

September 20, 2016

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

Sharing our diversity and unity

Two leaders in the beef cattle industry recently visited the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture to discuss leadership and career opportunities with our students.

Barb Cooksley and Jaclyn Wilson captivated students during the evening dialog at the Nebraska Agriculture Industry Education Center. Aggie students were listening to every word delivered by these two dynamic ranchers.

Cooksley is the first woman to serve as president of the Nebraska Cattlemen organization. She ranches with her family near Anselmo. Wilson is owner of Flying Diamond Genetics, a business she founded and operates at her family's century old ranch north of Lakeside.

The pair has participated in exciting and eye-opening adventures in trade, education and industry travel in the U.S. and internationally. And, here they were, immersed in discussions with our students, providing encouragement, mentoring and broadening the outlook for some.

The program kicked off a lecture series for the school year which will engage NCTA students in a wide-ranging discussion of agricultural issues, trends, developments and career ideas.

On this evening, two clubs in the NCTA Animal Science Division welcomed guests to campus. The speakers shared their perceptions of leadership roles in what many perceive as a male-dominated industry. The Women in Agriculture and Collegiate Cattlemen student clubs are led by two female students.

Emilye Vales of DeWitt chairs Women in Ag and Eleanor Aufdenkamp of North Platte is president of Collegiate Cattlemen. Both are second year students at NCTA, arriving at campus with solid backgrounds in agriculture production and leadership.

Cooksley and Wilson shared many insights about leadership and Nebraska's agricultural industries. Their reflections were well received by NCTA students. Not all of our students hail from rural areas. Some students are not familiar with the beef cattle industry, its production practices, financial demands, and highly regulated business environment. During the lecture, many students learned about ownership, governance and leadership opportunities in one of Nebraska's predominant industries.

One of the expectations of a college or university is to stimulate insight, discussion, thoughtful and respectful debate about many topics. Last week our lecture topic was about women

leaders in agriculture. This week our diversity program was shining a light on poverty around the world.

Our goal is to enlighten students, expose them to local and world issues, help in their education beyond the atmosphere of our friendly, small, rural campus. And, to celebrate the diverse world, people and issues which comprise our society.

We will be inviting you to join us for these public programs so watch the NCTA calendar for future offerings of student and public engagement.

Upcoming Events:

- Sept. 22-23 – Livestock Judging Team to El Dorado, Kansas
- Sept. 24 – NCTA Trap Club to Grand Island, Mount Marty dual
- Sept. 24-25 – Livestock Judging Team, Lincoln/Omaha, AK-SAR-BEN
- Sept. 25 – Stock Dog Practice, LTC 6-7 p.m.
- Sept. 26 – Collegiate Farm Bureau, Lincoln County meeting
- Sept. 27 – Rural Futures Institute Regional Forum, North Platte WCREC

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.



NCTA Women in Agriculture and Collegiate Cattlemen student groups at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture recently hosted Barb Cooksley, Anselmo, president of Nebraska Cattlemen, (center) and Jaclyn Wilson, (third from right) owner of Flying Diamond Genetics at Lakeside. NCTA program hosts included, from left, Shane Hoer, Blair, Student Senate president; Teri Jo Bek, animal science professor; Emilye Vales, DeWitt, WIA president; Cooksley and Wilson; Eleanor Aufdenkamp, North Platte, CC president; and Whitney Hall, Alliance, NCTA student and summer intern at the Wilson Ranch. (Photo by Christina Tilford/NCTA News)