

Annual Report



LEADING
EDUCATION
ABOUT
PIGS

Letter from the Board

Greetings from the LEAP Foundation,

I have had the privilege of serving on the board of the LEAP Foundation since its inception in 2019. I met the DeKryger family and Belstra Milling through my position with the Indiana State Fair Commission. I believe in what they do and the ethical way in which they do it, so when they asked me to serve on the board I didn't hesitate to say yes.

I'm a city guy who grew up in Indianapolis with no connection to agriculture before coming to work at the Indiana State Fair 30 years ago. Through my decades of work at the Fair, I have developed a passion for Ag Education. At a time when less than 2% of the population actively works in production agriculture, and most people are four or more generations removed from the farm, I believe it is crucial that responsible producers provide consumers with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about the food they eat. One of the reasons I agreed to serve on the LEAP Board was the shared belief in, and passion for, Ag education. In 2020, we were able to bring LEAP together with the Indiana State Fair to create a virtual school field trip program called "There's a Pig in My Classroom." The experience is targeted to kids in grades three through six and is built around a standards-based curriculum focused on pig production and food. The highlight of the experience is a live virtual connection to The Pig Adventure (Legacy Farms) at Fair Oaks. Kids step inside a working pig farm, learn from Ag professionals, and ask questions about pigs. It's an experience they can't get anywhere else.

When we started the program, we had one goal in mind, to educate school-aged children about pigs and pig production. We didn't know if the industry would support it, or if schools would sign up. Going into our fourth year, I think we can safely say the program has been a success. Since its launch, we have raised more than \$410,000 allowing 46,185 students in 35 states and Puerto Rico to participate in the program free of charge. Because of the support from our donors, this program has exposed children across the country to pig production for free. Removing the financial constraints that often impede field trip participation has made this program accessible to everyone. And in 2024, thanks to a partnership with the Department of Defense Education Activity, we are taking the program international.

I cannot thank you enough for supporting LEAP and the work we are doing to educate consumers about pigs. Our work would not be possible without you.

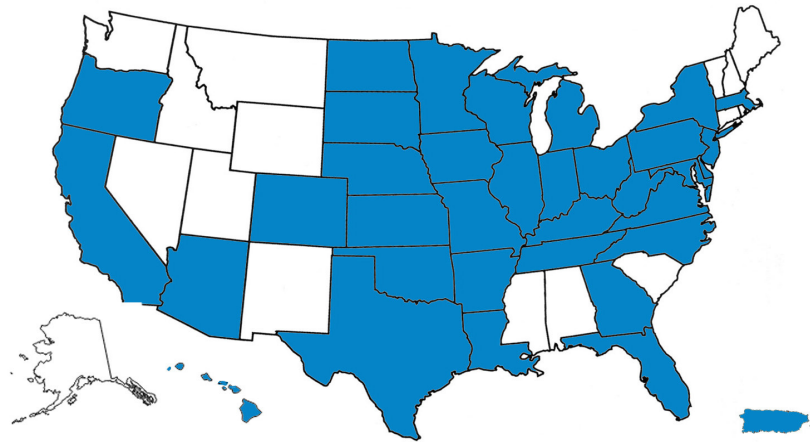
Ray Allison
LEAP Board Member
Indiana State Fair Chief Development & Strategy Officer



There's a Pig in My Classroom

Program Updates

This has been a year of growth as we are now in 35 states across the country. Additionally we began working internationally because of our new connection with the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). We reached military classrooms in 4 different countries including Japan, South Korea, Germany, and Bahrain. In 2024, we plan on expanding our reach as we develop a high school aged curriculum in addition to our elementary field trip.



Tour Guide Spotlight



Vanessa Donovan has been a tour guide for the LEAP Foundation's virtual field trip "There's a Pig in My Classroom" for almost two years now. Even in her short time she has already seen the growth of the program and understands the huge impact it has on the next generation. Vanessa's favorite part about her job is answering all the questions that the students come up with along the tour. Students will ask "Why is the pig pink?", "Why are they making noises?" or even "Why are their tails so short?!" All of these questions make Vanessa's day and show the pure curiosity that students have about the pork industry.

Outreach Spotlight

"Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council sponsored virtual field trips for 355 students across 8 different PA schools in 2023. The student engagement was incredible, with many students and teachers alike having their first opportunity to see pork production in real-time. PPPC is so grateful for programs like "There's a Pig in my Classroom" that bring pork production to high population states, like PA"

~ Courtney Gray (PA Pork Producers Council)



2023 LEAP INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

2023 Intern



Matthew McMillan attends Purdue University and this summer he had a Pig Production internship through the LEAP Foundation. Matthew is from Montpelier, IN and started his junior year this past fall. Majoring in Animal Sciences Production and Industry and minoring in Crop Science. He has a breed to finish farm for show pigs, goats, and show lambs. Matthew is very involved in Huntington County 4-H and Southern Wells FFA. A couple of his top accomplishments are winning sweepstakes (Champion) on his veterinary science project at state fair over pregnancy testing and 2015 Grand Champion Barrow at Huntington County fair with a 3 generation homegrown barrow. After college, Matthew wants to manage a breed to wean sow farm.

