

Feb. 1, 2018

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

NCTA: Stock dogs, student clubs enrich ag campus

When Lacey Johnson first came to college at Curtis in 2007 her sights were set primarily on academics in veterinary technology.

Along the way during three years of studies, she was influenced by Professor Judy Bowmaster-Cole in a dog obedience class. Lacey gained interest in how a well-trained stock dog could help in safe handling of livestock.

Today, Lacey and her husband Jake Haskell live and work in Kansas, where Lacey uses stock dogs around the farm. She also works in a feed business and Jake is employed in banking and crop insurance.

Their college experiences at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis prompted them to say thanks to the college and the NCTA Stock Dog Club by making a donation toward dog kennels for students temporarily housing dogs on campus during classes and stock dog activities.

This weekend, NCTA students and stock dogs and owners from several states will be gathering in the indoor arena at campus for a working dog trial hosted by the student club and the Outback Stock Dog Association.

The campus experience of Lacey and Jake Haskell is one of many examples we hear from students who benefitted from enhanced academic opportunities at NCTA.

Students are gaining lifelong skills, developing leadership, demonstrating cooperation and work ethic, and gaining responsibilities by learning and competing individually and as members of a collegiate team.

Last weekend, freshmen and sophomores on the NCTA Livestock Judging Teams traveled to Sioux Falls for the Sioux Empire Farm Show contests. The team did very well in the contests.

A highlight of their travel experience, however, is the relationships the students build with livestock producers such as Ruth Simmentals where they stopped to practice and judge cattle. They were also treated to meals shared by these families of NCTA students: the Wilke Family of Columbus and the Fleer Family of Pierce.

Special opportunities like these make a lifelong memory as students traveling in college vans stop for a break and enjoy fellowship together.

The spring season of student competitions is gearing up for Aggie students in ranch horse, crops judging, livestock judging, stock dogs, shotgun sports and rodeo. Academic competitions will culminate in late April for some of these traveling teams plus others from NCTA with an annual national contest.

This year, the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) conference and contests will be in Norfolk, Nebraska. We look forward to that fine event each year as it rotates around the U.S.

At Manhattan, Kansas in 2017, NCTA was Reserve Champion Sweepstakes winner, and the Aggie Crops Judging Team won the National Championship. Bravo Aggies!

We also have students who are very active in student academics such as Agricultural Education (judging record books at a school in the region this week), Agribusiness Club (planning a trip on Ag policy and government), and Women in Agriculture (attending the Women in Ag conference in Kearney), among several other student club events held in February and March.

Be watching this column for news of upcoming programs and projects for our NCTA students. When activities occur here on campus or in nearby locales, we will inform you so that you may attend and observe our Aggie students in action.

Your next opportunity for witnessing Aggie learning is this weekend, February 3-4, with the Stock Dog Trials in the heated indoor arena of the Livestock Teaching Center. I hope to see you there!

Online article at: <https://go.unl.edu/8a0q>

Around Campus:

FEBRUARY

- 1 – 4-H Beef Weigh In, 6 p.m., Red Barn
- 3-4 – NCTA Stock Dog Trial, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., LTC arena
- 6 – Collegiate Cattlemen, 6:30 p.m., LTC (NCTA)
- 7 – District XI FFA, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m., NCTA campus

NCTA Mission:

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.

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A student's stock dog from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis has a gentle face-off with a goat at the NCTA campus farm. (Craig Chandler / NCTA photo)