

ALFH INSIDER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION OF HAWAI'I



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Meet ALP Class XIX inside this edition of the ALFH Insider and hear about their first seminar as ag leaders! Also, find out about exciting plans for the next Hawai'i Agriculture Conference. As we near the end of 2025, we hope you will consider supporting ALFH's programs not only during our current annual giving campaign but into the future as our work continues to fill an important need for the agriculture sector. Find out how to show your support, how to get involved, read alumni updates, and save the dates for upcoming alumni events. Mahalo for your continued support!

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ALFH Insider is the quarterly
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October 2025**

BOARD NOTE

Aloha ALFH 'Ohana,

Hawai'i's agricultural landscape is evolving. We're seeing a stronger focus on biosecurity, more locally grown foods appearing on school menus, and renewed dedication to revitalizing underutilized lands across the state. These exciting shifts are being led by both long-time colleagues and the newest generation of Hawai'i's agricultural leaders.

In this edition of the ALFH Insider, meet the newest cohort, Class XIX, and get a glimpse into their experiences during Seminar I. You'll also find updates from our alumni community, including recent awards and accomplishments. Be sure to congratulate them if you see them during the holidays!

As the year winds down (and somehow goes by faster than ever), the ALFH Board of Directors would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for your continued engagement and support over the past twelve months. ALFH remains a unique organization, providing leadership training, hosting a biannual conference, and cultivating a strong, connected network of agriculture professionals statewide. None of this would be possible without your contributions, both financial and otherwise.

We recently launched our annual giving campaign, and we kindly invite you to support these distinctive programs that grow Hawai'i's agricultural leadership. Please also reach out if you would like to volunteer to host an alumni event, lunch or dinner for the current cohort, or a site visit at your operation.

And one more exciting update: AG2026 is on the calendar! Join us on Hawai'i Island for the next Hawai'i Agriculture Conference, taking the show "on the road" to Waikoloa from November 9-10, 2026.

We can't wait to see you there!



Lisa Rhoden
ALFH Vice President



Jennica Lowell-Hawkins
ALFH Secretary



Agricultural Leadership
Foundation of Hawai'i

MAKE AN IMPACT

Help ALFH Develop Agricultural Leaders for Hawai'i



For over 40 years, the Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i (ALFH) has been providing leadership development and networking opportunities for Hawai'i's agricultural professionals.

Now is an especially exciting time for ALFH as we recently launched Class XIX of the Agricultural Leadership Program and we will be hosting the next Hawai'i Agriculture Conference in November of 2026 and we need your support.

Any contribution you can offer to help us reach our \$40,000 goal and continue this important work is greatly appreciated.

- ✓ Develop Leaders
- ✓ Encourage Collaboration
- ✓ Uplift Communities
- ✓ Support Hawai'i Agriculture
- ✓ **DONATE DURING OUR ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN!**



 agleaderhi.org/support

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Your donation is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please consult your tax advisor.

MEET CLASS XIX



*Agricultural
Leadership Program*

AGLEADERHI.ORG

ALFH is pleased to introduce you to the newest cohort of agricultural leaders in Hawai'i, who are committed to expanding their skills and networks to move agriculture forward in our state.

Read each of their personal profiles online at agleaderhi.org/current-class

Class XIX kicked off their first seminar in Hilo, Hawai'i.

They workshopped, explored, questioned, and networked. They listened to today's leaders share what it has taken to rise to the top of their industry and build lasting and sustainable businesses and operations.

We are excited for the journey this cohort is embarking on, and even more excited for what they will give back to Hawai'i.



