



Nov. 13, 2019

NCTA Dean's Message  
By Interim Dean Kelly Bruns, Ph.D.

## **Teams, clubs enhance Aggie academics**

CURTIS, Neb. - When I was a youth participating in Hall County 4-H programs I was quite active with livestock and agricultural opportunities. A fulfilling and educational 4-H career launched my career as an educator and animal scientist.

Livestock judging and evaluation of animals, and knowledge about production and management, led me into a collegiate path of animal science. That included both livestock judging and meats judging training plus national travel while attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



*FFA livestock judging was among district contests at NCTA two days this week. (Nutter/NCTA News)*

The "rest of the story" is that academic programs for master's and doctorate degrees in animal science led to a nearly 20-year college teaching career. Opportunities here brought our family to the University of Nebraska system as director of the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte. Now coupled with interim dean duties at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, I again have direct involvement with college students.

Many of our Aggie students at NCTA hail from similar backgrounds to mine. They flourish in rural family life in Nebraska or elsewhere, and have been active in 4-H and FFA programs.

Some own and produce registered livestock in the cattle, swine and sheep industries. Others learned about livestock judging or meats judging as youngsters following in the footsteps of grandparents, parents and siblings.

Yet, some students come to NCTA not having been raised in a rural environment but eager to learn about production agriculture and management. Perhaps they have relatives from a farm or ranch, or they caught an enterprising interest through an urban classroom.

Our hands-on teaching and leadership opportunities at NCTA make a huge difference for all youth – not just those who are full or part-time students. As a rural campus with livestock, a working farm, and varied educational resources, NCTA has vast resources for educational events. This week we hosted two district FFA competitions with nearly 800 students on campus. Exposure to a collegiate environment can be formative to career choices for these young people.

### **Aggie teams**

NCTA had five student teams on the road this fall for collegiate contests. Livestock judging, ranch horse, rodeo, shotgun sports and stock dog students learn and refine their knowledge and skills in the classroom, arena, corrals, target range or farm.

They learn discipline, time management, organization, decision-making, communications, teamwork, appreciation, and much more in their interactions as team members, but also as individual competitors.

I enjoy working with the students, faculty and team coaches at NCTA in their clubs and teams. Student activities like these enhance academic success.

Next spring, crops judging kicks into high gear along with agribusiness and agricultural mechanics contests at the national level.

We wish our Aggie Ranch Horse team the best for their first collegiate show of the season on November 22-24. Although the students were working hard each day in classes, at practices and on their skills, the team opted to wait for their first contest out of state. An early-season concern with vesicular stomatitis in horses was diagnosed in the Front Range of Colorado.

The team is busy this weekend on campus, hosting the popular Sherman Tegtmeier Reining and Horsemanship Clinic. Then, next week they head to Colorado.

Plan to come to campus Saturday for another popular event – pampering your dog or cat the NCTA Pet Spa Day. Animal care students in veterinary technology provide this community service and get a chance to test their skills. See you there.

Don't forget that we welcome about 50 prospective students and their families to campus Monday for an NCTA Discovery Day.

Next week, on November 19-20, NCTA has 10 students from animal science and livestock management attending the Range Beef Cow Symposium at Mitchell, Nebraska. Look for the NCTA Aggies there!

### **Upcoming events**

Nov. 16: NCTA Pet Spa Day, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Vet Tech Clinic

Nov. 15-16: Sherman Tegtmeier Horsemanship Clinic, 8 a.m., LTC arena

Nov. 18: NCTA Discovery Day, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Ed Center

Nov. 18: Frontier County 4-H Council, 7 p.m., Ed Center

Nov. 18-20: Range Beef Cow Symposium, Mitchell, Scotts Bluff County Event Center

Nov. 20-21: NCTA Stock Dog display at McCook Farm & Ranch Expo

See online at: <https://go.unl.edu/iz3v>

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