



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Jan. 11, 2022

## **NCTA Recap for 2021 – Part 2**

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

The year of 2021 was both successful and eventful at the Aggie campus of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. Here's a recap from the second half of the year:

**July** - NCTA hosted a three-day Ag Mechanics / Ag Instructor Boot Camp for high school teachers. Participants sharpened skills on small engines, electricity, and welding along with sessions on course curriculum and FFA leadership development. Aggie recruiters had a busy month with outreach at cattle shows, county fairs, the National High School Rodeo Finals in Lincoln, and the Burwell Parade and Rodeo. Jaden Clark, Curtis businessman and native of rural Wellfleet, was named the new NCTA Rodeo Coach.

**August** - Summer session ended August 6. Students, stock dogs and volunteers were busy with numerous county fairs in the region. Noel Ochoa, NCTA alumnus, joined the faculty in Veterinary Technology. Fall semester started August 23 with 232 fulltime students, a 6.4% increase from 2020. Aggie recruiters, rodeo, livestock, and stock dog teams, plus Collegiate Cattlemen were part of the Nebraska State Fair. Wallet Hub named NCTA a Top 2-Year College for career outcomes, based on 10-year post-graduate earnings for the second year in a row. <https://wallethub.com/edu/e/best-worst-community-colleges/15076> NCTA also was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in Nebraska among seven, public 2-Year colleges.

**September** - Aggie teams jumped into action with fundraisers which help on travel and entry expenses. Shotgun Sports Team hosted a public clay targets match at the Curtis Gun Club. Aggie Rodeo launched its new activity, 2021 Round Robin Team Roping Series, with weekly ropings to November. Rodeo also had contests at Wisconsin, North Platte, and Iowa. Recruiters and students engaged with the public for three days at Husker Harvest Days. NCTA joined CASNR for an alumni and industry employer reception. Aggie Ranch Horse had two contests in Colorado, and Shotgun Sports hosted a 3-day match at North Platte. Aggie recruiters traveled to 30 in-person college fairs across Nebraska, meeting with hundreds of prospective students. Livestock teams competed at Aksarben in Grand Island.

**October** – Prospective students arrived for Discovery Day on Oct. 5, Stock Dog Trials were Oct. 9-10, and Ranch Horse Team made two trips to Colorado contests. Fall break was brief on Oct. 18-19 with students organizing unique campus events in October and November for Human Relations class. Dr. Gossen hosted a campus reception for seven FFA members receiving American FFA Degrees virtually, or attending in person, for the National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis. NCTA recruiters Andela and Rulon took a large NCTA exhibit to Indy, and Dr. Doug Smith served on the livestock evaluation committee which conducted the national livestock contest. The month was wrapped up with an advocacy program by Trent Loos, board member with Protect the Harvest; a 5K Fun Run for Halloween, a Car & Truck Show on campus, and a two-day AI breeding course for livestock students.

**November** – The Crops Judging Team and Dr. Brad Ramsdale traveled to Salt Lake City for the American Society of Agronomy meetings and a collegiate crops contest. The Aggie sophomores, the only 2-year college in attendance, earned fourth place overall, surpassing several top 4-year schools in the rankings. Kaden Bryant of Firth was 4<sup>th</sup> place individual among 72 contestants. FFA District events brought 400 students and advisors to NCTA campus for several sessions of Leadership or Career Development Events. Nearly 100 students and guests attended the second Discovery Day of the fall season on Nov. 15.

**December** - Dan Stehlik, agricultural mechanics lecturer, was recognized as a regional winner of the Outstanding Postsecondary Agriculture Program from the National Association of Agricultural Educators during the NAAE convention in New Orleans. Deans Gossen and McConville also attended. Aggie students finished semester projects in early December and took final exams Dec. 13-16. For some Aggies, they completed requirements for graduation. Nine students achieved perfect 4.0 GPA for the fall semester, making the Dean's List. Also, 46 students with 3.5-3.99 GPA made Dean's Honor Roll.

### **Onward with the new**

The year-end also saw several campus improvements and renovations either concluded, underway or in the bidding process through deferred maintenance and designated projects. These included upgrades to the Frontier County Extension Office housed in Ag Hall, several classroom upgrades, updated technology, teaching resources, campus lighting, sidewalks, roads and more. NCTA received \$3.1 million for deferred maintenance from the 2021 Legislative appropriation to the NU system. Projects will continue throughout 2022 until all are completed.

Plans are underway for renovation to the Student Union (older gymnasium) to create an upgraded Student Activities and Success Center. New construction with an addition to the existing structure will allow relocation of the Aggie Dining facility (lower level of a former residence hall), fitness center, and some administrative offices into a modernized building with ADA accessibility. I look forward to sharing more with readers on this project in future updates.

Our Aggie students and campus community did, indeed, have a highly successful and productive year in 2021. We appreciate the support of Nebraskans, our stakeholders and alumni, the students and their families, and many industry partners. Here's to an even better 2022!

### **Jump ahead with credits**

High school students can get a jump start on college courses this spring if enrolled by Friday in a Dual Credit class. For \$69.50, which is half price of a regular 1-credit-hour class, students can explore six ag career categories in "Introduction to Careers in Agriculture" taught by Professor Brad Ramsdale. For details, see <https://ncta.unl.edu/dual-credit-and-agricultural-academies>.

*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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Noel Ochoa, left, joined the NCTA Veterinary Technology teaching staff in August. (George Hipple Photography / NCTA)