



March 22, 2022

National Ag Week Salute

NCTA Dean's Message by Dr. Larry Gossen

America observes National Agriculture Week March 20 to 26!

At the Nebraska College of Technical in Curtis, *EVERY* week is Agriculture Week.

After all, we've been known as the Aggies since the regional boarding school was first opened its doors in 1913.

Everywhere one turns on campus and nearby farm and pasture of Aggieland, we emphasize academics through hands-on learning.

At NCTA, students learn hands-on animal health and management with cattle, goats, sheep, swine, horses and poultry. Our veterinary technician students care for small companion animals and larger animals as well.

We use horses for ranch work around our cow herd here on campus and at the Leu Ranch in Hayes County. Our student workers who ride horses and manage the cattle herds at NCTA prefer the title of "ranch crew" while their counterparts on the crops and farm side are the "farm crew."

Students participate in their classes in crop management and agronomy with crops such as corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa, triticale and forage sorghum.

During our recent Spring Break, many students went home to their family farms and ranches to help with spring calving, livestock chores or readying machinery for spring planting season.

Some of our Aggie students volunteered to stick around Curtis, caring for the college's animals and livestock in Animal Science and Veterinary Technology facilities. They took care of horses or pets owned by students who traveled.

Our Shotgun Sports Team and Ranch Horse team members came back to campus mid-week to leave for team activities in New Mexico or Wyoming. All the while, someone was minding the work back at campus or at home.

Agriculture is our #1 industry in Nebraska. Livestock and crop producers lead the U.S. in total receipts of agricultural commodities.

We know how much work and resources that individuals and agriculture operations have invested in their business of farming and ranching.

Steve Wellman, a producer from southeastern Nebraska and graduate of NCTA in production agriculture, is director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

In his Agriculture Week message, Director Wellman reports that Nebraska's agriculture producers and industries are among the best in the nation.

In 2020, strong crop and beef cattle production boosted Nebraska exports beyond \$7.1 billion in agricultural goods. That was \$847 million higher than 2019, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Wellman reports Nebraska's top rankings as:

- #1 in cash receipts from all farm commodities per capita; and
- #1 in commercial cattle processing (2021) at 7,091,600 head; and
- #2 in cattle on feed (Jan. 1, 2022), all cattle and calves (Jan. 1, 2022), beef exports (2021), and commercial red meat production (2021).

We also are #1 in the nation for popcorn production (2017), and Great Northern bean production (2021).

This Agriculture Week, NCTA recognizes the hard work and commitment of farm and ranch families, our students, Aggie alumni, and the hundreds of agricultural partners we value in production agriculture, animal health and related industries.

THANK YOU for producing food, fiber and fuels to support our world.

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.



An animal science student and “farm crew” employee at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture stops to check the feed wagon while doing chores at the NCTA campus farm. (M. Crawford / NCTA News)