

June 4, 2020

NCTA Aggies are educators

Dean's Message from Interim Dean Kelly Bruns, Ph.D.

CURTIS, Neb. – Graduates of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture are applying skills and knowledge gained through their NCTA experiences in successful careers.

That know-how includes employment in Nebraska high school classrooms and laboratories with agricultural education and FFA programs. And, some are leading 4-H youth through Nebraska Extension, coordinating county programs with local 4-H councils and extension educators.

Our NCTA professors stay in close contact with Aggies graduates in all facets of academic and industry endeavors.

Kudos to the NCTA alumni who have been and currently are agricultural educators and FFA advisors at the high school level. The recent 2020 FFA State Convention held virtually in late May demonstrated the value of our ag educators.



The Nebraska Agricultural Educators Association 2017 annual meeting at Kearney gathered alumni and future ag teachers from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis. Fourteen NCTA alumni will be teaching in Nebraska ag and FFA programs this fall. (NCTA Photo)

Four NCTA graduates completed their first year as new teachers in the Nebraska programs. They are Trevor Ginkins, Mullen; Haley Rogers, Lexington; Emily Whipple, Ainsworth; and Emilye Vales, Columbus. Also, we have several alumni beginning their teaching careers this year.

These educators receive their associate degrees through two years of intensive hands-on education in Curtis, and then transfer to a 4-year program. Many of our NCTA graduates receive their bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dr. Doug Smith is the Ag Ed professor and advisor at NCTA, and a professor of practice with the UNL Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication department.

This fall, nine of Dr. Smith's alumni will be teaching Ag Ed. They are: Wade Overturf, Brent Thomas, Trevor Ginkens, Evey Choat, Karlee Johnson, Haley Rogers, Morgan Segner, Emily Whipple and Emilye Vales.

Five Aggie alumni who graduated in prior programs are highly valued educators and FFA chapter advisors in Nebraska's classrooms. They are: Phillip Simpson, Dana Hall, Sierra Meyer, Randy Vlasin and Craig Frederick.

We appreciate the dedication of all agricultural educators and congratulate our Aggie alumni.

Gary Scharf award

Phillip Simpson, Burwell FFA advisor and NCTA Aggie alumnus, was awarded the 2020 Gary Scharf Helping Hand Award from the Nebraska FFA Foundation. He was nominated by community members and his colleagues for the annual award which recognizes contributions made outside of the classroom and FFA.

The memorial award is especially significant to our Curtis community and the Scharf family. Gary, who was a victim of the Omaha mall shooting in December 2007, grew up here on the family farm, operated by John and Barbara Scharf, his brother and sister-in-law.

Gary made significant contributions to Nebraska agriculture and FFA through his years of service on the Nebraska FFA Foundation Board, including a year as Board President in 2002-2003.

"The Foundation Board is honored to present this award to Mr. Simpson. He exemplifies many qualities that defined Gary Scharf's life – commitment, self-sacrifice and genuine kindness," says Stacey Agnew, executive director, Nebraska FFA Foundation.

All of us at NCTA appreciate this award in honor of Gary and Nebraska's ag educators who provide significant service and leadership to our rural communities.

Save-the-date for judging

June 16-18 will be the dates for a virtual youth livestock judging contest sponsored by NCTA and UNL. For information, see details at [NCTA/ UNL Virtual Judging Camp Registration](#) or contact Dr. Smith at doug.smith@unl.edu

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 numerous 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 article: <https://go.unl.edu/48np>