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By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

NCTA Aggies join cooperatives tour

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Four agribusiness students from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, Neb., recently attended the College Conference on Cooperatives in Minneapolis.



NCTA representatives attending the 2018 College Conference on Cooperatives in Minneapolis are, from left:

Taylor Hovie, Grand Island; Jeremy Sievers, NCTA agribusiness professor; Riley Abbott and Nate Letcher, both of Hay Springs, and Erica Mowery of Middleburg, Pennsylvania. (NCTA courtesy photo)

Nate Letcher and Riley Abbott, both of Hay Springs, Erica Mowery of Middleburg, Pennsylvania, and Taylor Hovie of Grand Island, joined 15 other Nebraskans at the CCOC events on February 16-18, said Jeremy Sievers, NCTA advisor.

The National Farmers Union hosted 76 students from colleges and universities in 10 states including the Nebraskans from NCTA in Curtis, Northeast Community College in Norfolk, and Southeast Community College in Beatrice.

The three-day conference provided an interactive learning experience regarding the importance, structure and operations of various types of cooperative groups, explained Sievers, associate professor of Agribusiness Management Systems (AMS).

The annual conference was the eighth for Sievers as NCTA faculty sponsor. Camdyn Kavan of Nebraska Farmers Union based in Lincoln led the delegation.

Nebraska's colleges received grant support from the Cenex Harvest States and NFU Foundations.

“It is surprising the different cooperative structures that exist even though the coops are within the same sector,” said Riley Abbott, who farms and ranches with his family in Sheridan County. “Growing up in a rural community, you think of the local seed, fertilizer or feed coop but there are many different cooperatives out there.”

The array of cooperatives featured at the 2018 conference included traditional and value-added agricultural cooperatives, housing and worker-owned co-ops, and consumer cooperatives such as REI sports sales.

“The benefits of being part of a cooperative really exist even within the urban parts of the U.S.,” Abbott noted.

The Minneapolis-area tour highlights included REI and two different housing cooperatives, one for college students and the other for the elderly. Students also toured the Mill City Museum, which is a river-front center built into the remains of what was once the world's largest flour mill.

“We find that the College Conference on Cooperatives has been valuable for exposing our students to various management strategies and business careers, as well as teaching them concepts for their future as agricultural producers and consumers,” Sievers said.

NCTA’s agribusiness program is one of four majors for the open-enrollment, two-year institution. For more information, see ncta.unl.edu or call 1-800-3-CURTIS.

Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/juwk>

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