

# **POTATO LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION & ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Chairman of the Board,  
Brett Jensen, Idaho Falls, Idaho**

**Vice Chairman, RJ Andrus, Idaho Falls, Idaho**

**Wendy Dykstra, Friesland, Wisconsin**

**Gregg Halverson, Grand Forks, North Dakota**

**Keith McGovern, Fargo, North Dakota**

**Shelley Olsen, Othello, Washington**

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### **Ex-officio:**

**Kam Quarles, National Potato Council**

**Blair Richardson, Potatoes USA**

**Kelly Turner, Michigan Potato Industry Commission**

Created by the National Potato Council Board of Directors in 2019 the Potato Industry Leadership, Education, and Advancement Foundation (Potato LEAF) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization to provide the industry with a long-term funding source to support leadership development, educational programs, and other efforts to advance the potato industry in the United States.

Potato LEAF serves to encourage members to commit their time and energy to the betterment of the U.S. potato industry. Potato LEAF supports the cultivation of future leaders through three key program areas:

- Leadership development. Growers and industry members will learn what it takes to become effective communicators, influencers, and decision-makers in the industry.
- Educational training. Future leaders will be taught how to broaden their understanding of the key opportunities, practices and challenges affecting national potato production.
- Advancement opportunities. Participants will build their industry network through opportunities for collaboration with grower-leaders from around the country.

**LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTE**   
BROUGHT TO YOU BY POTATO LEAF

  
**LEADERSHIP  
IN THE FIELD**  


 | Leadership,  
Education &  
Advancement  
Foundation  
**SCHOLARSHIP**



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION JUNE 30, 2024

### Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$114,497
Investments	\$2,072,963
Accounts and contributions, net	\$105,585
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$2,293,045</b>

### Liabilities and net assets

Total Liabilities, net	\$10,428
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### Net Assets

Without donor restrictions	
Undesignated	\$696,888
Board-designated	\$1,500,000
Total without donor restrictions	\$2,196,888
With donor restrictions	\$85,729

<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$2,282,617</b>
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<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$2,293,045</b>
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## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2024

### Revenue and Support

Meetings	\$87,550
Contributions	\$235,822
Investment return, net	\$(10,819)
<b>Total revenue and support</b>	<b>\$312,553</b>

### Expenses

Education programs	\$140,851
General and administrative	\$62,177
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$203,028</b>

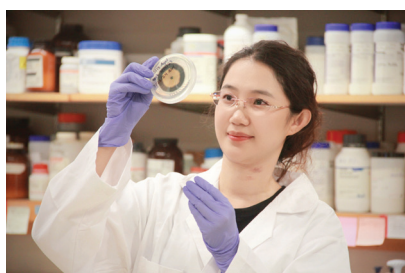
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>\$109,525</b>
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<b>Net assets, beginning of year</b>	<b>\$2,173,092</b>
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<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$2,282,617</b>
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## ANNUAL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

Annually, Potato LEAF awards one \$10,000 academic scholarship to a graduate student with a strong interest in research that can directly benefit the potato industry.



2024-25 academic scholarship recipient, Xiuyan Zhang of the University of Maine.

Xiuyan Zhang, a Ph.D. student at the University of Maine, was the recipient of the organization's 2024-25 Academic Scholarship. Her research focuses on the dynamic behavior of bacterial species that cause potato blackleg and soft rot disease, as well as the influence of potato storage conditions on pathogen infection. Since 2020, she has gathered over 300 bacterial pathogens within 11 species in *Pectobacterium* taxa and performed whole genome sequencing on them.

Applications are accepted annually from April through June.



## LEADERSHIP IN THE FIELD

Continuing to find new opportunities for leadership development, Potato LEAF first offered the Leadership in the Field program in 2024 in partnership with the Gettysburg Foundation, with the second class gathering in June 2025. This two-day experience on the Gettysburg Battlefield offers unique opportunities that utilize the resources of America's most revered battlefield to teach effective leadership. Applications are accepted annually from January-February.