**Lehua
Abrigo**



**Mason
Alfaro**



**Clayton "Jr."
Allencastre**



**Jessica
Araszewski**



**Bonarath "Bo"
Bory**



**Justin
Brown**



**Rachel
Fukumoto**



**Judah
Lum**



**Jesse Mikasobe-
Kealiinohomoku**



**Christen
Oliviera Reppun**



**Jillian
Scheibe**



**Francesca
Scola**

*Read on to follow
their journey during
Seminar 1 as they
learn, lead and
network...*



**Chelsea
Takahashi**



**Shaun
Wilcox**

Day 1

ALP CLASS XIX SEMINAR 1



Contributed by Lehua Abrigo



As we met each other one by one at the Hilo airport for the first time, we joked about how it felt like the start of a reality show...strangers gathering, trying to figure out who's who, and wondering what challenges might lie ahead. For a moment, it was *Survivor: Hawai'i Island Edition*. But before long, laughter replaced nerves, and we began to realize that this wasn't a competition, it was the start of something much deeper.

Our first activity, the "Birds & Butterflies," encouraged us to reflect on how we handle conflict. We explored the balance between achieving our goals and maintaining strong relationships. One clear takeaway was that trust, once broken, is difficult to rebuild, but with shared goals and *pilina* (relationships built on respect and understanding), conflict can become a tool for growth rather than division.

Later, Peter Adler PhD, shared his presentation "Nimble Leadership: Ideas for Agricultural Leaders in Difficult Times." He reminded us that leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about listening, adapting, and inspiring others to exceed their own expectations. Through stories of resilience and insight, we learned that the best leaders move forward with humility and enthusiasm, even when faced with uncertainty.

Throughout the day, we also got to know each other better through personal introductions. Hearing our classmates share their journeys (as farmers, educators, policymakers and community advocates) reminded us of the depth of experience and shared commitment within our cohort. The evening alumni reception offered a warm welcome into the larger ALP 'ohana, where past participants shared stories and wisdom that encouraged us to make the most of every opportunity ahead.

By the end of our first day in Hilo, we were no longer strangers at an airport. We were classmates connected by purpose, ready to learn, lead, and grow together for the future of Hawai'i's agriculture.

NETWORK

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LEAD



HAWAI'I ISLAND

Our floriculture visit to Green Point Nurseries in Hilo provided a meaningful look into one of Hawai'i's leading family-owned operations. We were welcomed by Eric Tanouye, ALP Class VII, who shared his pride in seeing his business being passed down to his three sons. It was clear that his legacy goes beyond just running a nursery—it's about building a family tradition rooted in

responsibility, innovation, and respect. Eric emphasized the importance of being mindful of the surrounding communities, especially in relation to shared water resources. In an island ecosystem where water is life, he spoke about how vital it is for growers to use it responsibly, ensuring balance and sustainability for neighboring farmers and residents alike. Another key takeaway was Green Point's commitment to quality and innovation. Focusing on the excellence of their products not only maintains their reputation but also pushes Hawai'i floriculture forward on a global scale. Innovation, whether through technology, design, or cultivation methods, has kept Green Point competitive while preserving the island's natural integrity. He emphasized how trust and transparency in partnerships, such as with the USDA, allow growers to confidently export products and protect Hawai'i's agricultural reputation.

After our visit, we joined members of Green Point Nurseries and CTAHR extension agents and ecology representatives, to discuss the importance of having an association to unite growers, foster collaboration, and provide a collective voice to legislative leaders. We also delved into the future of Hawai'i's floriculture industry and how working together can help protect its longevity.

Next we visited Āina University, an initiative focused on teaching youth the importance of understanding where food comes from and how it grows. The program's mission—to connect children to the land, inspire future farmers, and strengthen Hawai'i's food security—was both educational and deeply moving. By giving students hands-on experiences with agriculture, Āina University is helping to build memories that tie them to their culture, environment, and future as stewards of the land.

We concluded the day in Waimea, where the crisp air and cool evening provided a peaceful change of pace. We gathered for dinner, where we shared stories, reflections, and laughter. It was a meaningful end to the day—an opportunity to connect on a deeper level to appreciate not only the work we do but passion that drives us.



