



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

April 12, 2022

## **NCTA applauds FFA leaders and teachers**

NCTA Dean's Message by Dr. Larry Gossen

We added a large checkmark (and a few gold stars) to our NCTA "bucket list" in the past week for FFA programs.

The 94<sup>th</sup> annual Nebraska State FFA Convention in Lincoln was a grand event. After a two-year pandemic hiatus, it was quite reinvigorating to again assemble in the Star City.

Sixteen of us from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture attended, amid 6,000 FFA members, chapter advisors, family members and future teachers.

What an exhilarating energy with the 2022 "Empower" theme at the general sessions, FFA Expo, and a Career Fair, all showcased at the Pinnacle Bank Arena.

Our NCTA group featured 11 students, two faculty, two recruiters, and yours truly. The exhibit at the FF Expo (hosted by the Nebraska FFA Foundation) was a popular spot where I occasionally joined Rulon Taylor and Andela Taylor in greeting convention attendees.

I enjoyed speaking with future students, alumni, and other friends of NCTA about the programs and opportunities we provide to the Nebraska agriculture community. It's always great to visit with our former students who love to share their memories from when they were at NCTA.

A highlight was a visit with Kayla Mues, agriculture instructor from Dundy County-Stratton, who brought her chapter by the booth to say hello. We stay well connected to 18 Curtis graduates who are currently teaching in Nebraska high schools.

### **Future educators**

Six students majoring in Agricultural Education assisted their professor, Dr. Doug Smith, at the Agricultural Mechanics on Wednesday. They also helped at Natural Resources Speaking, Meats Evaluation, and Veterinary Science on Thursday, and Friday with the Discovery Speaking Contest.

They were Callie Bauer, McKenna Darby, Cassidy Frey, Ellie Jarecke, Keaton Moore, and Ellie Stohlmann. Four of the students are headed to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this fall. Soon, they may be teaching 4-H programs or high school classrooms, preparing FFA members for leadership and career development activities. And, hopefully, taking FFA students to state and national events.

These Aggie students have their first three or four semesters of study at NCTA. Then, they complete their education at UNL as majors in Agriculture, Leadership, Education and Communication (ALEC). The demand for agricultural educators is great. Nebraska reports 22 openings next fall. During convention, I represented NCTA at a "Teach Ag" luncheon sponsored by ALEC and Dr. Mark Balschweid.

What a privilege to witness two future Aggie students sign letters of intent to attend NCTA and major in Agricultural Education. Collin Konecky from Mead, and Isabella Hulit from the Hartington-Newcastle FFA chapter will begin their career path this fall in Curtis.

## **Equine, Agricultural Mechanics**

Annually, NCTA sponsors the Equine Placement Proficiency Award. I was honored to be on stage for the presentations. One of the finalists is already signed up to join us at NCTA next fall majoring in Equine Industry Management. Congratulations to all proficiency winners.

Five NCTA students from Dan Stehlik's Irrigation Technology classes assisted with the electricity practicum of the Agricultural Mechanics and Technology contest. Austin Youngquist, Logan Wamsley, Gordon Acosta, Drew Katzberg and Michael Comstock did an excellent job of evaluating, scoring, and resetting the components after FFA students wired an electrical switch, receptacle, and lamp.

Instructor Dan Stehlik reported the wiring scores have been steadily improving at the state contest with the 2022 practicum a high point. In addition, Dan teaches welding and high-demand skills in ag mechanics.

Outside of Nebraska, NCTA attended FFA state conventions in Wyoming and Iowa. Rulon Taylor headed to Iowa FFA. Sophomores Maddy Carr of North Platte and Nathaly Dragoo of Lincoln had a display which included a miniature calf named Bruce, plus NCTA apparel and the Aggie curriculum guide at Cheyenne.

"We had a great time interacting with the Wyoming FFA and families," said Maddy. "We gave away lots of information and got plenty of involvement with students. They wanted their picture taken with Bruce, a fun way to remember the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture!"

For information about NCTA Agricultural Education, an associate degree or certificate programs, see [ncta.unl.edu](http://ncta.unl.edu).

## **NCTA EVENTS:**

April 18: Dr. Reed's Public Speaking Class Students, Ed Center, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

April 18: Coffee with a Forester, Ed Center and virtual, 7-9 p.m.

April 19: New Student Enrollment, Ed Center

April 22-23: Rodeo to Black Hills State University, Spearfish

April 23-24: Jeanne Mueller Barrel Clinic, LTC Arena

# # #

*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.*



Kayla Mues (front, right) is advisor with the Dundy County-Stratton FFA Chapter. The NCTA alumna brought students by the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture exhibit during the 94<sup>th</sup> Nebraska FFA Convention. (Photo by Andela Taylor / NCTA)

Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/tao4>