Colleagues and friends I want to start with a few thank yous. First, thanks to Wendy and Jack for this opportunity, albeit at a challenging time for us all. I have a steep learning curve to get up to speed on the budget, the task forces and other activities that are already underway that will impact us in the coming years.

I want to thank Jerry Miller for not only his leadership in recent years, but also for his tutelage of me and the opportunities to observe, experience and learn about extension programming and leadership. Also, I want to thank Paul Brown for his years of service and dedication to ISU and wish him well in his new position at Auburn University.

Finally, I want to thank you for the work you do that makes us all proud to be part of Iowa State University Extension. And, for coming today and providing honest input and ideas about us and what we do. Together we will shape the future of ANR Extension to preserve its role as a trusted leader in agriculture and resource management. Together we will assure that it remains an organization we are proud to call our own.

Budget reality necessitates that we strike a new course for the future of ANR at Iowa State. Extension and outreach is essential to the mission of the college and university. Ag and natural resource management is the very foundation of Iowa’s economy and is the largest segment of ISU Extension. While we are impacted by the reorganization of both the college and Extension, we are also essential to each of their successes.

As Jerry mentioned in his opening remarks, tweaking is no longer enough to keep us afloat. We have and will continue to work on efficiency to do more with less. But, most of the low hanging fruit is gone and we must choose a new course based on relevance, excellence and impact.

We will do less with less, but we must do the right things. As an organization, as POW teams and as individuals we must prioritize what we do and we must do it well. Our strength has always been in delivering objective research-based information. This too shall be our future. However, that delivery must also assure that the topic is relevant, that it is understood and can be evaluated by the client and that it makes a difference in people’s lives.

The prioritization process will begin with a review of existing programs and an assessment of current and emerging clients needs. Many of you will be involved in the process and some of this work is underway. Once the priorities are determined we will focus on implementation. Because client’s needs change, and if we do our jobs well they can handle yesterday’s challenge, our programs will evolve but remain POW driven addressing priority issues.

For ISU to remain the leader in agricultural research and extension our programs must be client focused. This means that we listen to their needs and provide not only timely and relevant information but provide leadership on emerging issues. While our mantra and strength is research-based information, clients must also have the knowledge to interpret the information themselves and evaluate it in their context for it to have value. This means that we educate as well as inform. To succeed we must have comprehensive and innovative delivery methods for information and education programming.

Successful programs will be integrated. Integrated by campus and field specialists working together to develop and deliver programs. Integrated research and extension projects addressing relevant issues. And, integrated interdisciplinary teams focused on solutions to complex problems.
Effective POW teams will consist of talented, confident and professional individuals. The members must share a common goal, respect their teammates and play his or her role well to contribute to team success. Individuals must be technically competent and up-to-date in their field. They must also have the professional skills and necessary resources to succeed as competent and confident communicators and educators that are respected by the clients and peers.

Because of the reorganization, I will conduct performance evaluations of off-campus program specialists. Jack, Wendy, the Department Chairs and I have discussed that I will be more closely involved with the annual evaluations of faculty with extension appointments. This simpler administration will allow us to keep the focus on POW direction and implementation and assure that all members of the team are pulling in the same direction.

So, what are the next steps? We will be contacting you to participate in the process. Over the next 90 days we will conduct program reviews and needs assessment and finalize those activities and reports by the time we meet in March. The tentative date is March 24. At that time, based on the information gathered and input from the task forces organized by Extension we will review and revise POWs. The POW teams given this information will set their direction, but will also have responsibility and accountability for delivering results. So in addition to goals and objectives in the POW, it should also include action items with timelines and the individuals responsible for each deliverable.

I will also be around to visit with you and learn more about what you do, what you think is important and what obstacles you see to your and our success. I still have my day job through the end of January, but as you have team meetings and have time on your schedule, please give me a call. I am facing a steep learning curve and am anxious to get started.

The coming months will be challenging. We will be balancing planned activities under existing POWs with the review and needs assessment with an eye to the future. We must have a continued presence so people know we are still here and we will begin to identify and cultivate partners critical to our future success. It will be physically tiring, mentally taxing and yet personally rewarding to know that you are impacting not only our clients, but the future of our organization.

You all realize that these are difficult times but also know this: Ag and Natural Resources Extension will emerge as a changed but strong, vital part of this university, of Iowa and of agriculture. We have the opportunity to review, revise and reinvigorate what we do and how we do it. The process will not be simple and it will be frustrating, but we will be successful. For those who accept the challenge and own the process it will be rewarding. In the end you will be proud of what you accomplished and of Iowa State University Extension.

I accept this new responsibility with excitement, optimism and a great deal of humility. Like most of you, I am a product of and believe firmly in our Land Grant Mission. Together we can shape the future of ISU Extension regarding agriculture and natural resource and carry the tradition of excellence and leadership into the future.

Thank You.