

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

SEEKING
GARDEN
VICTORY



Barb Janes poses for a photo with some of the vegetables from her garden. She has been entering her tomatoes into contests at the Illinois State Fair for a number of years.

CRYSTAL REED PHOTOS, ILLINOIS FARMER TODAY

Veggie growing contest among state fair festivities

CRYSTAL REED
Illinois Farmer Today

MT. ZION — Beyond the heavy slate of livestock shows at county and state fairs, there are many contest categories to choose from, such as photography, quilting, baking and others. Barb Janes of Mt. Zion has tried a little bit of everything.

Many years back she entered items into the Macon County Fair in categories such as flower arrangements, baked goods and hobbies, she said, but nowadays she focuses on vegetables, specifically tomatoes.

“The difficult part is applying or signing up in July and then the fair being in August,” Janes said.

Sometimes the vegetables are not ready, and some years she hasn’t had any vegetables to show.

Besides growing tomatoes in her backyard, she also grows zucchini, cucumbers, green peppers, banana peppers, jalapeño peppers and a lot of herbs that she uses in cooking.



Aug. 8 is Agriculture Day at the 2025 Illinois State Fair.

Janes said she has been attending the Illinois State Fair since the age of 5, and she is now 77. Over the years she has won second place for her zucchini bread and received second and third placings for tomatoes, but the blue ribbon remains elusive.

Janes said there is not a large reward for placing in the various competitions, but that doesn’t matter to her.

“I love being at the fair,” she said. “It’s my fun thing to do, and as long as I’m healthy enough I will continue to do it.”

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MIDDLE EAST

Why enough food isn’t reaching Gazans

Crowds swarm delivery trucks, fired upon

SAM MEDNICK
Associated Press

International outcry over images of emaciated children and increasing reports of hunger-related deaths pressured Israel to let more aid into the Gaza Strip. This week, Israel paused fighting in parts of Gaza and airdropped food.

Aid groups and Palestinians say the changes have only been incremental and are not enough to reverse what food experts say is a “worst-case scenario of famine” unfolding in the war-ravaged territory.

The new measures brought an uptick in the number of aid trucks entering Gaza, but almost none of it reaches U.N. warehouses for distribution.

Instead, almost all the trucks are stripped of their cargo by crowds that overwhelm them on the roads as they drive from the borders. The crowds are a mix of Palestinians desperate for food and gangs armed with knives, axes or pistols who loot the goods to hoard or sell.

Many were also killed trying to grab the aid. Witnesses say Israeli troops often open fire on crowds around the aid trucks, and hospitals reported hundreds killed or wounded. The Israeli military claims it has only fired warning shots to control crowds or at people who approach its forces.

The alternative food distribution system run by the Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has also been marred by violence.

International airdrops of aid resumed, but aid groups say airdrops deliver only a fraction of what trucks can supply. Also, many parcels landed in now-inaccessible areas that Palestinians were told to evacuate, while others plunged into the Mediterranean Sea, forcing people to swim out to retrieve drenched bags of flour.

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EDUCATION

Trump’s bill curbs loans, med students

KATE ARMANINI
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — Twenty-year-old Eric Mun didn’t want to believe it: Only one kid in the family could make it to medical school — and it wasn’t going to be him.

Mun had done everything right. He graduated high school with honors, earned a scholarship at Northwestern University and breezed through his biology courses.

He immigrated to Alabama from Korea as a toddler. From the quiet stretches of the South, he dreamed of helping patients in a pressed white coat.

But dreams don’t pay tuition. And with new borrowing limits, Mun’s family can only support one child through school.

“My parents already implied that my older brother is probably going to be the one that gets to go,” Mun said.

President Donald Trump’s sweeping “big, beautiful” tax and spending bill, signed into law last month, imposes strict new caps on federal student loans, capping borrowing for professional schools at \$50,000 per year. The measure particularly affects medical students, whose tuition often exceeds \$300,000 over four years.

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