   *Contributed by Mason Alfaro*

Day 2



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Day 3



ALP CLASS XIX SEMINAR 1

■ ■ ■ *Contributed by Clayton "Jr." Allencastre*



We began day three waking up at the beautiful Waimea Country Lodge. From there we headed to Hawai'i Farming, the home of Keiki Cukes. Eric Batha was there to meet the group at his beautiful nursery in Waimea. We started the day on his sales floor watching the team box orders to be shipped all over Hawai'i. The Hawai'i Farming state of the art operations were breathtaking to see. The quality they put into growing perfect cucumbers is amazing...from the cleanliness of the farm, to the technology they implemented, to improving growing and sales...it is monumental. Hawai'i Farming did not only master cucumbers, but also now have their first greenhouse for hydroponic lettuce. What Eric and his team are doing in Waimea is amazing.



Our next stop was just a short drive to Parker Ranch. There we met with Jacob Tavares, ALP Class XV, where he gave our team a history lesson on the historic Parker Ranch office, houses and ranch. Seeing and walking through buildings and around a property with such a historic past that was massively impactful to Hawai'i was an honor and gave me chicken skin. Jacob took us for a short drive up the hill above the ranch office where he talked about the water systems they maintain, as well as the historical battles fought on the plains of the ranch between Maui's and Hawai'i's forces in old Hawai'i. From there we headed to lunch at one of Parker Ranch's old corrals. We were treated to sandwiches made by Waimea Butcher Shop's owner, Mills Stovall. Mills opened his butcher shop in 2016. He only uses locally sourced proteins – so we were treated to great sandwiches with meat from our local farms. After lunch, Jacob moderated a panel discussion "Local Beef: From Pasture to Plate" during which Jacob, Mills, Keoki Woods, Parker Ranch, ALP Class XI, and Brad Deluz, owner and operator of Hamakua Meat Processors, discussed the importance of strong relationships, communications and feedback throughout the supply chain to safely and successfully deliver quality products to the customer. Brad's role is the meat processor; without him more beef would need to be shipped



to the mainland for processing. Jacob, Keoki, Brad and Mills are in a sense a team working together to promote local beef and agriculture.



Next we headed over Kohala Mountain Road to our final destination at Starseed Ranch. There we toured the grounds as our host Dash Kuhr explained about the medicinal and food uses for his variety of crops and discussed the start of Kohala Food Hub. We ended the day eating a dinner prepared by our host in their outdoor retreat space and we spent time recapping the previous days together.

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HAWAI'I ISLAND

On our fourth day, we started our morning at Greenwell Coffee Farm. Touring a farm cultivated over generations, we traced agricultural continuity from 19th century roots through 20th century mixed farming to a modern specialty coffee operation. Seeing

fermentation, roasting, varietal rows and commercially grown black peppercorn emphasized stewardship across crop cycles. Leadership lessons from the farm highlighted resilience and policy literacy. The owner's candid account of challenges illustrated humility, long term vision, and practical advocacy.

Midday at NELHA we shifted from field to framework. The workshop with Greg Chun, Ph.D. on systems thinking and agricultural thinking invited us to reflect on the lenses we use and to map pathways toward a healthier future. Through collaborative exercises we learned to identify disconnects between actors, resources and policy, and to see how different organizations can support one another. The session reinforced the importance of strategic curiosity, inclusive listening, and the ability to turn complex system maps into concrete partnerships.

At Blue Ocean Mariculture hatchery we toured the only Kampachi hatchery and followed the full life cycle from eggs to juveniles to offshore grow out. The technical walkthrough showed how careful engineering, problem solving and evidence driven risk management make scalable aquaculture possible. Leadership qualities on display included technical humility, persistence in experimentation, and a mission driven focus that moves ideas into reliable systems while maintaining ecological caution.

