



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

May 18, 2021

Cattle and range roundup from NCTA

By NCTA Dean Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

May is National Beef Month, a time of recognizing beef cattle production and the healthy, nutritious product many of us consider a staple in our diet.

A tip of the cowboy hat to all cattle producers, families, and employees from all of us at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. We appreciate your dedication to the livestock industry.

At the NCTA farm, we have completed spring calving and branding, and are preparing to turn out the cow-calf pairs on to summer range.

It's an exciting transition after our spring semester has ended at the college. Aggie graduates are in their new jobs and careers. Undergrads are off to summer internships or back home in their family farms and ranches.



Roundup of cows and calves for spring branding at Aggieland, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. (Photo by Mary Crawford / NCTA News)

Rangelands are starting to green up here, thanks to some timely rains, large or small, in Frontier County. The corn is planted and now we're getting soybeans in at the campus farm.

Our NCTA "farm crew" of Alan Taylor, Roy Cole, and students hired for summer employment are tackling the first of a long list of projects getting the cattle grazing program underway.

Over the winter and early spring, the NCTA cow herd is located here at campus, down the hill at "Aggieland" where we have a calving barn, update corrals and handling facilities. Our students help with hands-on activities of calving, processing, and branding calves before leaving college in early May.

Just as with any ranching enterprise, NCTA has daily chores with livestock. During the school year, the farm crew rotates morning feeding of cows, cattle on feed in our feedlot, plus other livestock at campus.

Before we turn out the cow herd in May, onto rangeland for summer and fall grazing, much preparation includes fencing, corral upkeep, stock tanks operating properly, and any equipment repairs.

This includes receiving cows from the University of Nebraska Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory to join our spring-calvers at the Frank B. and Mabel Leu Memorial Ranch in Hayes County.

With this recently-announced gift of the Leu Ranch for teaching, research and outreach, NCTA will be able to keep our pasture here at campus for grazing this fall. Students will benefit with the GSL cows as a fall-calving herd when classes resume in late August. Traditionally, the NCTA calving experience for students in large animal veterinary technology and beef production classes is in March and April.

Youth Range Camp

On June 7-10, NCTA will be the site of a Youth Range Camp hosted by the Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management. I encourage youth ages 14-18 to pursue this outstanding camp!

As a former agricultural educator in Kansas high schools, I appreciated the outstanding work by rangeland professionals in educating FFA and 4-H students on range science.

Since the camp had to be cancelled in 2020, this will be my first opportunity as NCTA dean to see Nebraska range campers in action. The Aggie campus is an excellent location for hands-on learning of range resources and application of range management.

Shelly Kelly, co-director for the Nebraska Youth Range Camp, will be attending her 17th year of this range camp. First, Shelly was a teen participant, and then has served as a volunteer instructor and a member of the SRM Range Camp Committee. She enjoys working with the students and volunteer instructors.

The camp registration is very affordable (\$75) and includes meals, three nights stay in the NCTA residence hall and all curriculum materials. Scholarships are available through local Natural Resource Districts. See a camp brochure and details at the Nebraska SRM web site at <https://nesrm.org>.

Livestock show, camp and field day

Three other livestock-related events for youth occur in May, all centered around Animal Science opportunities at NCTA and Nebraska's livestock industry. Contact Doug Smith at doug.smith@unl.edu about the following:

- May 22 is the NCTA Collegiate Cattlemen Beef "Summer Preview" Progress Show at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds in North Platte.
- May 26 is the NCTA Standard of Excellence Livestock Judging Camp at NCTA
- May 27 is the Nebraska Extension Animal Science Discovery Day at NCTA

I hope that youth will explore and engage in these excellent opportunities. Happy Beef Month!

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.

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Online: <https://go.unl.edu/cvk0>