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Wallace Foundation for Rural Research and Development President's Report

Tom Pollock

Wallace Foundation for Rural Research and Development

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Tom Pollock, board president

This has been a year of transition for our board of directors as well as for our organization as a whole. Although I have been on the board of directors for several years, serving as the president has presented many new challenges and learning experiences that board membership did not provide. With the help of our staff and board members, I feel the leadership transition has been successful. We have several new members on the board, and they bring talents that will be especially helpful in some of the new projects we envision for the future. The change in the area extension education director with the retirement of Bob Ramsey and the appointment of Alan Ladd has brought a new member to our advisory team. This transition has gone smoothly, and we look forward to our continuing work with Alan and ISU Extension.

Transition does not come without challenges and this year has presented some. One of the goals of the board at the start of the year was to regain control of the declining financial position of our organization. It has not been easy or pleasant, as staff realignment was a significant requirement; but I can report that we have made major strides in accomplishing our goal and that our financial position is stabilizing. Financial realignment by ISU forced the closing of the Lauren Christian Swine Farm early in the year. Our swine farm committee spent many hours developing strategies and implementing plans to utilize the facilities and generate income for the organization within the parameters of our goals and mission statement. Although we still have several hurdles ahead, we have made great progress. We have shifted our focus for that facility to the development of biobased energy resources, and we are looking at projects that can be located there to use its resources for this

new direction. The swine facilities and house are being leased to a local group, and the crop ground is leased to an area farmer to provide revenue.

Our organization has also enjoyed many rewarding experiences this year. We appreciate the continuing support of our area legislators and their staff teams. We value the opportunities to partner with other organizations that share our goals and objectives to pioneer for needed changes. We appreciate the hours of research and writing that went into the Iowa west grant that we received to help fund the construction of our greenhouse project at the farm. We look forward to the opportunities of working with the Harrisdale Foundation in its new endeavors. We anticipate interesting information and research data from the hoop confinement cattle feeding facility to be built on the farm as well.

I feel the Wallace Foundation is an accurate reflection of the southwest Iowa area we serve. Our organization is seeing many of the same challenges and opportunities of transitional times that other people and organizations of our area are experiencing. With the support of our members, leaders, board, and staff, I know we will be an important asset for improving the economic and social life of southwest Iowa. Let's all work to capture the opportunities!