



## NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Feb. 8, 2023

### Students to Present on Costa Rica Study Trip February 15

By Noel Ochoa and Ellie Welke

The public is invited to enjoy a presentation by NCTA students who traveled to Costa Rica recently to be held on our Curtis campus at the Agriculture Education Center auditorium at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15, 2023.

These photos represent highlights of the trip, starting with the top left photo of Ellie Welke, a vet tech student from Long Pine, NE, picking coffee beans straight from the plant. This farm engaged the group in the entire process of coffee production, from the plant all the way to drinking a fresh cup of coffee. We learned that coffee beans are picked from the plant when only when they turn a ruby red color resembling cranberries. Coffee beans are handpicked into baskets. Workers are paid about \$3.40/basket with an average of only about 6 baskets being picked by each worker, per day.

The group enjoying a sunset at the end of the trip by the west coast beaches of Costa Rica on the Pacific Ocean. Far back row: NCTA Faculty sponsor Noel Ochoa. Main row (L to R): Alyssa Hasse, Lincoln; Emily Hasse, Lincoln; Larista Barner, Wolbach; Amanda Patterson, Bertrand; Liz Schaffer, McCook; Jo Popp, Curtis; Sarah Stuckey and Omar Mejias, local guides. Front row (L to R): Shelby Kofler, McCook; Riley Brown, Wray, CO; Ellie Welke, Long Pine; and Claudia Stuckey, daughter of the local guide.

Also pictured is the Arenal Volcano in the Alajuela province in Costa Rica, just northwest of the capital, San Jose. Visitors are not allowed to the top of the volcano as it is considered active. It measures 5358 ft. high and has a crater at the top 460 ft. in diameter. The group traveled around the volcano to see it from either side of the continental divide and then toured Arenal Lake which produces considerable hydroelectric power for the country. Arenal Lake covers 33 square miles. When the lake was expanded for the construction of the hydroelectric dam, the towns of Arenal and Tondadora were left at the bottom of the lake. A town called "New Arenal" now borders the lake.

Shelby Kofler and Riley Brown were very excited to try coconut water from a roadside stand at Arenal Lake. There are roadside vendors everywhere in Costa Rica selling everything from bananas, coconuts, oranges, avocados, and pineapples.

Another highlight was visiting two local dairy production farms that use pasture rotations and other regenerative agriculture techniques to improve herd health, increase milk yields, and lower their impact on the Costa Rica environment. This is a herd of Jerseys in the city of Monte Verde, owned by our tour guide's family.

“The trip is so much more than a beach vacation or a “vet tech” trip, I really hope we can get the word out so that next time the trip happens, we can add more students from other departments, faculty/staff, and even community members.” Noel Ochoa, NCTA faculty member encourages more participation in the coming years.

Come to the presentation and see if you may want to join them in 2025!





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*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. NCTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates, and for the success of student teams 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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