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By NCTA News Service

## **Ten colleges compete at NCTA Crops Contest**

Curtis, Neb. – The Aggies know agronomy. They proved their academic know-how Saturday in the crops lab and classrooms and won the first collegiate crops contest held at Curtis.

Agronomy students from 10 Midwestern colleges gathered at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis for the inaugural collegiate crops judging contest hosted by NCTA Agronomy.

Teams from four 2-year schools which included hosts NCTA and teams from six 4-year colleges spent four hours identifying plants, taking a written exam, comparing weeds to valued crop plants, and calculating math problems for field uses.

A foursome of NCTA sophomores won the 2-year division with John Paul Kain, McCook, first-place individual; Maggie Brunmeier, Bayard, second place; Vincent Jones, Kirwin, Kansas, third place; and Brent Thomas, Alliance.

Other Aggie team members competing but not eligible for awards included: Will Kusant, Comstock; Dalon Koubek, North Platte; Lee Jespersen, Hemingford; and Nate Montanez, Grand Island.

Iowa State University captured the top team among 4-year schools. Individual students competed in four categories, with 60 minutes for completing each section.

Students from NCTA have been traveling to agronomy competitions for seven years, after their coach and professor Brad Ramsdale created the crops teams in 2010.

The 2-year schools competing were NCTA, with a winning team; Northeast Community College, Norfolk, Neb; Cloud County Community College, Concordia, Kan.; and Hutchinson Community College, Hutchinson, Kan.

Six 4-year schools competing were Iowa State University, with a winning team; Kansas State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Fort Hays State University, Oklahoma State University, and Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

Four students per school are eligible for awards, with more students participating to gain experience in the judging scenario which complements their academic program at NCTA. The contest drew 64 competitors.

The next contest among these colleges and many more will be a national competition on April 8 in Manhattan, Kan., hosted by Kansas State University and the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA).

NCTA will return to defend its 2016 national championship.

Event categories include:

- 1) comprehensive agronomic exam of 75 multiple-choice questions about agronomy
- 2) math practical encompassing all possible mathematical problems in agronomy
- 3) a lab practical which includes 75 specimens that might include insect, disease and equipment identification; crop growth staging; pesticide labels; nutrient deficiency symptoms, fertilizer samples, and more, and,
- 4) plant and seed identification of 75 specimens of crop and weed plants and seeds (out of a possible 150 species).

For information about NCTA agronomy courses, see [ncta.unl.edu](http://ncta.unl.edu), call 1-800-3CURTIS or contact Dr. Ramsdale at [bramsdale2@unl.edu](mailto:bramsdale2@unl.edu) . On-line article here: <http://go.unl.edu/nny0>

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Top 2-Year Crops Team at NCTA's contest is the NCTA team of (from left) Brent Thomas, Alliance; Maggie Brunmeier, Bayard, 2nd place; John Paul Kain, McCook, 1<sup>st</sup> place; and Vincent Jones, Kirwin, Kansas, 3<sup>rd</sup> place. (Ramsdale/NCTA Photo)



Ten colleges competed in the 2017 NCTA Crops Judging Contest on Saturday in Curtis, Neb. (Ramsdale/NCTA Photo)