2023 Scholarship Recipients



Lilly Misch, currently a sophomore at Purdue University, is studying Animal Science with a concentration in Production and Industry. She is also working toward a minor in farm management. During her 2023 summer internship at Belstra's in Demotte, Indiana, Lilly had the chance to work on a commercial hog farm. This experience was one of the best she's ever had. It made her absolutely positive that she wants to pursue going to veterinary school and focusing on food animals. Lilly is so honored to be the recipient of the 2023 LEAP scholarship.



Emily Myers is a freshman attending Purdue University majoring in Animal Sciences. She has loved animals since she was little and her passion has grown through being involved in the 4-H program and National Junior Swine Association over the past ten years. Emily is grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in these programs and grow her love for animals! She plans to expand her knowledge of animals specifically in the swine industry at Purdue. The LEAP Scholarship is very appreciated to assist in her educational endeavors.

First Fruit Gives



Blessing Bags, a First Fruits Gives ministry, was created out of a desire to ensure that no child would suffer from hunger or worry over food insecurities. Our goal is to make sure that no child will have to worry over where their next meal will come from. Our team is working with full hearts and open hands to help each child and family in our school, and in our community, feel included and cared for. This is done through pre-made meals, food stuffs, toiletries, gifts at Christmas, and supplying back to school items each fall. Currently, we operate a free store open every Friday to supplement food needs over the weekends for 66 families in our community. We pack fresh, healthy, and fun meals and snacks to fill in the gaps. Our 20 acre farm is producing eggs from chickens, Hogs, Angus Beef, Turkeys, and meat chickens to ensure our families have quality meats to eat and cook with. We have over 3,000 linear feet of vegetable gardens, a fruit tree orchard, and Strawberry and Blueberry patches that all produce fresh and healthy options in the growing season.



We are a non-profit organization, and no one takes a salary from the Farm. Every dollar and donation that comes in, goes right back out to the community and those we serve. The best of what we produce, the First Fruits, are given away to our families every week. We then sell our items to offset costs, and finally, we can preserve what isn't taken or sold to be cooked throughout the year.

The hogs that LEAP donates go to feed our families and offset the costs of raising and butchering them. Last year, one hog was used in a hog roast at a community FUN-raiser. We had a barn dance and just enjoyed the Farm atmosphere while learning line dancing. We can't wait to do this again this summer! Two hogs were butchered and are in the freezers for our families to take weekly and for us to cook for them with. Last Easter, we were able to give each family a ham or ham steak for their family Holiday meal. The other two hogs are for sale to the public. This helps offset costs on the farm.

We are so excited to partner with LEAP this year! We have been so blessed and have learned so much. It's wonderful for the families we serve to have their needs met with healthy and quality cuts of meat. They also enjoy seeing the animals and giving them treats as they grow!

~ Audrey Krooswyk (Foudner)



Lilly Endowment Grant

Leading Education About Pigs Inc also known as the LEAP Foundation was competitively awarded a grant of \$150,000 from Lilly Endowment Inc. to assist with the development and growth in LEAP's live virtual field trip, "There's a Pig in My Classroom".

The program is being funded through Lilly Endowment's initiative, Strengthening Youth Programs in Indiana. The aim of the competitive initiative is to help youth-serving organizations working throughout Indiana improve their abilities to promote the academic, physical and social well-being of young people, ages five through 18. Leading Education About Pigs (LEAP) Foundation provides an interactive and virtual field trip, "There's a Pig in my Classroom," to elementary students who want to learn how food gets from farm to table at no cost to the school or students. With this grant, we plan to extend the reach of our live virtual field trip to more students across Indiana. Most importantly, students in Indiana's metropolitan areas who may not have access to farming/nutritional education will now have access to the program.

Future goals include the development of a middle/high school virtual field trip and an educational video which teaches students about how pigs are raised and how pork is produced. This video can be utilized by teachers at any time no matter the time zone.

"We are extremely excited and honored to receive this grant from Lilly Endowment" said Nick DeKryger, President of LEAP Foundation,. "This grant will greatly improve our efforts of teaching kids about agriculture and pig production in a unique and non-formal approach. The need for agricultural education is more important than ever and we are grateful for the support from Lilly Endowment to help us meet those needs."

The LEAP Foundation is one of 187 organizations receiving grants through Strengthening Youth Programs in Indiana. "Indiana's youth-serving organizations are crucial to the healthy development of children and youth across the state," said Ted Maple, Lilly Endowment's vice president for education. "The challenges these organizations have faced in meeting the needs of young people in recent years have made their work increasingly difficult. Lilly Endowment is pleased to support their efforts to strengthen programs and serve more youth more effectively."

Lilly Endowment launched Strengthening Youth Programs in Indiana Initiative in 2022 with an invitational round of grants to nine national youth-serving organizations to help them expand and enhance the work of their Indiana affiliates or chapters. For more information about the LEAP Foundation, please go to our website at <https://www.educationaboutpigs.com/>.

