

February 7, 2018

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

NCTA: Animals, Students and Outreach

Social media is the primary communication tool for many friends and followers of our student population at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

Facebook is an effective means of relaying stories of our campus community to alumni, stakeholders in NCTA, and the family and friends of Aggie students.

Realizing not everyone is connected to social media, we also project our messages through this column, news releases, our official web site at <https://ncta.unl.edu/>, Twitter and some radio commentary.

One of our newest outlets in social media is our video report, "At the Desk with the Dean." In these brief reports on Facebook Live, we provide a real-time, live window into daily campus activities. The filming takes place in our laboratories and classrooms, and the sessions are unscripted and unedited.

What began as a commentary from behind the Dean's desk in Ag Hall has evolved into a "roving reporter" format. Thanks to Tina Smith, admissions and recruiting coordinator, our Facebook Live filming allows us to showcase some of the rich, hands-on activities experienced by NCTA students.

Our Facebook followers wonder where on campus the weekly dispatch will occur next – we may be visiting with students at the Ag Business program's "Cup of Joe on the Go", or perhaps we will be broadcasting from the NCTA meat processing laboratory where students are learning how to process a carcass into retail cuts of meat.

NCTA features a wealth of hands-on learning activities during daily classes and laboratory sessions – both indoors and outside on the campus farm.

Last month we met at the Veterinary Technology division for a look at the start of a live surgery. Second-year Vet Tech student Payton Peterson described responsibilities that Vet Tech students have in prepping for a surgery the day and evening prior, along with the duties at the surgical table with Professor Ricky Sue Barnes, DVM. Payton also explained the work being done by a group of students in the background as they applied anesthesia to a dog about to undergo a surgery.

A technician student performs tasks such as sterilizing tools and supplies, arranging sterile packs in the surgery suite, and ensuring every "i" is dotted and "t" crossed before an animal is readied by the student prep team.

Other students are guided by Barb Berg, VT Division chair, in planning anesthesiology, monitoring and charting the patient through the surgery, and ensuring a successful post-op recovery. Students in the surgery suite are engaging in tasks that prepare them for a real-life setting at an animal hospital or clinic.

Last week, viewers saw equine students practicing skills with horses in beginning, intermediate and advanced riding classes. Joanna Hergenreder, assistant professor of animal science and coach of the NCTA Ranch Horse Team, described the training techniques for student-owned and campus horses as we watched the class at the campus indoor arena.

Professor Hergenreder is an outstanding teacher who motivates her students in all facets of their coursework. Though some students do ride hunt seat on occasion, most of NCTA's programs emphasize western riding.

Our program prepares students to be trainers or managers of equine operations, and to understand the business side of equine production as well as the requisite technical skills. The popular Ranch Horse team highlights the advances the

riders and their horses make from beginning phases to advanced competitions in reining and cow work for cutting horses.

Practical ranching aspects are emphasized. NCTA graduates are skilled in dealing with real-life situations in moving cattle, roping, and cow work. Students learn horsemanship skills such as opening and closing gates while mounted and on foot, walking a horse across boards or bridges, safely encountering obstacles such as downed trees, and how to prevent a horse from shying away from rustling objects such as a rain slicker or feed sack blowing in the wind. Always, safety is first with our students and horses.

If you are inclined to view some of these Facebook Live or archived interviews from campus, see our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfNebraskaNcta/> I hope you tune in and join “At the Desk with the Dean” in future sessions!

Around Campus:

FEBRUARY

7 – District XI FFA, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m., NCTA campus

8 – Valentine’s Day Dance, 9 p.m.-midnight, Student Union

10-11 - Livestock Judging Team, Iowa Beef Expo

10-11- Crops Judging Team, Oklahoma Panhandle State

13 – E.N. Thompson Forum, Misty Copeland, 7 p.m., Ed Center (Public event)

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.

Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/d7bp>



NCTA student veterinary technicians apply stitches under the watchful eye of Dr. Ricky Sue Barnes (Crawford/NCTA photo)