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By NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

Crafting ag and trade skills

CURTIS, Neb. – Workforce development is a priority for many young people seeking skills in agricultural trades and sciences.

During high school, **Donovan Buss** took advantage of college partnerships that York Public Schools forged with the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture.

Buss enrolled in dual credit or “concurrent” courses, several of which were NCTA diversified agriculture courses, which enabled him to graduate from YHS in May 2017 with enough credits to enroll for NCTA that fall as a college sophomore.

He was on the fast track in agronomy and diversified agriculture. In his third semester at NCTA, Buss was again a step ahead, simultaneously wrapping up his associate degree program while also taking online courses from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Today, from the Buss family farm in York, he commutes three days a week to classes at UNL where he is on track for a bachelor of science in agribusiness in May, 2020. Meanwhile, he also is earning an income three to four days a week following his passion in agriculture.

Angela Crouse is studying veterinary technology at NCTA, focusing her studies and part-time work with an area veterinary practice primarily for on large animals, feedlot cattle and cow-calf enterprises.

However, the native of a family ranch near Haigler, Nebraska, initially started her collegiate studies in human health systems. She soon realized her passion and interests in agriculture were more aligned in animal health so she transferred to NCTA to study in a hands-on program to become a veterinary technician.

The agricultural campus at NCTA offers a win-win for this outdoor enthusiast who also competes on the Aggie Shooting Sports Team and serves as its club president.

The second-year student hopes to gain her required internship in a veterinary practice which specializes in feedlot health and the beef cattle industry. With the NCTA campus farm, student beef herd, a small feedlot, and access to an assortment of livestock and horses, Crouse finds the ideal setting to achieve her workforce development goals.



Chase Stanley and Jarrod Tuttle gain electrical and irrigation tech skills with the small center pivot at the NCTA ag mechanics lab-classroom. (Crawford/NCTA News photo)

NCTA has been named among the Top Ten large animal vet tech programs in the U.S. for that very reason – on-site, hands-on learning to cattle, sheep, swine, horses and production agricultural enterprises.

Chase Stanley graduated from Lincoln East High School, having grown up in Lancaster County. However, his uncle farmed in Fillmore County and operates a family irrigation business, Carlson Irrigation in Shickley,

The company encouraged Stanley to enroll in the NCTA irrigation technician program, which is a partnership with Reinke Manufacturing of Deshler, Nebraska. Reinke will match an irrigation dealership's \$1,000 scholarship provided to a student who then commits to employment with the local dealer.

In his situation, Stanley came to NCTA knowing here he was headed in his career. He will graduate in May, plans to settle in Fillmore County, and work in farming and the irrigation industry.

The electricity and welding courses required at NCTA for an irrigation technician certificate were designed in the NCTA-Reinke partnership to aid Nebraska's need for well-trained, skilled technicians in the center pivot irrigation industry.

National exposure of NCTA's program drew the attention of **Jarrold Tuttle** of Eltopia, Washington. He wanted to study in the Nebraska program, knowing of the strong demand for the trade across the U.S.

This summer, Tuttle will be employed by Carlson Irrigation, working from their headquarters in Shickley. He plans to return to NCTA in the fall for additional welding, electricity and agricultural mechanics courses to earn his associate degree.

These programs and more will be featured at the NCTA Discovery Day on Monday, March 4. Campus tours, meetings with faculty and advisors, and information about Aggie clubs and teams are on tap, along with a lunch for the prospective students and their guests. For information and to register, see <https://ncta.unl.edu/discovery-days>.

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

NCTA Events:

- Feb. 26 – Adams Middle School NCTA campus visit
- Feb. 27 – Kearney High School NCTA campus visit
- Feb. 28 – Feeding Cattle & Horses workshop, 5-9 p.m., Ed Center
- March 4 – Discovery Day, 8:30 a.m., Welcome Center
- March 5 – District 11 FFA contests, NCTA Campus
- March 8 – NCTA Crops Contest, Ed Center

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