Messaging Improvements

In 2023, LEAP Foundation assumed the responsibility of messaging improvement at the Pig Adventure. Now in its 10th year, the tourable area of the Pig Adventure is seeing wear and tear, along with some exhibits that are outdated and using old technology. With some specific funding, we were able to start an endowment that would become the foundation for long-term investing into messaging updates. We started with a 5 year master plan that would address everything from wall paint and flooring repairs to revamped layouts and large exhibit refreshes. We are excited to begin the process and hope to reengage the visitors with fresh, interactive and educational experiences.

FOF - LEAP - MASTER PLAN

OVERVIEW

RE-IMAGINE (CHANGE)

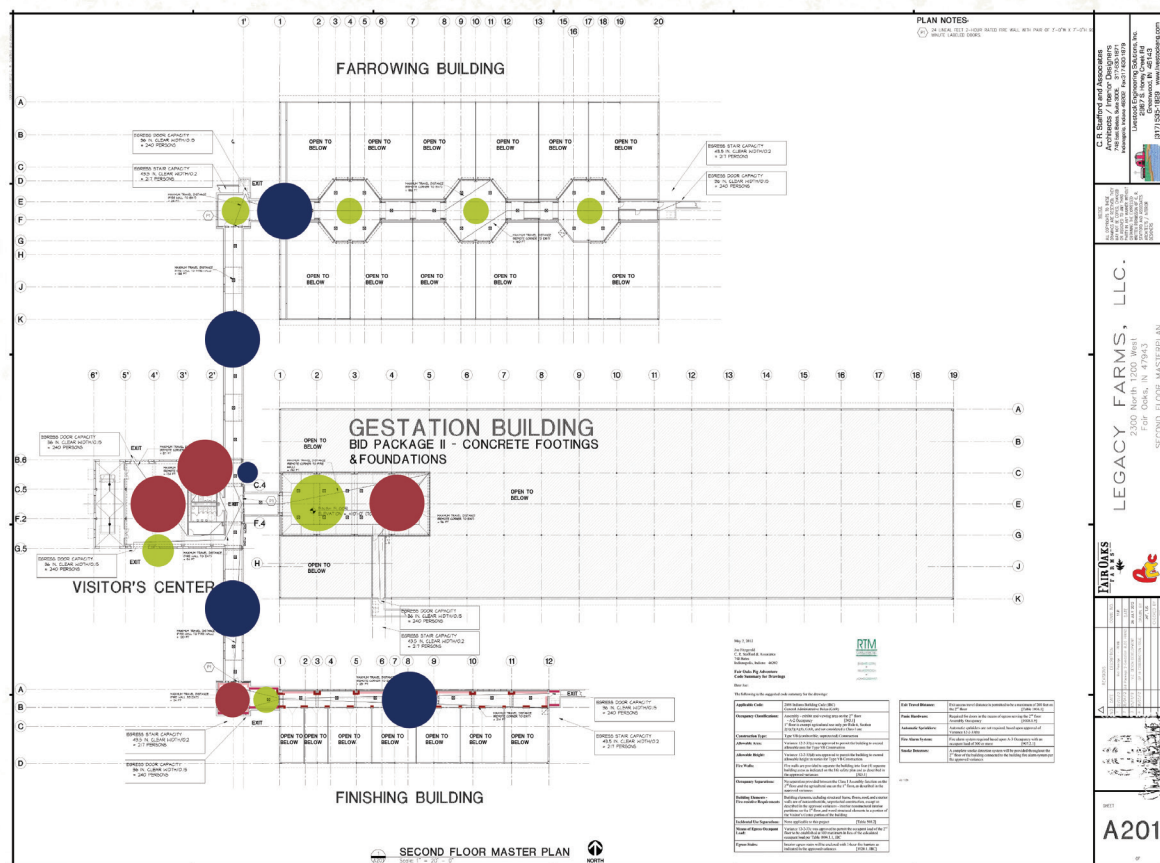
Complete overhaul of exhibit, with function and flow in mind. Possible build items and update tactile and technology. Removal of existing exhibits.

UPDATE (MAKE BETTER)

Keep similar messaging theme with potential to add additional display or signage. Moderate change with possibility of keeping all or parts of existing exhibit. Leaves open the addition of a small kiosk or build item.

KEEP EXISTING (ADD TO EXHIBIT)

Existing signage/display can be updated to have a more consistent feel across the Pig Adventure but keeps with the theme and content in that area. Build items would be minimal if any.





THREE AREAS TO SUPPORT

Distance Learning Fund

In order to keep our field trip free for students we must raise outside funds to cover the costs. If you would like your donation to go directly to supporting students then please consider giving to the Distance Learning Fund.

Messaging Improvements Fund

The LEAP Foundation is responsible for any messaging improvements in the Pig Adventure at Fair Oaks Farms. We are always striving to keep information in this building relevant and interactive for families.

Food Bank Donation Fund

During the year, Belstra & LEAP donated over 40,000 pounds of pork which equals to about 160,000 meals given to these local Northwest Indiana pantries. Your donation would go towards supporting these local food pantries!

**Scan QR Code to
Give Today!**



Questions?

Contact Nick DeKryger at 219-987-4343 ext. 173 or nickd@belstramilling.com