Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) continues to be a difficult problem for veterinarians in North America. Frequently I am asked, what will the next 10 years bring? In my opinion, the future of the North American swine industry and the swine veterinary profession will depend on how we choose to manage PRRS. I believe we have to eliminate this virus from the continent. The veterinary profession must lead the way to large scale, sustainable eradication of this disease; however, it will take significant change in the industry and the veterinary profession to make this happen.

**Team building**

In North America, members of academia are working together to solve PRRS problems. One example of academic teamwork is the NC-229 group. This group consists of researchers from 20 Universities that along with numerous industrial partners collectively (57 collaborators) wrote a proposal and received a 4.4 million dollar award for work on basic and applied PRRS research from the USDA/National Research Initiative. Therefore, along with the National Pork Board (NPB), for the first time, large sums of research dollars are available for both basic and applied PRRSV research. Now scientists from around the country are working side-by-side with industry in a team effort to solve the problem. A call for proposals has been issued, project review has occurred, and awards have been made to select teams of investigators. This is very exciting, and I believe the output from the research community will be staggering over the next four years.

**Need for models**

There are still a number of questions that remain unanswered, particularly in the areas of PRRSV genomics, immunology, eradication and biosecurity. To answer these questions correctly, I believe we need new models of research, that incorporate controlled field settings, and involve large populations of pigs in order to “bridge the gap” between University research settings and the real world. Our model at the University of Minnesota is our Swine Disease Eradication Center research farm. This is an actual farm, and thanks to the support of Genetiporc, hundreds of PRRSV-naïve pigs are available to conduct infectious disease research in a commercial setting using large populations of pigs.

**Regional mentality**

Finally, it is time to challenge the producers in our industry, and raise their awareness to the fact that like the lone scientist or practitioner, an individual farmer cannot win the PRRS war on their own either. Producers must collaborate and think/act as a group, a team, a “region”, and not as an individual farm or system, or even a company. This has not been the practice of the average pork producer over the years; however, the time is up for acting alone. They must cooperate to achieve the desired goal, just as Universities and veterinary practices must do. In particular, US producers should take note that such collaborations are already underway in competing markets and the longer that we delay and do battle amongst each other, the faster we fall behind. Furthermore, new research from our group indicates that recently identified routes of regional spread of PRRSV such as flies and transport may be impossible to manage unless producers cooperate and organize regional projects. The American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) is well positioned to play a major role in this unification process.

There is no time like the present!

While the challenge of developing coordinated projects to enhance large-scale control and eradication of PRRS is an enormous undertaking, in my opinion, the timing is perfect to make rapid progress towards first of all, answering necessary questions, conducting pilot projects and sharing the information across the industry. The AASV, NPB and the NC-229 group are prepared for developing information to answer questions and solve problems, followed by communication of the information via extensive outreach efforts. Practitioner and producers now need to begin to build teams and work together for the sake of the industry. PP