



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Oct. 21, 2021

Our salute to veterinary technicians

NCTA Dean's Message by Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

Melody MacDonald and her classmates in veterinary technology are in their ninth week of the fall semester at NCTA (the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture).

They also are immersed in two weeks of acronyms celebrating their chosen profession. National Veterinary Technician Week is Oct. 17-23, which they will observe next week, as well.

A native of Fullerton, Nebraska, Melody is a third-year Aggie at NCTA, in veterinary technology with a large animal emphasis.

By this time next year, she will be employed in a veterinary clinic, preparing to take her national licensing exam, and starting to build that beef cattle herd she has dreamed of throughout high school.



Emma Hollenback, a Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture Aggie, feeds a giraffe at the Lincoln Children's Zoo. Student Technicians of Veterinary Medicine Association enjoyed a field trip to Omaha and Lincoln zoos. (Photo by Melody MacDonald)

Melody and cohorts spent Sunday and Monday, over NCTA's Fall Break, on a study trip to Omaha, where they visited the nationally renowned Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. They also toured the Children's Zoo in Lincoln.

"In Omaha, I really enjoyed the stingray beach. It was very immersive and interesting to get to see the animals up close and personal," said Melody. "I also enjoyed some of the unique animals including the fossa. That is one of my favorite animals because of how unique they are."

The students also are looking forward to an event this Friday and Saturday when they will greet and interact with 25 professionals in veterinary technology, veterinary nursing, or practicing veterinarians and educators.

What is STVMA?

Aggies here at NCTA are members of a student organization called STVMA.

Most of us outside of the halls of the Vet Tech complex "up on the hill" don't easily list (or know) the full title for the Student Technicians of Veterinary Medicine Association.

With 70 members from the first, second and third-year Aggies, STVMA is the largest student organization on campus. Hannah Murray, president, says due to Fall Break, STVMA activities will be observed Oct. 25-29 with daily themes for class scrubs-attire; a pet portrait contest, and movie night.

Vet techs may also be members of other NCTA clubs or teams, including Stock Dog Team, Safari Club, Aggie Rodeo, Collegiate Cattlemen, of FFA Alumni and 4-H, among others.

They are busy individuals, day and night, working in small groups at Facilities Management, Surgery, Animal Care Clinics, and more. Rigorous labs include Nursing, Anatomy and Physiology, or Animal Behavior, to name a few.

Last week, in preparation for their mid-term exams, study groups met frequently in the evenings to prepare for tests over the initial 8-week period of fall semester.

This week, in the age of hashtags on social media (#NVTW2021) and promotions of their occupations, the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America encourages students and practicing professionals to share their stories of animal care.

In a recent radio interview, Melody shared a bit of her story.

"I chose NCTA as my college for several reasons – affordability, hands-on learning, and a career path in animal agriculture. It's been a great college for me! ... We've studied hard for our Mid-Term exams. As we observe Vet Techs this week and next, a highlight is welcoming our alumni and industry professionals back to campus for two days of Continuing Education."

Continuing Education for 48 years

Curtis-based VTCEA (Veterinary Technician Continuing Education Association, Inc.) is hosting its 48th annual fall CE.

Add that up, over the years, and likely more than 1,000 professionals have received professional continuing education in Nebraska, with the non-profit organization established here in Curtis long ago.

Leighlynn Obermiller, NCTA VT lecturer and faculty coach of the Aggie Stock Dog Team, accompanied the STVMA members on their field trip. She also organized the CE Seminars.

Students will participate in Friday sessions and are invited, but not required, to attend on Saturday. Professionals will receive 8 hours of CE credit daily.

Many attendees are graduates of our NCTA program. Presenters include Aggie alumnus and faculty member Noel Ochoa, LVT (licensed veterinary technician). His Friday topic is a specialty, "Handling the Avian Patient."

Other topics are equine reproduction, small animal care, bovine handling, wildlife and raptor recovery, equine acupuncture and chiropractic care, and training and behavior modifications of aggressive dogs.

I look forward to meeting Aggie alumni while learning and networking in the veterinary health profession.

Welcome back to campus, NCTA alumni and VTCEA professionals. And congratulations to STVMA and all for National Veterinary Technicians Week 2021.

Aggie Events:

Oct. 22-23: Vet Tech Continuing Education Conference, NCTA Campus

Oct. 25: Protect the Harvest, Trent Loos, 6 p.m., Ed Center (public)

Oct. 28: 5K of Fright Halloween Run or Walk, 4:30 registration, Ed Center (public)

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 article: <https://go.unl.edu/e382>