2025 Leadership Institute class.

## LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

In 2025, Potato LEAF hosted the 23rd class of the Leadership Institute, continuing to invest in creating a strong leadership foundation of industry leaders. Now run by Potato LEAF, the Leadership Institute provides up-and-coming leaders with the tools they need to achieve success in the potato industry.

The 2025 class traveled through Wisconsin and then to Washington, D.C.

In 2026, the Leadership Institute will be held February 18-25 and is scheduled to be held in Florida and Washington, D.C. Participants will receive an overview of the local and national potato industry, including some of the challenges and issues beyond the production sector, tours local agricultural businesses, and then travel to Washington, D.C. and hear from public policy and communication experts and practice how to effectively deliver key messages. Participants will join other growers from their state to educate members of Congress on the U.S. potato industry and policies impacting it.

Applications are accepted annually from August-October.

## LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

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*"Being from a non-traditional potato state with no state association, the Leadership Institute gave me the resources and connections that I needed to be connected to the potato industry. The institute provided exceptional leadership and professional development opportunities, and industry networking."*

- Adam Koch, Kittleson Brothers, Iowa

*"No matter if you have been in the potato industry for 20 years or just starting out, the PLEAF Leadership Institute will benefit your farm, your family, and your community as you learn leadership skills with your fellow industry participants. I was reluctant to attend because of the length of time required to be away from my family and farm, but at the end of the institute, it truly became one of the greatest highlights of my professional career."*

- Ryan Christensen, BKR Farms, Idaho

## WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO POTATO LEAF

### ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION

1

#### Tax-deductible Donations

Support the programs of the foundation

- Online at [pleaf.org/contribute](https://pleaf.org/contribute)
- Mail to Potato LEAF, 50 F St NW #900, Washington, DC 20001



Potato LEAF Board Member, Gregg Halverson, a potato grower from North Dakota during the live auction at Potato Expo 2025.

2

#### Auction at Potato Expo

The auction at Potato Expo 2025 raised over \$90,000 to benefit the programs of the foundation. You can support the foundation by donating or bidding on items during Potato Expo 2026.

Visit [pleaf.org/expo-events](https://pleaf.org/expo-events) or email [info@pleaf.org](mailto:info@pleaf.org) for more information.



## FOUNDERS SOCIETY MEMBERS

The Potato LEAF Founders Society was developed to recognize inaugural contributors making pledges and contributions of \$10,000 or more to the Potato Leadership, Education, and Advancement Foundation. These 30 individuals and businesses have pledged \$2,158,000 to establish the foundation.

### Diamond Business Members \$250,000+

- Idaho Potato Commission
- National Potato Council
- Potatoes USA
- Washington State Potato Commission

### Platinum Business Members \$100,000+

- RD Offutt Farms

### Gold Business Member \$50,000+

- Allied Potato
- Alsum Farm & Produce, Inc.
- Colorado Potato Administrative Committee
- Farm Credit
- J.R. Simplot Company
- Maine Potato Industry
- McCain Foods, USA
- Michigan Potato Industry Commission
- Northern Plains Potato Growers Association
- Oregon Potato Commission
- Sklarczyk Seed Farm
- Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association

### Individual Member \$10,000+

- RJ & Nancy Andrus, Idaho Falls, ID
- Black Gold Farms, Grand Forks, ND
- Blatchford Farms, Haines, OR
- In memory of Dave Blatchford
- Countrywide Potato LLC, Alliance, NE
- Todd & Jill Michael, Urbana, OH
- Montana Potato Advisory Committee
- Dan & Jann Moss, Rupert, ID
- Marty & Ann Myers, West Linn, OR
- Lynn J. & Marthann Olsen, Othello, WA
- Richard Pavelski, Hancock, WI
- Blair & Marti Richardson, Denver, CO
- Kam & Karen Quarles, Washington, DC
- Mike Wenkel, Washington, DC

## PLEAF ANNUAL DONORS

We appreciate the contributions to Potato LEAF by the following individuals and businesses in 2024.

