Heifer Link coming to 100 Cow Program
By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean

Students at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture learn in a variety of ways. Hands-on learning is the hallmark of the college. That’s why students select Curtis for their career preparation.

They know that our small class sizes, daily interaction with faculty and staff, and management of animals or crops on campus, will lead to responsibilities and experiences which prepare for their future profession. We can make a difference in that future. We offer many opportunities for success.

Production agriculture courses in livestock management and agronomy include NCTA’s specialty programs called the 100 Beef Cow Ownership Advantage and the 100 Acre Ownership Advantage.

Our goal is to equip interested students with production and management skills and then hone their financial acumen so they will be successful in making application to our USDA partners at the Farm Service Agency for low-interest loans.

Since its inception in 2007, the 100 Beef Cow program at Curtis has enrolled 78 students. This is a unique program – it was developed and launched here at NCTA. Students have the ability to return to the ranch, to start their own beef cattle enterprise or obtain financing to purchase cows. When they do, they are contributing to the agriculturally-based economies of small towns across Nebraska.

Additionally, some graduates have become managers of long-standing ranching operations in the state. They are applying skills and management knowledge gained at NCTA. Perhaps they are also building their own herds, simultaneous to managing valuable livestock and natural resources for their business partners.

Others may dedicate themselves to off-farm or off-ranch income on a fulltime basis, yet carve out the time to manage and improve their own breeding herd while acquiring land and cattle assets for future growth.

We at NCTA are proud of each one of these individuals. It is exciting to assist young people in mapping out their goals, and then seeing their hard work come to fruition. They know we believe in them, dedicating ourselves to not only their academic success but to their development, leadership and personal goals.

NCTA is starting a new project in 2015 called 100 Cow – Heifer Link, with an emphasis to provide greater hands-on management and student responsibilities for the NCTA cattle herd. In their second year of the major, each qualifying student will be given responsibility for a yearling heifer. From their hands-on supervision and management of all facets such as nutrition, reproduction and animal health, each student will plan their future herd and breeding program. And, using the skills learned through NCTA’s artificial insemination coursework, the yearling heifers can be bred at campus. When the student graduates in May from the 100 Cow program after two years of study, he or she can leave college with that bred heifer to begin or add to their own herd.
The 100 Cow - Heifer Link program will be a mentorship/partnership with donors who contribute to the program. We appreciate their support and rely on these types of partnerships to help the college achieve its long-term goals.

This week, we are sharing information about the 100 Cow - Heifer Link with industry partners at some of the state’s agricultural conferences such as Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation and Nebraska Cattlemen.

NCTA also is reaching out to other cattle-related organizations such as the Sandhills Cattle Association and the Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska. They will help stimulate information and conversations about this exciting effort. And, we will be speaking with alumni and individuals across the U.S. who already are, or wish to become, vested in individual student success at NCTA.

It is an exciting time for all us at campus and we are looking forward to launching this new program. Thank you to industry advisors who provided the impetus and traction for Heifer Link to become reality.

If you are interested in learning more about this effort or other opportunities, please contact us at 1-800-3CURTIS. We look forward to sharing details!

Also, thank you to the Curtis community for sharing your holiday season and festivities with NCTA faculty, students and staff. From our NCTA family to yours, Merry Christmas and happy holidays!

Ahead at NCTA:

**Dec. 10** – FFA District 11 Leadership Skills Events (LSE) Contest, NCTA Campus
**Dec. 10** - 5th Annual NCTA Christmas Tree Parade – creations in businesses or at Community Center.
**Dec. 11** – Hometown Christmas, Community Center
**Dec. 13** – NCTA “Giving Christmas,” food, clothing, warm gifts collection
**Dec. 15** – Campus Finals Week

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_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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