

# **Wapsie Valley FFA Remodels Greenhouse and Thanks All Donors**

**By Natalie Risse, Chapter Reporter**

As the school year began, so did construction on Wapsie Valley FFA's greenhouse. The Friends of the Wapsie Valley FFA worked with students and experts in the community to plan a much-needed remodel of the chapter's greenhouse. The plan included lifting the greenhouse from its position, putting in cement with floor heat, shortening the entire structure, and replacing the panels. This remodel would have an estimated cost of \$45,000. These changes would reduce the heating cost of the structure by 30-40 percent. Overall, the goal of the Wapsie Valley greenhouse is to have functioning aquaponics and hydroponics systems, as well as growing other plants. The aquaponics system works by using fish or other aquatic animal waste as nutrients to grow plants in water. In the Wapsie Valley greenhouse, the aquaponics system is used to grow lettuce. The hydroponics system works by growing plants in water with mineral nutrients. The hydroponics system is used to grow tomatoes in the Wapsie Valley greenhouse. The lettuce and tomatoes grown in the greenhouse are then used in the school lunches at Wapsie Valley and Community Lutheran Schools in Readlyn. When the fish from the aquaponics system grow to market weight, they are harvested. Additionally, the chapter holds an annual plant sale, where plants are available for purchase to the public to be reinvested into the greenhouse and the opportunities associated with it. The students also have a new capability to grow seedlings year round because they can grow them right on the heated floors to provide the warm environment the plants require, even in the winter. This remodel makes the growing systems some of the most updated greenhouse technology at the high school level.

The Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter and the Friends of the Wapsie Valley FFA would like to recognize all of the generous donors for their contributions to the remodel project.

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Without the support and contributions of these organizations and individuals, the greenhouse remodel would not have been possible. The Wapsie Valley FFA Chapter and the Friends of the Wapsie Valley FFA would like to thank those that made this plan become a reality.

