



## NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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### **NCTA Students Top National Contest**

By NCTA News

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture Crops Judging team won another national championship title and swept the first three individual titles last week in Twin Falls, Idaho. Winning students were Tyler Keener, Mitchell, 1st overall; Leah Schutz, Elwood, 2nd overall; and Jay Mintling, Hayes Center, 3rd overall. Other team members included Owen Harb, Chase Glover, Delany Salm, and Sean Lucas.

All seven team members also competed in the Precision Agriculture Contest, with Jay Mintling earning 1st place overall individual.

The North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Judging Conference is an annual event held each spring in which teams of graduate students from 2-year and 4-year agricultural institutions who are active members of NACTA compete in various contests. There were over 50 colleges and universities at NACTA this year and over 500 students and coaches. Students could compete in twelve different agricultural contests. Next year's competition will be at West Texas A&M from April 9 - 12, 2025.

Recently, the NACTA organization featured Dr. Brad Ramsdale, NCTA Agronomy Professor and Crops team coach.

#### **How long have you been a member of North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture?**

I first attended a NACTA teaching conference in 2006 in Vancouver. Soon after, I switched jobs, and it took a while to get plugged back in. I've been an active member for about 10 years and have taken students to the Judging Conference since 2010.

#### **What have you most enjoyed doing in your time with the Association?**

Preparing student teams for the Judging conference is my greatest passion, but attending the summer teaching conference is always a great experience. Both have provided wonderful opportunities to network with peers from across the country, and I always take home some new teaching ideas from the summer conference. I'd love to see more 2-year agricultural teachers take advantage of the summer teaching conference.

#### **The 2024 NACTA Judging Conference is coming up later this month! What are you most looking forward to?**

Taking students to a national competition and to Twin Falls. The competition itself is an amazing learning experience for students, but traveling to a whole different region in the U.S. and providing students with the chance to experience both agriculture and the culture 900 miles from home will provide lifetime memories.

#### **What interesting things are you working on outside of the Association right now?**

I am launching a new summer teaching program this year. As an agronomy teacher, the best hands-on learning opportunities occur during the summer, but our students also need that internship experience. So, this summer, we have developed a hybrid program where students will work at their internship in the industry 4 days a week and take two classes from me one day a week. The site will be at the University of Nebraska's Stumpf International Wheat Center, an hour from

campus—fully experiential learning at a research center surrounded by a very active agronomy industry.

**What is your most memorable teaching moment?**

About a month ago, a good friend who works with Corteva sent me a text that he met one of my first students when I began teaching at Fresno State from 2003 to 2007. I find it very humbling to know that a very positive impression was made that early in my career.

**Anything else that you would like to add?**

Serving on the NACTA Executive Committee for the last five years has been a wonderful opportunity. The passion of these colleagues for NACTA is amazing.



**Team members (Nebraska hometowns, unless otherwise listed, back row L – R): Jay Mintling (1st year), Hayes Center; Owen Harb (1st year), Grand Island; Tyler Keener (2nd year), Mitchell. Front row (L-R): Delany Salm (1st year), Kendall, WI; Leah Schutz (1st year), Elwood; Chase Glover (2nd year), Grand Island; and Sean Lucas (1st year), Bailey, CO.**

*Part of the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year institution with a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, and related industries. NACTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates, and student teams' success in competitive activities, including crops judging, ranch horse events, livestock judging, shotgun sports, stock dog trials, and intercollegiate rodeo. The college is consistently ranked as one of the best two-year schools in the nation.*

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