The day closed with an overview of Ocean Era with Jennica Hawkins, ALP Class XIV and their proposed offshore farming and seaweed cultivation projects. Sampling seaweed and learning about design approaches for open ocean space gave a vivid sense of what scalable ocean farming might look like. The presentation underscored the need for cross sector collaboration, transparent stakeholder engagement, and forward looking governance when introducing new ocean enterprises.

Taken together, the day revealed a leadership progression: grounded local knowledge at the farm, systems framing in the workshop, technical implementation at the hatchery, and visionary scaling at Ocean Era. Leaders who combine local understanding, systems literacy, iterative experimentation and collaborative engagement will be best positioned to steward resilient agricultural and ocean futures.



Day 4

Contributed by Jessica Araszewski



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Alumni News



JULI BURDEN, ALP CLASS XVIII

...Program Director of the Agrivoltaic Research and Demonstration Center at the Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center (HARC), was named the **2025 Solar Farmer of Year** at this year's Solar Farm Summit!



"This recognition is really a reflection of the people around me. Hawai'i's ag community, our energy partners, and our policy leaders that have pushed agrivoltaics from an 'interesting idea' toward something that can actually function on the ground. ALP was a big part of that for me — it gave me the confidence and the network to advocate for agriculture, our food systems, and to talk about farming as essential infrastructure, not an accessory.

Being named 2025 Solar Farmer of the Year isn't just about solar, and it's not just about farming. It's about showing, nationally, that Hawai'i is building models where food production, soil health, and clean energy can coexist in the same space. I'm proud to carry that message to a national stage on behalf of our producers here at home and the ALP community, and I'm deeply grateful for the experience and support I have as part of Class XVIII." - Juli Burden

Learn more about the project at <https://www.harc-hspa.com/agrivoltaic.html>
Explore the Solar Farm Summit visit <https://agrivoltaicsawards.com/2025-winners>



ASHLEY STOKES, DVM, PHD, MBA, ALP CLASS XIV

...began a new job as the Dean of College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CA&ES) at the University of California Davis in July 2025. UC Davis CA&ES is the #1 ranked college for agricultural sciences and forestry in the nation and #2 in the world. Ashley is responsible for nearly 400 faculty, 725 staff, 8,800 students, and statewide research, extension, and outreach. UC Davis researchers are working to advance aquaculture, crop, and livestock systems—including coffee, tree crops, and beef production—while being stewards of natural resources and helping communities thrive. Ashley lives in Northern California and is thrilled to be back in the Pacific Region.



Kahuku Farms' Farm Cafe named Newsweek's 2025 Readers' Choice Award for Best Farm-to-Table Restaurant!

Kylie Matsuda-Lum, ALP Class XII, Melvin Matsuda, ALP Class IX, and Judah Lum, of the current ALP Class XIX Cohort, and Kylie's sister, Kayln Matsuda, have received the incredible honor of being voted **Newsweek's 2025 Best Farm-to-Table Restaurant in America.**

Kylie, the Managing Director of Kahuku Farms, expressed her gratitude for the award, and the network of people who support Hawai'i's agricultural community. *"This recognition truly humbles us and fills us with gratitude for our incredible community, our dedicated team, and everyone who voted for us. Mahalo for your continued support and for helping us share the spirit of Hawai'i through food and farming."*

This extraordinary family boasts both generational farmers and generational Ag Leaders. Melvin Matsuda was one of the founders of the Matsuda-Fukuyama Farm, Kahuku Farms' parent company, and a member of ALP Class IX. Daughter Kylie followed in his footsteps in ALP Class XII, and now her husband, Judah Lum, is building upon that foundation as a member of the current cohort, ALP Class XIX. Kylie looks back upon her ALP experience as *"such an eye-opening and inspiring journey. I'm so grateful for the connections made, the knowledge gained, and the renewed sense of purpose it gave me to continue strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural community."*

Read more about [Kahuku Farms](#) and their award in the *MidWeek* article on the ALFH Website under "[Alumni in the News.](#)"



A Family of Agricultural Leaders
Judah Lum, Kalyn Matsuda, Melvin Matsuda and Kylie Matsuda-Lum



ALP Alumni Events

Save the Date!

