



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

April 27, 2022

Connected by land, rural roots

NCTA Dean's Message by Dr. Larry Gossen

This week is bittersweet. Our NCTA Class of 2022 will be graduating next Thursday, May 5.

Students who faced adversity with a global pandemic during their spring semester as high school seniors. The Class of 2020 didn't get to enjoy public celebrations and a high school commencement.

Young people, 17 or 18 years old, faced an unknown. That August, they came to Curtis to attend college at NCTA. They were brave, but not necessarily without apprehension.

Truth be told, they may not have been 100% ready to leave the security of loved ones and home. They came anyway.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture had in-person campus classes and programs, one of the few colleges which did. We gained a few transfers that fall, for that reason. Students wanted to learn, through the hands-on opportunities that an ag college and expansive outdoor venues can provide.

These students would become the Class of 2022 at NCTA. They were excited to forge ahead, despite the unforeseen challenges that a global pandemic might bring along the way.

They had goals for their education. For opportunities to become adults with a whole world in front of them. For careers in agriculture. To gain experiences and maturity, preparing for livelihoods in a field they could embrace the rest of their lives.

We wanted safety. We sought the best path for our health. We wanted freedom and the independence of a life in agriculture.

What we needed most was our faith, perseverance, trust, dedication, and ability to navigate the unknowns that would come. We needed each other.

Now, two years later, the Class of 2022 will be able to celebrate a graduation with their friends and family. Please join them at 1:30 p.m. on May 5. A public reception will immediately follow.

We are planning this year to again have the ceremony outside on the old football field south of Agriculture Hall. However, with the windy nature of Nebraska lately, should conditions and weather forecasts warrant, we have reserved the Curtis Memorial Community Center.

I am very proud of these individuals who have completed their course of study. Currently, 76 candidates for graduation intend to participate. We are all looking forward to marking this milestone for the NCTA Aggie Class of 2022.

As we began this final week of April, our community and nearby residents in rural areas and adjacent counties are reflecting upon the devastation experienced from tragic wildfires that raced across the prairies, farmsteads, and ranches of Southwest Nebraska.

It's been shocking, exhausting and heartbreaking.

The appreciation we hold for the dedicated service of men and women in volunteer fire departments is immense. Our lives and livelihoods are intertwined, including those among our campus families.

The college is part of the fabric of this region and the state. Our roots are embedded in Frontier County land. With you, we grieve the loss of life in two tragedies that took Darren Krull and JP Trumble.

To our community and agricultural neighbors everywhere, Fay and I are praying for you.

To our campus employees and families who live here and in nearby counties, we support you.

For our students who live here on campus, in Curtis, and out in rural areas, and often work with the family farmers and ranchers, and the agribusinesses in the area, we know that you are deeply affected as well. We are here for you. I encourage you to stop by if you want to chat. I'd like that.

The strength of rural Nebraska and American agriculture is its people.

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.

NCTA Events:

April 28: NCTA Recruiter, Columbus High College Fair

April 29: NCTA Recruiter, Bayard High College Fair

April 29-30: Aggie Rodeo to Black Hills State, Spearfish

May 4: Phi Theta Kappa Ceremony, 1 p.m., Ed Center

May 4: Family & Friends Student Picnic, 5 p.m., The Barn

May 4: Student Awards Program, 7 p.m., Ed Center

May 5: NCTA Graduation, 1:30 p.m., Ag Hall South Field



Horses and riders from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis gather in a pasture where a college cow herd grazed in summer of 2017. Students value the mentors and close relationships they forge with agricultural families during their years at NCTA. (Mary Crawford photo / NCTA archives)