Harvesting networking experiences
By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean

Education and agriculture are two professions which offer lifelong learning. Students at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are fortunate to have many opportunities for formal learning experiences, both in the classroom and off campus.

Recently, 12 students from NCTA’s Agribusiness Management Systems (AMS) program had a unique opportunity to connect the dots, so to speak, between monetary policy and their chosen profession of agribusiness.

Esther George, president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, spoke at a luncheon and forum in McCook for financial leaders, and two of our faculty, Jennifer McConville and Jeff Nielsen, arranged for students to attend.

“This was a great lesson in economics for our students, as they get ready to leave NCTA and start their own agriculture experiences,” Jennifer McConville shared afterward.

As the Kansas City branch president, Ms. George leads Federal Reserve activities in a seven-state region which includes Nebraska. She shared details with the McCook audience regarding her work as a member of the Federal Open Market Committee which has authority over the monetary policy in the United States.

“Ms. George spent most of her discussion talking about interest rates. She explained that we will probably start seeing a slight increase in rates over the next years. We have been operating at zero interest-rate for several years. This concept is used to drive economic growth and encourage spending. She also explained some of the volatility that will probably occur in the market as interest rates start to increase,” explained Assistant Professor McConville.

I am proud of the initiative of our AMS division to attend this market forum, and of the professionalism of NCTA’s business students in their interactions with business leaders. Opportunities for networking and gaining insights from agricultural professionals are two important elements of the college’s outreach.

Record harvests across the U.S. are filling the bins and adding increased stocks to world grain storage, now peaking at the highest volume in recorded history. As agriculture producers, we truly are helping to grow the food which feeds the world.

What an incredible milestone for American agriculture! While the downside is lower commodity prices currently occurring for producers, we are indeed advancing in the ability to increase foodstuffs with increased knowledge and production skills, and progressive technologies.

Next week, I will be attending the 2014 Global Water for Food Conference, where I look forward to learning more about Nebraska’s role in global food production. Stay tuned for more information.

Our business faculty and four AMS students will have further opportunity for learning and networking on Oct. 28-30 at the 2014 AgriFuture Conference in Kearney. You, too, can engage in these agricultural production and financial discussions with ag leaders, producers, businesses and educators from several states at this first-time conference in Nebraska.

Registration details are available at https://2014agrifutureconference.eventbrite.com or contact NCTA’s AMS Assistant Professor Jeremy Sievers at (308) 367-5250 or jsievers2@unl.edu.
Don’t forget the “Shiny Show” at the Livestock Teaching Center Arena on Saturday, Oct 25. Our Ranch Horse Team will be hosting this Halloween-themed show. Information is available at 308-367-5291, 307-220-2183 or jhergenreder2@unl.edu.

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.