NCTA salutes ag producers

By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean  
Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

This week, March 15-21, we observe National Agriculture Week.

As an institution dedicated to instruction and career development in agriculture, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture honors the heritage of the Curtis campus and the contributions of thousands of graduates who have dedicated their careers to a livelihood in rural America.

Thank you for being an important part of Nebraska agriculture.

Did you know that one of four jobs in the Cornhusker State is created by agriculture and its related industries?

And, are you aware that of the thousands of post-secondary educational institutions in the U.S., NCTA is one of two offering an associate degree in agriculture-only programs?

NCTA has added some new programs this past year continuing a fine tradition of statewide mission in preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries.

The new irrigation technician certificate program with Reinke Manufacturing educates skilled technicians for the center pivot irrigation industry. There is great demand for irrigation techs, as the world’s four largest pivot manufacturers are based in Nebraska.

When these irrigation techs and other students graduate from NCTA, they are workforce-ready.

We survey NCTA graduates three and five years post-graduation. At both times in recent reviews, 75 percent of the students say they are well-prepared for their chosen professions and would again select NCTA as their college.

Last fall, when student enrollment climbed 28 percent, we knew NCTA’s track record and new programs helped draw students to our agriculture college. My goal is to continue that upward growth.

We are fortunate to be a part of Nebraska agriculture, and to help prepare young leaders as agricultural professionals, including ag educators, communicators, technicians, business owners, animal health providers, farmers and ranchers.

Here are a few ag facts to share during National Agriculture Week:

- Nebraskans irrigate 8.2 million acres of cropland by surface and groundwater – more than any other state in the U.S.

- Nebraska is ranked #1 in cattle on feed, beef and veal exports, popcorn and Great Northern beans production, and red meat processing.
The Cornhusker State is ranked #2 in production of proso millet and pinto beans, and cattle and calves.

We are #3 in the production of corn for grain and all dry edible beans, and total cash receipts from farm commodities at $23.5 billion.

97% of all Nebraska farms are family owned.

Today, 1 farmer produces food and fiber for 154 people compared to just 19 people in 1940.

Thanks to each of you who are providers of food, feed, fiber and fuel. Our NCTA hat is tipped in appreciation!

I also extend deep appreciation to Barbara Scharf, Frontier County Extension Educator, who retires after 35 years of dedicated service. Please join us Friday at the Ag Industry Education Center for a reception between 1:30-4:30 p.m. A program begins at 2:30 p.m.

Happy Agriculture Week!

For more information on any of NCTA’s programs call 1-800-3CURTIS or visit the web site at ncta.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.

**Upcoming events:**

March 20 – Barb Scharf Retirement Reception, 1:30-4:30 p.m. (2:30 program)
March 20 – 4-H Horse Practice, 6-8 p.m., LTC arena
March 20-21 – Weekend Artificial Insemination Class, LTC
March 20 – Punchy in Pink Spring Roundup Horse Show, McCook
March 21-28 – NCTA Spring Break
March 25 – Youth Farm Safety Day
March 29 - Performance Horse Reining and Cow Work Clinic

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