



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Jan. 9, 2021

Happy New Year!

NCTA Dean's Message by Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

We are starting the new year of 2021 with renewed energies and a fresh perspective for what is ahead this semester at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

The holiday break was just what we all needed to allow us time with families, friends and loved ones.

Campus activities this past week focused on preparations for the semester which begins January 11. Our faculty and staff have recharged their batteries. Hopefully, our Aggie students have done the same during their break and are ready to tackle a successful year ahead.

We greeted students early last week with the livestock judging team and coach Doug Smith starting some workouts ahead of their judging season. Their first meet is Jan. 12-13 at the Cattlemen's Congress Judging Contests in Oklahoma City.

Also, the Resident Assistants who staff the three residence halls on campus returned early for their orientation with Residence Life Manager Erika Arambula. Aggie students who live on campus moved back into their halls over the weekend.

Staff and faculty prepared for the Spring Semester with orientation and meetings. I appreciate the dedication of the individuals who work at NCTA and thank them for their commitment to student success.

Kudos for 2020

Our academic team had several "firsts" in 2019 and 2020, some of which occurred prior to my arrival last June as the new dean. I would be remiss to not give each of these individuals a shout out, as well, as they were integral to our teaching component on campus.

For the first time in recent history, several courses in the NCTA Animal Science division utilized teaching assistants affiliated with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Thank you to Haley Linder who taught an animal nutrition course for us last fall and also served as an assistant coach for the NCTA Ranch Horse Team. She resided in Curtis one semester and boarded her horse off campus so that she could continue to enjoy horsemanship and ranch horse competitions.

In December, Haley graduated with her master's degree in animal science from UNL. Her thesis research was evaluating distillers grains supplementation strategies for growing beef calves on a high forage diet. Haley is now working on a doctoral degree at Texas A&M, studying nitrogen metabolism in beef cattle. We wish her well in the newest endeavor and extend a huge thank you to Haley for being a part of our NCTA family!

Also, kudos to teaching assistants in Fall, 2019. As doctoral students, Jocelyn Beard and Tasha King conducted research with faculty at the University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center.



Joslyn was studying nutrition in beef cattle on range conditions at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory near Whitman. She assisted with Range Management classes at NCTA. Tasha was writing her dissertation on the energetic efficiency of commercial beef cows and milk production. She taught Introduction to Animal Biology and Animal Nutrition. Thank you to both Joslyn and Tasha. Also, congratulations to them as they each received the prestigious Holling Family Award for Teaching Excellence last March after being nominated by Kelly Bruns.

Finally, but certainly not last, I extend great appreciation to Dr. Bruns, director of the WCREC in North Platte for his leadership in the interim dean capacity at NCTA. He guided the campus and institutional priorities and employees through our transition period from August 2019 until June 2020.

Thankfully for me, Kelly has continued to be an advisor, friend and strong advocate to me and NCTA during the administrative transition and holds a courtesy appointment as an NCTA associate dean. I am grateful!

To our health

We begin the new semester with steady eyes on the health and safety of our campus community. Each of us at NCTA is undergoing a screening for COVID-19 by taking a non-invasive saliva test. For those of our campus family who have tested positive for the virus in the past 90 days, the test is waived.

Together, we can continue to provide daily hands-on academics and leadership opportunities for our Aggie students. Here's to a healthy and successful semester and new year of 2021!

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 numerous 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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Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/25ey>



NCTA faculty and staff gathered in person for New Semester Orientation ahead of the 2019-2020 year. This academic year of 2020-21, groups are required to physically distance or be conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Kelly Bruns, front row, second from left, served as interim dean at NCTA when this photo was taken in Fall, 2019. (NCTA file photo)