

March 20, 2017

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

Celebrating National Ag Week

Greetings from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, home of the NCTA Aggies and future leaders in American agriculture.

This week is National Agriculture Week and Nebraskans join the nation's consumers in recognizing the 2017 theme, "Agriculture: Food for Life."

Our institution and campus is one of the few colleges in the U.S. dedicated solely to agriculture and veterinary technology in its academic program. We are proud of the academic quality, student success and low-cost programs for student education provided here in Curtis.

With that responsibility in awarding associate degrees and certificates in a formal setting comes the belief that our service and passion for agriculture truly does provide sustenance for life.

Several of our student clubs and organizations are active in leadership, consumer education and agricultural advocacy such as Collegiate Farm Bureau, Women in Agriculture, Collegiate 4-H and FFA, and our Agricultural Education program.

Aggie students impart information to young school children, adults, urban consumers and our many agricultural partners. This leadership and outreach by the NCTA students helps with consumer information, certainly, but it allows individual stories of student success NCTA's outstanding programs.

In observance of National Agriculture Week, here are some interesting statistics compiled by the USDA and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture:

- Agriculture is the nations' largest employer with about 23 million jobs.
- About 97% of U.S. farms are operated by families.
- Nebraska's farms and ranches utilize 45.2 million acres – 91% of the state's total land area.
- 1 in 4 jobs in Nebraska is related to agriculture.
- The average age of a Nebraska principal operator was 55.7 in 2012.
- Nebraska's ten leading commodities (in order of value) for 2015 cash receipts are cattle and calves, corn, soybeans, hogs, chicken eggs, dairy products, wheat, hay, dry beans and potatoes.
- Nebraska's top five agricultural exports in 2015 were soybeans, feeds and fodders, beef and veal, corn and soybean meal.
- In national rankings, Nebraska is:
 - 1st in beef and veal exports, commercial red meat production, commercial cattle slaughter, Great Northern beans production, all cattle on feed, and popcorn production.
 - 2nd in all cattle and calves, pinto beans production, proso millet production, and bison.
 - 3rd in corn for grain production, corn exports, cash receipts for all livestock and products, and light red kidney bean production.

- 4th cash receipts from all farm commodities (\$23 billion in 2015), cash receipts from all crops, total agricultural exports, all dry edible bean production, beef cows, and land in farms and ranches
- 5th in soybean exports, soybean production, and grain sorghum production
- 6th harvested acres of principal crops, commercial hog slaughter, all hogs and pigs on farms, all hay production, and sugarbeet production
- 7th in sunflower production, winter wheat production and alfalfa hay

The young men and women who dedicate two to three years of their early career involved with an agricultural institution such as NCTA know they are achievers in producing the food, fiber, fuel and leadership which drives the state's economy and its people.

Our students representing Aggie academics and competitive teams are interacting on a daily basis with educators and leaders who assist them in making sound choices for rural America, and in some cases for food production around the globe.

I salute our students and the many agricultural leaders, businesses, educators, organizations and partners who enrich Nebraska agriculture and our technical agriculture mission here in Curtis and internationally.

Thank you for your service to agriculture. Please join me in the 2017 salute to "Agriculture: Food for Life!"

Upcoming NCTA Events:

20-24: National Agriculture Week

24: Frontier County 4-H Horse Club Practice, 6-9 p.m., LTC Arena

26: NCTA Stock Dog Club practice, 5-7 p.m., LTC Arena

27: NCTA Classes resume

28: Master Gardener/Horticulture Webinar, 6:30-9 p.m., Ag Hall

31: Frontier County 4-H Club practice, 5-7 p.m., LTC Arena

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.

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