The Agriculture Council of America (ACA) and 21st Century Equipment calls on 9-12 grade students to submit an original, 450-word essay or a two minute video essay about the importance of agriculture. This year's theme is "American Agriculture: Nourishing opportunities."

The deadline is Feb. 1, 2013. 21st Century Equipment is offering $500 scholarships for the three best essays or videos selected from their trade area in eastern Colorado, western Nebraska and western Kansas who participate in the contest.

The national written essay winner receives a $1,000 prize and round-trip ticket to Washington, D.C. for recognition during the Celebration of Ag dinner held March 19 at Whitten Patio at the USDA. During the dinner, the winner will have the opportunity to read the winning essay as well as join with industry representatives, members of Congress, federal agency representatives, media and other friends in a festive ag celebration.

The video essay winner wins a $1,000 prize, and the winning video will play during the Celebration of Ag dinner.

All essays for the $500 scholarship from 21st Century Equipment need to be emailed to MEisenzimmer @21stCenturyEquip.com by Feb. 1, 2013. If submitting a video, contact the above address for more information.

For the national prize contest, all written entries should be sent to: 2012 Ag Day Essay Contest, Agriculture Council of America, 11020 King Street, Suite 205, Overland Park, KS 66210 or submitted by e-mail to essay@agday.org. Students may upload video essays at http://agday.leapfile.net and follow the directions on the page, or students may choose to mail video entries to the address above on a compact disc.

Visit www.agday.org or www.hpj.com/agdayessay to read official contest rules and for more details regarding entry applications