

February 12, 2018  
By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

## **NCTA Aggies sweep crops contest**

CURTIS, Neb. – The Crops Judging Team from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis made a Saturday sweep in their opening contest for the year.

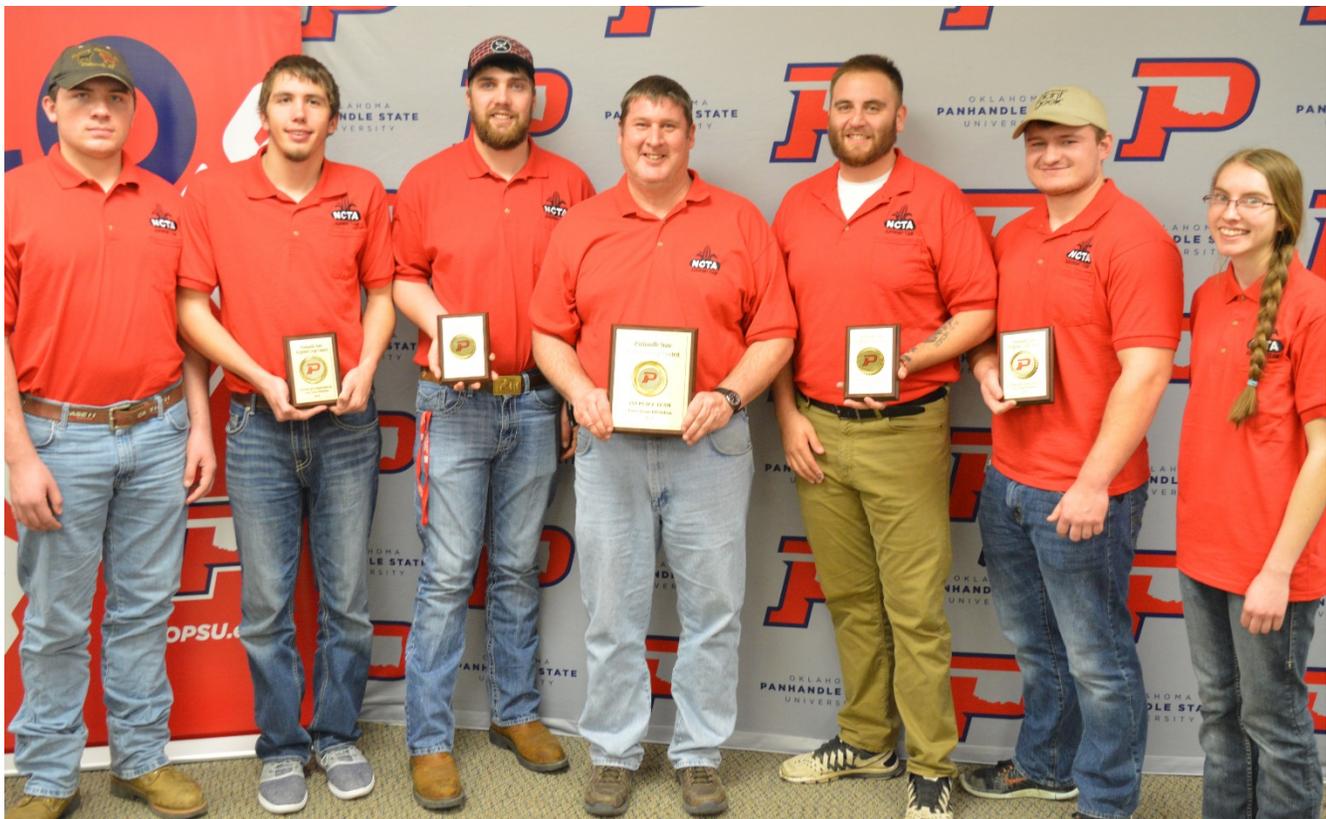
NCTA Aggies won first place team among 2-year colleges while the Aggie students swept the top four individual placings in a contest at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, said Coach Brad Ramsdale, agronomy professor.

“OPSU hosted an excellent contest that really challenged the students. I am very proud of the student’s performance and I know they were very excited for the first competition of the year,” Ramsdale said.

Dalon Koubek of North Platte led the team with Will Kusant of Comstock second, and Nate Montanez of Grand Island and Lee Jespersen of Hemingford, tied for third place.

The experienced crops team members at NCTA are three agronomy students and Jespersen who majors in diversified agriculture.

The NCTA team was among five 2-year and eight 4-year colleges vying for top honors in the contest at Goodwell, Oklahoma.



Agronomy team members flank their coach and instructor, Dr. Brad Ramsdale, after the Aggies of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture won first place in a contest Saturday at Goodwell, Oklahoma. They had the top

four individuals, as well. From left, Jacob Valley, Plattsmouth; Lee Jespersen, Hemingford, tied for 3rd; Will Kusant, Comstock, 2<sup>nd</sup>; Coach Ramsdale with 1<sup>st</sup> place team plaque; Nate Montanez, Grand Island, 3<sup>rd</sup> tie; Dalon Koubek, North Platte, 1<sup>st</sup> place; and Catherine Ljunggren, Harvard. (Brent Thomas/NCTA News Photo)

In their first try at the daylong crops judging events with written exams, plant and seed identification, and a lab practical, two of NCTA's freshmen students also got a taste of the collegiate competition.

Catherine Ljunggren, who is a diversified agriculture major from Harvard and Jacob Vallery, an agronomy major from Plattsmouth, participated individually. They will be eligible for awards in their second year of competition.

"The first contest can be an eye-opening experience for the first-year students," Ramsdale noted. "All the students have been working hard and they always show great progress in their knowledge from one contest to the next."

Brent Thomas of Alliance, a third-year NCTA student and former team member, assists the team and Coach Ramsdale.

Crops team classes meet three days per week while studying plants, pests, weeds and the technical aspects of crop production and management. Crops judging events are based on the Certified Crop Advisor program of the American Society of Agronomy.

The NCTA Aggies are champions from a national contest in 2017 and will be defending their title in April in Norfolk, Nebraska, at the North American Colleges of Teachers and Agriculture conference.

The next competition for the NCTA Aggies is March 9 at Kansas State University.

Online article at: <https://go.unl.edu/8auq>

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Source: Brad Ramsdale, PhD, NCTA agronomy professor and crops judging coach, (308) 367-5225, [bramsdale2@unl.edu](mailto:bramsdale2@unl.edu)

Editor: Mary Crawford, NCTA News, (308) 367-5231, [mcrawford@unl.edu](mailto:mcrawford@unl.edu)