Join ALP Class XIX
for a night of networking
and fellowship.



O'ahu - December 4, 2025

Kaua'i - April 11, 2026

Maui - June 6, 2026

*Thank you to everyone who was able to join us at our recent
ALP Alumni events*



Kaua'i Alumni Pau Hana

June 28, 2025



O'ahu Alumni Pau Hana

August 28, 2025



*Hilo Alumni Reception &
Class XIX Welcome*

September 28, 2025

HAWAI'I AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

AG2026

November 9-10
2026

New
location!!



WAIKOLOA,
HAWAI'I

Visit
hiagconference.org
for updates



In Memoriam

After graduating from Oregon State University in Agriculture, **Garret W.C. Hew** moved back to Maui, determined to run his own successful onion farm on his family's land in Kula, Maui. Garret worked tirelessly to make this venture sustainable, and grew some of the best onions and tomatoes in these parts. However, he eventually recognized that it took much more than just a "green thumb" to run a successful farming business. Upon this realization, Garret made a pivot to pursue his agricultural dream with an already established organization, Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company (HC&S).

Garret began his career with HC&S on December 5, 1983, as a Relief Supervisor in the Irrigation Department. Although it was only for two years, Garret was able to gain valuable experience in the different aspects of sugar cane irrigation, most notably, the ditch operations! Who knew that this was the beginning of a storied 34-year career that would forge a legacy to be remembered!

On November 1, 1985, after much dedication and perseverance, Garret was transferred to HC&S's sister company, East Maui Irrigation (EMI). As the Senior Supervisor of Administration, Garret would learn the many intricacies of both the ditch operations, as well as the land management component of the company. He excelled in both areas, and on January 1, 1989, Garret was promoted to the Superintendent of Administration. In this capacity, he continued to manage the land administration side of the operation, while also learning about the many components of the ditch system and their various functions. Garret grasped this information quickly, and he eventually became an expert in the overall management of the operation.

In 2003, Garret was named Manager of EMI, a position which, over time, grew beyond its literal title to also include oversight of HC&S's Pā'ia farm, infrastructure, and water resources. In this role, Garret was instrumental in navigating both the operations and the "politics" of water on-farm and in East Maui. He strived to develop long-term partnerships, not just for the benefit of the sugar plantation, but for the greater community as well. Through his many decades as Manager of EMI, Garret earned widespread recognition as the primary authority on the EMI system. Garret's knowledge of this extremely complex water system – spanning from Nāhiku to Maliko, and consisting of more than 70 miles of ditches and tunnels – ensured that agriculture in Central Maui thrived, and that water would be continuously delivered for the many thousands of residents and farmers in Upcountry Maui.



Garret Hew, Class VIII

Throughout his career, Garret was also heavily involved in Maui's agricultural community – he was an active member of the Farm Bureau and the Olinda-Kula Soil and Water Conservation District – and always explored opportunities to create new relationships through agriculture.

One of Garret's many notable experiences was his inclusion and participation in Class VIII of the Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i. Garret was very grateful for the learning opportunities, networking, and friendships that he made in this program, and even recommended the program to several of his colleagues.

Garret finally retired from East Maui Irrigation in 2017, and vowed to spend the next chapter of his life devoted to his family. It was a promise that he greatly succeeded in fulfilling. Garret was very fond of the time he spent with his wife, children, and grandchildren, and Garret worked diligently on perfecting the role of husband, father, and Papa. He enthusiastically and lovingly spoke about each of them with a great sense of pride.

Sadly, Garret was called home to be with the Lord in June of 2025. He will be missed, but always remembered as the EMI Man.

Contributed by ALP Classmate and Friend, Mark Vaught



Garret Hew, ALP Class VIII



Agricultural Leadership
Foundation of Hawai'i

*43 years of growing
ag leaders*

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