



April 17, 2018

NCTA Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

NCTA offers global ag program

In May we kick off an exciting opportunity for the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and our campus community in Curtis. We will be hosting 50 young men and women from Rwanda for three weeks of intensive agricultural training.

These young adults, enrolled in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Rwandan Scholars Program, are currently completing their freshman year studying agriculture in Lincoln. On May 12, they will travel to NCTA to spend three weeks developing the hands-on skills necessary for successful production agriculture.

On June 1, after three weeks in Curtis, they will return to Lincoln to continue working on a Bachelor of Science degree in Integrated Science that is focused on conservation agriculture, entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovative thinking.

The students were selected for the Scholars Program through a highly competitive process. The goal of the program is to develop expertise in the areas of high need as identified by the Rwandan Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. Upon completion of their bachelor's degree in 2021, the students will return to Rwanda to spend a minimum of 5 years of their career advancing the Rwanda agricultural sector.

Rwandan scholars work at the University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff in 2017. PREC Director Jack Whittier is at right. (IANR photo)



Around campus

At NCTA, the Rwandan students will take six short courses within the areas of agricultural mechanics, agronomy, animal science, horticulture and veterinary technology. NCTA instructors will teach the courses.

The training is in collaboration with the UNL College of Agricultural and Natural Resources.

We appreciate this opportunity to participate in global engagement, agricultural education and cultural exchange. We look forward to the educational interaction with the 50 scholars.

Recent national discussions about international trade illustrate the importance of global engagement for Nebraska's agricultural industries.

The Nebraska Farm Bureau reports that Nebraska was the fifth-largest agricultural exporting state in the country in 2016, exporting \$6.6 billion of agricultural goods.

Nebraska tops the nation in beef exports, is the third-largest exporter of corn, and the fifth-largest exporter of soybeans and soybean meal. This Rwandan initiative is one step towards increasing global understanding for our college community.

Community engagement

Over the next two weeks we will be reaching out to community partners who may wish to engage with these visitors. We are especially interested in providing opportunities for interaction between the Rwandan students and nearby civic organizations, churches, youth and extension programs, and community residents, both in town and rural areas.

I welcome your questions and assistance, and if you are so inclined, consider volunteering a few hours to welcome and provide venues for community hospitality. One suggestion is being a “host family” and inviting a small group of students to a meal, entertainment, rural tour, recreation and cultural exchange on a weekend or evening.

With the exception of a conference in Lincoln in late May, the group will remain engaged in Curtis over the weekends, including Memorial Day. Community programs, dances or recreational events can enhance this experience for the community and these students, alike.

Please call my office and visit with Catherine, Jennifer or myself if you are interested in serving as a host for these sharp young men and women from Rwanda. Our office number is 308.367.5200.

This Week in Nebraska

NCTA is represented this week by 25 students and three faculty involved in the North American Colleges of Teachers in Agriculture Conference and Contests. Aggie students compete in the Knowledge Bowl as well as 12 contests in agronomy, horticulture, livestock and agribusiness.

Good luck Aggies at NACTA in Norfolk and at UNL Rodeo in Lincoln!

Upcoming:

18-22 – North American Colleges of Teachers in Agriculture Conference and Contest, Norfolk

20-21 – Aggie Rodeo at UNL, Lancaster County Event Center, Lincoln

26 – NCTA Belt Buckle Ceremony, 5 p.m., Ed Center

26 – Animal Science “Steak and Shake” dinner and program, 6:30 p.m., Community Center

26 – Final exams begin

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

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