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By NCTA News Service

NCTA Crops Team top 2-year schools

Curtis, Neb. – Agronomy students from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture proved they are outstanding in their field.

A foursome of NCTA sophomores won a Crops Judging Contest on Saturday hosted by Iowa State University, topping the field of teams from 2-year colleges.

Team members are: Ross Steward of Littleton, Colo., Dalton Johnson of Gering, Nolan Breece of Holdrege, and Aaron Jensen of Goehner.

Steward, an NCTA Aggie who spent his summer of 2015 as an agronomist intern in the Scottsbluff-Gering, Nebraska area, was the top individual competitor. Teammate Jensen was third overall.

Individual students compete in four categories, with 60 minutes for completing each section, said Dr. Brad Ramsdale, NCTA agronomy professor and team coach.

NCTA also took 5 first-year students who did not compete for prizes, but participated in their first try-out with all phases of the competition.

“It is a rigorous contest with about four hours of evaluation and knowledge exams,” said Ramsdale, who started the NCTA crops judging team in 2010. This was the first contest for 2016.

Third-year student Desarae Catlett of Broken Bow has already competed for two years in regional and national contests. This year she serves as assistant coach.

First-year competitors are Maggie Brunmeier of Bayard, Vincent Jones of Kirwin, Kansas, John Paul Kain of McCook, Kyle Krantz and Brent Thomas, both of Alliance.

Contest categories include 1) a comprehensive agronomic exam of 75 multiple-choice questions about agronomy, 2) a 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 lastly, 4) the plant and seed identification of 75 specimens of crop and weed plants and seeds (out of a possible 150 species).

The next Aggie contest will be a regional event hosted by Kansas State. For information about NCTA agronomy courses, see ncta.unl.edu, or contact Dr. Ramsdale at bramsdale2@unl.edu.

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Top Overall Crops Team at Iowa State University contest, 2-year colleges: (Left to right) Ross Steward, Littleton, Colo., top individual judge; Dalton Johnson, Gering, with 1st Place Team plaque, Nolan Breece, Holdrege, and Aaron Jensen, Goehner, 3rd place individual. (NCTA Photo)



The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture Crops Team (left to right) with Coach Brad Ramsdale, Ross Steward, Littleton, Colo., 1st place individual; front Dalton Johnson, Gering, Vincent Jones, Kirwin, Kansas; center with plaque, Maggie Brunmeier, Bayard, Kyle Krantz, Alliance, John Paul Kain, McCook; center, front, with plaque Aaron Jensen, Goehner, 3rd place individual, Nolan Breece, Holdrege, and Brent Thomas Alliance. (Desarae Catlett/NCTA Photo)