Summer visitors; STEM courses last a lifetime
By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean

The NCTA campus is busy here in early July with the Curtis Community Garden growing well thanks to abundant sunshine.

And, our veterinary technology students are hard at work with their summer classes, studies and laboratory sessions underway these past three weeks. The NCTA campus is also busy hosting external groups meeting at our facilities to engage in unique continuing education opportunities.

One such group is high school agricultural instructors from Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas. The “Delta Conference,” as it is called, brings together nearly 50 agricultural education instructors for professional development.

These high school teachers meet at NCTA classrooms and laboratories for one week in early July. The ag instructors are brushing up on hands-on teaching skills and certifications, while others pursue curriculum planning and leadership development.

There is a strong demand by high schools for more teachers in agricultural education. Fortunately, the career is growing all over the Midwest as secondary school systems see the value in launching new agriculture curriculums and FFA organizations.

I appreciate the investment agricultural teachers make in their professions, and the dedication they share in developing future leaders. High school agriculture instructors and FFA advisors are catalysts in preparing youth for lifelong careers in agriculture and leadership.

Their impact is evident here at NCTA. Frequently, our incoming freshmen start their college experience with a strong skill set and academic background from their FFA and 4-H training.

Students select NCTA as their post-secondary institution to further their hands-on knowledge in agriculture while also learning in the “STEM” course areas of science, technology, engineering and math. We equip students for immediate job-readiness upon receiving a 1-year certificate in Irrigation Technology, for example, or earning their two-year Associate of Science or Associate in Applied Science degree in agribusiness management, veterinary technology, crop production, livestock production or equine management. NCTA also prepares students to continue on for a UNL Bachelor of Applied Science, a program they can take right here at Curtis.

NCTA students develop great confidence and workforce readiness through experiential learning. They learn from internships, mentors in the agriculture industry, and working side-by-side with other students and our staff at the NCTA farm and with our cattle and horse herds.
It’s not too late to apply for NCTA’s fall session. Ask about our “Earn to Learn” scholarships. Inquire about work study and career internships. Learn how STEM translates into higher earning power in your career.

New student enrollment is July 13 and classes begin August 24th. I encourage you to make a difference in your life, or in that of a young adult you know. Learn more today at ncta.unl.edu or call 1-800-3-CURTIS.

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.