



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Aug. 19, 2020  
By NCTA News

## Ramsdale receives Bruntz Family Teaching Award

CURTIS, Neb. – “A faculty member who has made an extraordinary impact on the life of an NCTA student.”

This describes Brad Ramsdale, Ph.D., of Curtis, the 2020 recipient of the Bruntz Family Teaching Award, an esteemed faculty honor at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

Dr. Ramsdale is an associate professor of agronomy and chair of NCTA’s Agronomy and Agricultural Mechanics Division.

In the past 14 years, Ramsdale has accomplished much in the realm of agronomy, crops, irrigation, horticulture, ag mechanics, honors programs, respected advisor, and academic leader.

Since joining the NCTA faculty in 2007, he has launched and still coaches award-winning crops judging teams, coordinates achievement and assessment programs at NCTA, teaches a broad year-round course load, and enjoys getting out onto the college’s 550-acre farm and student learning laboratory.

There, you will find him operating tractors, planters, tillage equipment, a combine, managing irrigation and precision ag equipment, or in the seat of the large self-propelled crops sprayer that he helped the college acquire for teaching and production operations.

The quiet and humble professor is in the driver’s seat of major initiatives on the rural campus in southwestern Nebraska.

Appropriately, after the spring semester’s teaching programs downshifted to remote coursework due to COVID-19, the spring warmed up, and most campus crops were finally in the ground, Ramsdale was recognized with the annual award in early July.

He was nominated by colleague Mary Rittenhouse, chair of NCTA’s Agribusiness Management Systems Division.

“Dr. Ramsdale has implemented innovative and unique approaches in his teaching program which have resulted in meaningful and long-term learning in his students,” Rittenhouse said. “His techniques motivate students to stretch beyond ‘normal’ in their learning endeavors.”

A Kansas native who earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agronomy at Kansas State University, he then followed with a doctorate in plant science from North Dakota State.

Ramsdale is active in community programs around Curtis such as intramural sports, his church, and enjoys fishing.

He is known in academia for strengthening partnerships with the agricultural industry in several states, and with NCTA college alumni and Nebraska’s high school ag and science programs.

His impact on students is evident, as they continue to touch base with their mentor.

"I grew up on a farm, so I *thought* I knew a lot about a wide variety of crops," says Clade Anderson of Otis, Kansas.

"But after graduating from NCTA I now have a very wide variety of knowledge of all crops, not just the ones that are grown the most frequently."

"That is all because of Dr. Ramsdale. He is very knowledgeable in all aspects of the farm," Anderson continues. "He made the classroom very fun and he also kept us engaged with new tricks to identify and learn about a certain crop, weed, and or pest, and much more."

Anderson joined the crops judging team his first year. He also was president for two years of the Farm Bureau Club, of which Ramsdale is faculty sponsor. Clade was one of three NCTA graduates who were nominated this spring as the NCTA Aggie of the Year.

Accolades by Anderson for his major professor and advisor continue. For the past two summers, Clade worked with an aerial crop application business based in Wyoming. "My employer is very impressed with my knowledge, and that is because of Dr. Ramsdale."

This month, Anderson goes on to pursue a bachelor's degree, built on the strong foundation of NCTA.

The Bruntz Family award was established in late 2017 by Ann and David Bruntz, both UNSTA/NCTA alumni and ag producers from Friend, Nebraska.

The award is in memory of their daughter, Julie Bruntz, whose life and early career "were put on a strong positive trajectory as a result of her interaction with an NCTA faculty member" in the veterinary technology program.

At an awards luncheon, Rittenhouse said the Bruntz family honors Ramsdale with \$1,000, and will add his name to the award plaque. It hangs in the NCTA Agriculture Industry Education Center, home to Ramsdale's office and soils lab.

During his NCTA tenure, Ramsdale also has started an academic honors program, a crops practicum course, 1-year certificate programs for ag chemical application and irrigation technicians, and has won campus, University of Nebraska, and national awards for teaching.

For the past two years, he also spearheaded the recent campus review for NCTA's reauthorization of accreditation by the regional team of the Higher Learning Commission.

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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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