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Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

NCTA travel teams enriched

Happy National Agriculture Week!

We've made new friends these past few weeks across the U.S. and recently with agricultural and education leaders in Panama. What an exciting time for the NCTA Aggies!

Our student competitive teams and academic divisions from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are on the road, building relationships at industry tours, regional and national conferences and contests, and educational forums.

This second semester of college yields rewarding experiences for the various clubs and teams as our students put their classroom and laboratory experiential education into practice. These experiences are an important part of a student's education. Students see the application of academic skills in commercial settings. Students gain an appreciation for what they have been studying at NCTA. And students come back motivated and recharged – ready to jump back into our classrooms and laboratories to learn more!

Livestock judging, ranch horse, crops and trap teams vie at contests. Classes from veterinary technology, equine management, feeds and feeding, agribusiness, animal science, feedlot management, agricultural education, agronomy and more tour production and business operations of our industry partners.

Clubs such as Collegiate Farm Bureau, Women in Agriculture, Stock Dog, Rodeo Team, Student Technicians of Veterinary Medicine and 4-H and FFA are at the forefront in policy, service and industry venues.

There's much to be said for climbing into a van following hours and weeks of preparation on campus, then heading toward that common goal at a contest or seminar. Close proximity with teammates and the coach develops an even greater bond and team spirit.

Ask any athlete or livestock judging team member from a small college such as NCTA, and they'll relate the importance of those broader horizons beyond campus. Aggie alumni tell us how team travels opened a world of unique cultural experiences, new technologies in agricultural production, evaluating livestock, crops and business models, and fostering respect for their peers and ultimately, lifelong friends.

In the past 60 days, Aggie students have ventured to Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada, Mississippi, and Texas. Students have represented NCTA at events in Lincoln, Grand Island, Kearney, Broken Bow, Lexington, McCook, Palisade, North Platte and other Nebraska communities. Just this week, an Aggie team is competing at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo at a national livestock judging contest. A group of students just returned from Las Vegas, Nevada, where they participated in the Western Veterinary Conference. Over the weekend, the NCTA Trap Club went to Lincoln and participated in a collegiate trap and skeet competition. Currently, seven horticulture and ag students are

at Mississippi State University competing in the national landscape competition. NCTA's Ranch Horse Team spent last weekend in McCook hosting and staffing, as well as competing in, the Punchy In Pink Spring Roundup competition. Meanwhile, on campus at Curtis, Aggie students participated in and hosted public clinics in barrel racing and stock dog trials.

With each outreach opportunity, we are fostering student motivation and understanding of their academics. There is so much more to college than sitting in the classroom. Our students return from these experiences with a deeper understanding of their academic disciplines.

This weekend, our Panamanian guests noted this success within NCTA's educational framework as a phenomenal experience for learning, team building, and cultivating a student's leadership potential.

During National Agriculture Week, March 13-19, I salute our students and the many, many agricultural leaders, businesses, educators, organizations and partners who enrich Nebraska agriculture and our technical agriculture mission here in Curtis and around the world.

Thank you!

Upcoming NCTA Events:

March 18-20 – NCTA Beef Cattle AI School, Campus Red Barn

March 19-25 – Student Spring Break, Business Offices Open

March 24-25 – NCTA Crops Judging Team to K-State Contest, Manhattan, Kan.

March 27-30 – Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Site Visit, NCTA Campus

March 29 – Nebraska Farm President Steve Nelson program, 6:30 p.m., Ed Center

NCTA Mission:

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.