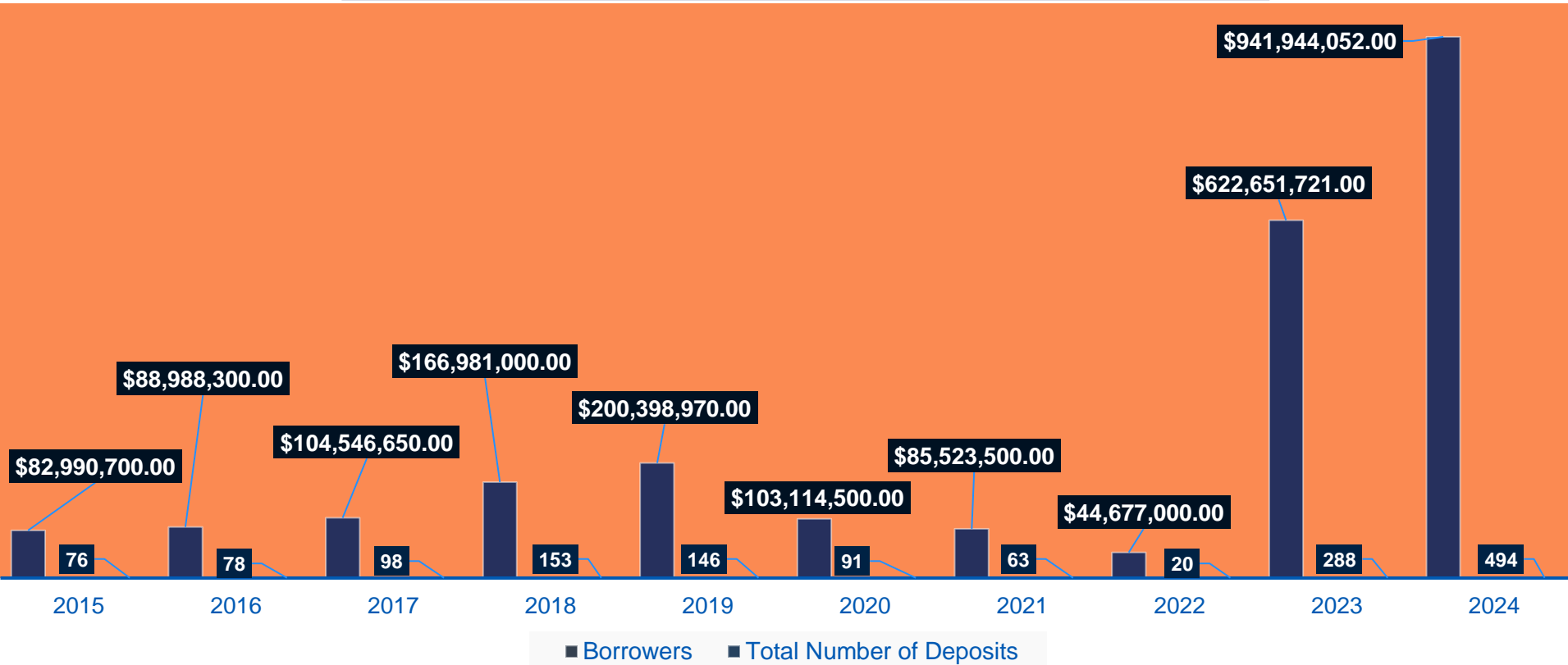
Invest in Illinois CY 2024



In CY 2024, the Treasurer's Office deposited over \$1B in financial institutions throughout Illinois under the Ag Invest, Business Invest and Community Invest programs.



AG INVEST OPERATING HISTORICAL NUMBERS



Grab Your Cameras!



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2025 Cream of the Crop

Application Period
March - June

- Be Creative!
- Agriculture is Year-Round!
- Enter every year eligible!

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTO!



Cream of the Crop
PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
CREAMOFTHECROPCONTEST.COM

History of the Cream of Crop Photography Contest



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- Introduced in 2013
- 1222 photos / 717 Students
- Photography calendar featuring submitted photos was introduced in 2015
- Celebrated 10 years in 2022 and created a special 10-year COC logo
- Bright Start Scholarship introduced in 2022
- Treasurer Frerichs has been hosting winners (and their relatives) at a breakfast on ag day during the state fair since he was elected in 2015



INVEST IN ILLINOIS TEAM



Michael W. Frerichs
ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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REBECCA HUSTON | DIRECTOR OF INVEST IN ILLINOIS

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