



March 28, 2019
By NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

Agriculture needs are global

CURTIS, Neb. – The linkage between a small rural technical college in Nebraska and agricultural learning in Rwanda is expanding.

During the 2019 summer session, NCTA will again be hosting a group of 50 Rwandan students who will be coming to Curtis for seven weeks to learn technical skills in agriculture. Some details are still being finalized but the students are currently scheduled to be in Curtis from May 13 through June 28.

These students are now completing their freshman year of a baccalaureate program in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. At UNL, they are enrolled in an initiative known as the CASNR Undergraduate Scholars Program – or CUSP.



These UNL students from Rwanda took a horticulture class in their hands-on programs at NCTA last summer.

CUSP students will live in the NCTA residence halls and take courses Monday thru Friday. They will also immerse themselves in our Curtis community and share many experiences throughout Frontier County.

The NCTA CUSP program features experiential courses in horticulture, welding, agricultural equipment operation and maintenance, dairy production, poultry production, swine production, crop production, meat processing and animal health.

When done with their bachelor's programs through UNL, these CUSP graduates will apply their Nebraska education in Rwanda, a country which is laser focused on expanding its agricultural opportunities in crop, dairy and small animal production.

We are looking forward to hosting these new Rwandan CUSP friends at NCTA. Their interactions in Curtis help the college to achieve our objective of increasing global understanding in our community.

NCTA role in RICA

On a larger scale, NCTA and CASNR at UNL are part of an international initiative to develop a higher education institution in Africa called the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture or RICA.

The government of Rwanda is dedicated to building agricultural sustenance and is seeking development assistance from Nebraskans in several capacities.

The RICA project includes construction of an agricultural college campus, patterned after some of our resources here in Curtis. Set to open in the fall semester, RICA will accept 84 students into the initial Class of 2023. Interviews are underway now in Rwanda from the 7,000 potential students who applied.

Doug Smith, Ph.D., is the chair of NCTA's animal science and agricultural education division. Earlier this month Professor Smith was part of a 12-member University of Nebraska team which visited Rwanda.

Team members are providing their expertise to the RICA effort in the country of 15 million people. With University resources such as NCTA's experiential academics, we can assist in training CUSP and RICA students.

While in Rwanda, Dr. Smith and the UNL team conducted interviews for the CUSP students coming to UNL this fall. They also would join us at NCTA for the 2020 summer program. Of 2,000 applicants, 160 were selected to be interviewed as these prospective students.

NCTA seminar on Rwanda is April 1

Professor Smith will be sharing a slide program about his work and travels to Rwanda next Monday. We also will be available to answer questions from the Curtis community regarding our UNL-NCTA CUSP effort in May and June.

Please join us at the Nebraska Agriculture Industry Education Center at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 1.

University President steps down

I learned Monday while drafting my weekly "Dean's Message from NCTA" of the announcement by Hank Bounds, University of Nebraska president.

He will be leaving the University system, which includes the NCTA campus and programs in Curtis. We appreciate Dr. Bounds' capable leadership and dedication to NCTA. He began his collegiate career at a rural, two-year agricultural school in Mississippi.

Thank you, Dr. Bounds, for being one of us – a true Aggie!

***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.*

Upcoming events:

March 30-31: Sherman Tegtmeier Reining and Horsemanship Clinic, 8 a.m., LTC Arena

April 1: Rwandan Agriculture Experience, Dr. Smith, 7 p.m., Ed Center

April 2: Frontier County 4-H Speech Contest, 6 p.m., Ed Center

April 6-7: NCTA and Outback Stock Dog Trails, 8 a.m. both days, LTC Arena

See this message on line: <https://go.unl.edu/ry8i>