



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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Counting my blessings

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

Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays, partly because it kicks off a month of preparation for Christmas. However, in its own right, Thanksgiving is a special holiday that should be celebrated and honored.

I find this time of year a natural period of reflection on the many blessings we enjoy in our lives. In the past year I have found many reasons to be thankful. I also find myself thankful for the little things that have been taken for granted for a long while.

As the dean of NCTA, I have been extremely blessed with a wonderful faculty and staff with which to work daily. These folks are the most dedicated, hard-working, passionate individuals I have ever known.

Since March, they have worked tirelessly to keep our campus safe and create a learning environment that is focused on student success.

NCTA truly is a great place to work and the students are fortunate to have their "Curtis family" to encourage and support them. Our small student body has really stepped up to the challenge of 2020 and has made the most of this year by being engaged in a variety of activities, focusing on their future careers and not letting the distractions of a worldwide pandemic interrupt their education.

I'm thankful for the entire Curtis community. The people Fay and I have met since mid-June are all wonderful representatives of Southwest Nebraska. I couldn't have asked for a better place to live or nicer people with whom to rub elbows.

And tapping elbows is about the only way we can greet each other since the good old handshake has apparently gone by the wayside with the current pandemic. But I have to say that even through COVID, we find gratitude and appreciation for people who reach out and care for their neighbors.

Through the course of the past several months, I've come to realize that I am thankful for some of the oddest things that for years I have just taken for granted.

I enjoy football, even if most of the time it is limited to watching on television from the comfort of our home. I enjoy being able to sit down in a real restaurant and eat a meal.



Larry Gossen, NCTA dean

I appreciate that NCTA was able to host the district FFA Career Development Events and provide just a touch of normalcy to nearly 500 students and advisors.

However, the people I most appreciate this Thanksgiving are the health care workers, teachers, and others who put themselves directly in the front lines, taking care of our sick and elderly, our students, the needy, and those who rely heavily on others in meeting the needs or concerns for their daily routines.

I am thankful we live in a country that still has free elections, open debate, plus the opportunities and privileges offered to us through the constitution which allow us the right to disagree and still be friends.

I am thankful for living in a community and state that honors our flag, our servicemen and women, our first responders, our police, and the wellbeing and life of every single person.

Finally, I am thankful that I can celebrate Christmas for the next month in the manner that fits my background and beliefs, while others can celebrate the holidays however they choose as well.

So, any time you start to feel discouraged, just count your blessings. There are many.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at NCTA.

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/m4gz>