



American Agricultural Law Association – Legal Issues Student Writing Competition

Entry Deadline: Friday, August 14, 2026

Awards for the top winners include: (1) Cash prize; (2) Registration fee covered for AALA Annual Educational Symposium; and (3) Article published in the AALA Symposium Edition of the Drake Journal of Agricultural Law. All participants are strongly encouraged to attend the AALA Symposium, November 6–7, 2026.

Description

The goal of the Legal Issues Student Writing Competition is to encourage law students to become involved in the American Agricultural Law Association (AALA) and to encourage research and academic inquiry in the diverse field of agricultural law. Each entrant must follow the rules of the competition detailed herein.

Topic

The entry must discuss a modern and relevant topic related to agricultural, food, and natural resource law.

Eligibility

The competition is open to law students who are, at the time of entry, (a) enrolled in an ABA-accredited law school, (b) pursuing a J.D. degree; and (c) at least 18 years old.

Format

Submissions must be in portable document format (PDF). The text of the essay must be double-spaced, in twelve-point font, with one-inch margins; footnotes should be single-spaced, also in twelve-point font and with one-inch margins. Citations may be embedded in text or set out in footnotes and should conform to the current edition of the Uniform System of Citation (Bluebook). Submissions may not exceed 10,000 total words or 40 pages, whichever is shorter, including footnotes, but not including the title page and table of contents. Submissions may include papers submitted for a law school course, law review notes and comments, or pieces specifically written for the competition. If submitted for publication in a law student publication (such as a law review or journal) and not yet published, the cover page must indicate to which publication the work was submitted. If the work has been published, it is not eligible for this Competition, although published work can be submitted to the AALA's Awards Committee (info@aglaw-assn.org) for the Student Scholarship Award instead. Essays must be the original work of the submitting student without substantial editorial input from others. Co-authored papers are ineligible. Failure to submit an original essay will result in disqualification and may result in the selection of a new winner. Only one essay may be submitted per entrant.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The use of all generative artificial intelligence (AI) is prohibited to create any portion of the submitted essay for this competition, whether in the writing or editing phase. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of OpenAI's "GPT" series, Claude, Grok, BLOOM, Jasper, BERT, Galactica, Lex, and other large language models. Use of generative AI in the research phase is acceptable. AI does not include basic tools for grammar, spelling, and references. By submitting an essay in this contest, Entrants are affirming that they did not utilize AI in the writing and editing phases of creating their written work product. AALA reserves the right to screen essays for the use of AI through an AI detector. Entrants utilizing AI to write or edit their written work product will be disqualified. If it is determined after the winner is announced and the prize is awarded that the winning Entrant utilized AI to write or edit their written submission in whole or in part, then the Entrant will forfeit the winning designation and must return the prize. A new winner will be selected.

Entry Procedure

There is no entry form of any kind. Entrant must submit the two files listed below to the AALA office via email at info@aglaw-assn.org. The first file should be a cover page only with contestant information, including the paper's title, entrant's name, law school, year or expected graduation, mailing and email addresses, and phone number. If the essay was previously submitted for publication to a law student publication and not yet published, the cover page should also indicate to which publication the work was submitted. If the work has been published, it is not eligible for this Competition, although published work can be submitted to the AALA's Awards Committee (info@aglaw-assn.org) for the Student Scholarship Award instead. The second file should be the paper with a cover page listing the title only; the contestant's name and other identifying information, such as school name, MAY NOT appear on any page within this file. **ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 PM CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME ON AUGUST 14, 2026.** The selection committee administrator will assign a random number to each entry. Neither the contestant's identity nor law school will be known to the selection committee. The AALA is not responsible for errors or for lost, late, or misdirected email or telecommunication, hardware, or software failures, including by reason of any bug or computer virus or other failure.

Judging

The entries will be judged anonymously by a selection committee made up of representatives from the National Ag Law Center and/or AALA members. Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- Creativity and clarity of the proposal or thesis
- Organization
- Quality of the analysis and research
- Grammar, syntax, and form

Decisions of the AALA (including the committee judging the entries) are final. The winning entries will be notified by email by September 25, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Central Daylight Time. The winner must acknowledge and confirm agreement to the terms and conditions of winning the competition no later than October 2, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Central Daylight Time, after which prizes will be forfeited and another winner may be selected.

Prize

The AALA may substitute a prize of equal or greater value in its sole discretion. Prizes are non-transferable and cannot be substituted by the winner. Winners will be solely responsible for reporting and payment of all taxes (federal, state, local, or other) on prizes, which will include the value of any accommodations and airfare. The decision of the AALA, including the judging committee, is final.

Entry Deadline

All entries must be emailed by **5:00 PM Central Daylight Time on August 14, 2026.**

Odds of Winning

Chances of winning may vary depending on the number of entries. However, AALA reserves the right not to award any prize if the judges determine that no entries are of sufficient quality to merit selection that year.

Laws and Regulations

This Competition is governed by U.S. law and all relevant and applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. By entering, all participants agree that the Competition shall be governed by the laws of the State of Kansas, that the courts of Kansas shall have exclusive jurisdiction, and shall be the venue for any dispute or litigation relating to or arising from the Competition. Void where prohibited by law.

Conditions of Participation

By participating, each entrant agrees to these Official Rules and the decisions of the AALA and releases and discharges the AALA and any affiliated entities, and each of their respective officers, directors, members, employees, independent contractors, agents, representatives, successors and assigns (collectively "Released Parties") from any and all liability whatsoever in connection with this Competition, including without limitation legal claims, costs, injuries, losses or damages, demands or actions of any kind (including without limitation personal injuries, death, damage to, loss or destruction of property, rights of publicity or privacy, defamation, or portrayal in a false light) (collectively "Claims"). Except where prohibited, acceptance of a prize constitutes a release by any winner of the Released Parties of any and all Claims in connection with the administration of this promotion and the use, misuse, or possession of any prize. All entries submitted to the AALA become the property of the AALA and will not be returned; however, entrants who do not win first-place may submit their entries for publication elsewhere. Entrants must not submit their articles for publication elsewhere prior to November 10, 2026. All expenses involved in preparing and submitting an entry are the sole responsibility of the entrant. Sponsor is not responsible for errors or for lost, late, or misdirected mail or email or telecommunication, hardware, or software failures, including by reason of any bug or computer virus or other failure. Sponsor may cancel, modify, or terminate the promotion if it is not capable of completion as planned, including by reason of infection by computer virus, tampering, unauthorized intervention, force majeure, or technical difficulties of any kind.

Privacy Policy/Data Collection

Information provided by entrants in connection with this Competition is subject to the AALA's privacy policy, available at <https://www.aglaw-assn.org/privacy>.

Sponsor

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