The New Year will bring many new opportunities for NCTA and our students here in Curtis, some of which will be expanded programs offered in collaboration with our colleagues and teaching partners at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL).

For example, students interested in becoming high school agriculture teachers can take the first two years of their courses at NCTA and then transfer to UNL to complete their degree program.

Faculty at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are part of that formula for equipping students with professional skills in academic specialties through the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication (ALEC) department at UNL.

NCTA has a long and successful history of teaching technical skills for two-year associate degree programs within the University of Nebraska system. Throughout that history we have shared visions and goals with the University of Nebraska Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) and our partners there.

Through the ALEC programs, students can major in agricultural education, agricultural and environmental sciences communication, or hospitality, restaurant and tourism management. Minor areas of study include leadership and entrepreneurship, and leadership and communication.

At NCTA, Dr. Doug Smith heads these agricultural programs. We are helping prepare students as teachers and leaders. They will be our next generation of FFA advisors and ag instructors at the high school level.

We are proud of Dr. Smith and his efforts, and congratulate him for a recent designation (the first for an NCTA professor) where ALEC designated him as a “professor of practice.”

Basically, this makes Dr. Smith a faculty member at ALEC, as well as NCTA. This opens more doors for teaching ALEC-related courses at NCTA, as well as expanding NCTA’s partnership in continuing education for existing agricultural instructors.

In 2014, some ag teachers from around the state came to Curtis for courses in welding and engine mechanics. We are planning expanded offerings for short courses here at Curtis again this summer.

Another linkage with our Lincoln counterparts is now in its second semester. That is the BAS (Bachelor of Applied Science) degree program which allows our graduates or other students who wish to earn a four-year degree in agricultural science to stay here in Curtis, use our campus facilities and resources, and take on-line classes through IANR’s College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR).
Each of these entities and NCTA partners truly does offer an extensive array for future agricultural professionals through the University of Nebraska system.

And, to top it off, we have officially launched our first classes in Urban Agriculture in the Omaha area, thanks to another great University partner – University of Nebraska Extension. Along with the Omaha Home for Boys, we know this Urban Agriculture program will yield even greater things to come.

Thanks for joining us in this New Year. Let’s make it the best yet!

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\textit{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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