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By NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

NCTA Aggies: Cattle, dogs and kids

Animals are an important part of campus life at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis. They are an essential component of our hands-on experiences in veterinary technology and animal science. Animals are part of many of our teams and clubs. And animals can provide support and companionship for students away from home for the first time.

Some NCTA Aggie students bring their horses to Curtis for collegiate competition as members of the NCTA Ranch Horse or NCTA Rodeo Teams.

Others also bring their stock dogs or horses for work at area farms and ranches. For these students, their horse or dog is a valued partner in their agricultural work life.

The NCTA Stock Dog Team members train and compete in working stock trials using their own dogs, a college dog, or a stock dog borrowed from a community member. Three team members brought their dogs to Grand Island to compete at the Nebraska State Fair earlier this week, using the skills they gained here at NCTA.



NCTA equine students work with their horses at the indoor arena. (Craig Chandler / NCTA photo)

Students can board horses and sometimes their dogs off campus at one of the area private boarding facilities, or at their own rental property. NCTA does not provide boarding on site but student animals can come to campus with the proper health certifications from their veterinarian.

Some animals on campus play a role as support, therapy or service animals. And, a few students enjoy having smaller pets in the residence halls, such as an aquarium full of fish.

The campus provides exposure to animals on a daily basis. Student workers for the NCTA Farm and the NCTA equine program have feeding chores twice a day for college livestock and horses. For these students, feeding chores begin before dawn, often as early as 6 a.m.

Veterinary Technology students have daily responsibilities for the care, feeding, and facilities maintenance for a wide variety of animals including exotics, birds, fish, reptiles, dogs, and cats.

The college was named to the Top Ten in large animal veterinary technology programs a few years ago because of the opportunities for our veterinary technicians and assistants to work with animals of all sizes, including horses and farm livestock of cattle, sheep, swine, horses, llamas, goats and kids.

NCTA veterinary technicians practice with these animals to learn hands-on skills in surgery, anesthesiology, disease diagnosis, laboratory procedures, radiology, dentistry, phlebotomy, disease treatment, safe animal handling, and anatomy and physiology.

Animal science students get involved in class and team activities in the indoor arena, the outdoor calving area, and the cattle processing barn with sorting tub, hydraulic squeeze chute and cattle holding pens. Students use these facilities to learn the skills needed for the care and maintenance of livestock, or to develop skills for the artificial insemination of beef cattle.

College-owned horses are maintained on campus and used to teach basic equitation skills to newer riders, as well as intermediate and advanced training. The program includes working stock cow skills used in Nebraska's cow-calf operations and ranches. In some courses, students train NCTA horses for the ranch horse team contests at other colleges.

We are never lacking for the responsibility to care for livestock, horses and companion animals at NCTA. When coming on a campus visit, ask about our animal-related programs and courses.

Aggies at Nebraska State Fair

If you attend the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island this week be sure to look for NCTA Aggies at the Raising Nebraska building, 4-H and FFA livestock shows, and the Nebraska Beef Pit.

We will be at the fair to help showcase Nebraska's youth programs, including Nebraska Extension which involves the largest 4-H program in the U.S. The average enrollment in the nation is 1 in 5 age-eligible youth (8-18 years of age) in 4-H. Here in the Cornhusker and Aggie state, the numbers are 1 in 2. That's great!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Aug. 24-Sept. 4 – Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island
Sept. 3 – Labor Day, campus is closed
Sept. 4 – Collegiate Cattlemen meeting, 5:30 p.m., LTC
Sept. 4 – Frontier County Livestock Committee, 7 p.m. Ag Hall
Sept. 4 – Curtis Teammates meeting, 7 p.m., Ed Center Computer Lab

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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