



March 7, 2019  
By NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

## **Aggies work through all types of weather**

There's no doubt about it, agriculturalists are hardy stock.

While Nebraska ranchers and livestock producers are battling frigid temperatures and winter conditions across the state, our Aggie students are facing this same dose of an extra harsh winter at campus.

Animal science and several veterinary technology majors at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis take a shift in calving rotation, checking expectant cows due to deliver soon.

Excitement rippled through social media a week ago with the arrival of the first calf to be born this spring.

"Welcome to NCTA little buddy," said Damian Wellman of Prairie View, Kansas, posting a Facebook photo of the cow and calf.



*First spring calf of 2019 at NCTA.*

Soon, a second photo announcement appeared.

This one from Emily Kammerer of Sutherland. "First spring calf at NCTA hit the ground early this morning! Welcome to the world little guy!"

At the time of this writing, we have four calves on the ground.

As the Ranch Horse Team traveled to Colorado over the weekend for its first Stock Cow Horse Show of 2019, several students stayed at Curtis, caring for the NCTA horses on campus or those boarded at private facilities near town.

The Aggies in equine management and the four student workers on the "farm crew" are out at 6 a.m. daily, breaking ice at water tanks, pitching hay to horses, carrying feed buckets of grain to stalls and pens, and walking through corrals and pens checking on livestock and horses.

This is a daily routine for NCTA students as part of their curriculum in livestock management, or as their responsibilities as student workers at the horse barn, managing the indoor arena or caring for livestock near the "red barn" up on the northeast hillside and at the NCTA feedlot.

Over at the Veterinary Technology complex, students have facility and animal chores which are mostly indoor. However, they keep similar pre-dawn hours arriving early on campus for animal care. Five VT students are helping with the calving duties, too, as part of the calving rotation class offered in their program. The class has been in place since 1990, posting students at various livestock locations across the state, said Ricky Sue Barnes, DVM. The last several years, they have taken rotations with the NCTA beef herd.

I had to chuckle while attending a meeting at another college campus earlier this week when I overheard an interesting conversation. Some students were expecting their classes to be canceled because of the frigid temps. My thoughts quickly turned to the NCTA students who would have been on calving watch through the night in spite of the -10° temperatures.

On a more serious note, though, we do appreciate the industrious and responsible role that students hold in their daily chores. They are true caretakers of the animals living at the NCTA farm and teaching locations. A pre-National Agriculture Week salute to our Aggie students, and all farmers and ranchers!

### **Campus farm growth**

In the upcoming months, we will be expanding the animal species at the NCTA farm for greater year-round programming and short-course opportunities. Hands-on learning will continue with our beef cattle herd, and we plan to add some swine, sheep and poultry numbers to our inventory.

In May, NCTA will again coordinate with the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the CASNR Undergraduate Scholars Program (CUSP). In 2018, we hosted 48 CUSP students from Rwanda. This year, the program expands from three to seven weeks.

We look forward to sharing this cultural opportunity with the Curtis community. In addition to daily classes, CUSP students will be involved in farm tours, family social times, picnics, programs, and gatherings organized by local churches.

Also this spring, in our agronomy department, NCTA students will be working in teams with the guidance of Professor Brad Ramsdale to plan crop rotations for spring planting. And, next fall, some will be taking the harvest operations course with instructor Roy Cole.

One goal for the campus 250-acre farm is adding cover crops to the rotation of the traditional corn and soybean crops. Students appreciate their experiences with the hands-on operation of farm machinery, implements and equipment at planting and harvest time.

NCTA students have many opportunities to become involved in campus operations. They learn about managing livestock as well as our equipment and crops. They value the responsibilities of working together as student teams and faculty. They appreciate developing skills in the business and financial management aspects of agriculture production.

The NCTA Collegiate Cattlemen Club invites you to join them on Thursday, March 14, for a meal and program of agricultural advocacy with speaker Trent Loos. Registrations will be limited to the first 50 reservations. I hope to see some of you there.

***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 March Events:**

9-10 – Shooting Sports Team at Doane College, Lincoln

10-16 – National Agriculture Week

11 – NCTA to UNL Transfer Student advising, 9:30 a.m.

14 – Student BQA Certification, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. LTC and Cattle Handling facilities

14 – Collegiate Cattlemen Meal and Trent Loos ag advocacy program, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Student Union

Read this article online: <https://go.unl.edu/2i9b>