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

#### Visionary - \$5,000+

- Mike Carter, Schofield, WI
- Jason & Nichole Davenport, Bakersfield, CA
- Brett Jensen, Idaho Falls, ID
- Rodney Peterson, Parkers Prairie, MN
- Blair & Marti Richardson, Denver, CO
- Don Sklarczyk, Johannesburg, MI
- John Stahl, Ritzville, WA
- Marvin Wollman, Warden, WA

#### Leader - \$2,500+

- Mike Wenkel, Washington, DC

#### Changemaker - \$1,000+

- Josh Bunker, Pasco, WA
- TJ Hall, Edinburg, ND
- Chris Olsen, Othello, WA
- Jordan Reed, Pasco, WA
- Steve Streich, Kalispell, MT
- Ted Tschirky, Pasco, WA
- Adam Weber, Moses Lake, WA

#### Influencer - \$250+

- Jon Hathaway, Monte Vista, CO
- Don Krautscheid, Pasco, WA
- John Mesko, Kissimmee, FL
- Dan Moss, Rupert, ID
- Shelley Olsen, Othello, WA
- Mark Peterson, Monte Vista, CO
- Kam & Karen Quarles, Washington, DC
- Eric Schroeder, Antigo, WI
- Sid Staunton, Malin, OR
- Tim Venhuizen, Manhattan, MT

#### Contributor - less than \$250

- Ivonne Alanis, Houston, TX
- Bryan Bender, Chambersburg, PA
- Nathan Bender, Bakersfield, CA
- Jess Blatchford, Baker City, OR
- Ralph Child, Malone, NY
- Jeremy Clark, Bliss, NY
- Justin Dagen, Karlstad, MN
- Jeffery DeWald, Boston, MA
- Jim Erlich, Monte Vista, CO
- Chelsea Gray, Denver, CO
- John Halverson, Arbyrd, MO
- Chris Hansen, Bliss, NY
- Bonnie Johnson, Denver, CO
- Braden Lake, Heyburn, ID
- Dan Lake, Ronan, MT
- Mike Larsen, Rupert, ID
- John Lundeen, Denver, CO
- Dave Masser, Sacramento, PA
- Tyler Mitchell, Monte Vista, CO
- Roger Mix, Center, CO
- Jan Moss, Rupert, ID
- Tom Qualey, Sherman, ME
- Bruce Richardson, Cape Charles, VA
- Paul Saito, Burley, ID
- Kevin Schleicher, Bancroft, WI
- Jonathan Springstead, Boardman, OR
- Ed Staunton, Tulelake, CA
- Kathy Sponheim, Urbana, OH
- Harry Strohauer, LaSalle, CO
- Colin Szawlowski, Hatfield, MA
- Dillon VanOrden, Pingree, ID
- Willy Walter, Odessa, WA
- Laurie Widdowson, Kearney, NE
- Lynn Wilcox, Rexburg, ID

### BUSINESS DONORS

#### Changemaker - \$10,000+

- Farm Credit
- Lindsay Corporation
- McCain Foods USA
- National Potato Council
- Sklarczyk Seed Farms LLC
- Valley Irrigation

#### Influencer - \$2,500+

- Magic Valley Produce, Inc.
- Schneider Farms Pasco

#### Contributor - less than \$2,500

- Ace Hardware
- Balcom & Moe, Inc.
- Black Gold Farms
- Double L
- Evocati Public Relations
- Idaho Grower Shippers Association
- Maine Potato Board
- The Mirage
- Michigan Potato Industry Commission
- Nelson Irrigation
- Nordlund Communications
- Potatoes USA
- Washington State Potato Commission
- Weber Grills
- Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association