



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Feb. 21, 2021

Partners across Nebraska

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

Refreshing. Impressive. Friendly. Amazing. Unique. Partners.

Those are just a few of the words mentioned in early February by 14 visitors to the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis.

The executive board of a state group which represents Nebraska Extension and county extension boards met at NCTA for a tour of campus, a board meeting, plus evening meal at Aggie Dining here at NCTA.

I enjoyed welcoming the guests from across the state. They met in Curtis on Feb. 5, then conducted a virtual and in-person statewide annual conference the next day in North Platte.

Many of the directors with the Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards hadn't been to NCTA, said Steven Stettner of Palmer, NACEB's past-president and 1999 alumnus of NCTA in production agriculture.

"There was a lot of people surprised of how much on is on campus," Steve shared with me later. "I think NCTA has great momentum."

New NACEB president Amanda Mogensen of Boone County was impressed by the tour.

"The greatest take-away from my visit to NCTA was learning about the connections that NCTA has throughout Nebraska, providing students with vast opportunities to gain valuable knowledge and prepare them to help run their family farming operation, enter a high demand workforce, or continue their education," she shared in a later interview.

Jo Bek, animal science professor emeritus is treasurer of the NACEB board. She lives near Curtis, having taught at NCTA for nearly 40 years, and serves on the Frontier County Extension Board.

Stettner and Bek are the reason NACEB came to Curtis.

"I always want to get people on campus because they are so amazed about what they see," Bek said. "I had one board member comment he wishes now he had attended NCTA when he went to college. The hands-on programs are outstanding."

Statewide partnership with Nebraska Extension is an aspect that all Nebraskans can take pride in, as we at NCTA do in our affiliation with the University of Nebraska system.



Directors of the Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards recently visited University of Nebraska partners at NCTA. They toured campus and met with NCTA Dean Larry Gossen. (Photo by Hilary Maricle / NACEB)

We value the relationships our two-year educational institution enjoys with all facets of the NU system, particularly the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources which includes the University of Nebraska College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) and Nebraska Extension, among other divisions based at UNL's East Campus.

Through Extension, valued volunteers in each county comprise the guidance and leadership aspects to county Extension programming. Extension units can be a multi-county region such as Central Sandhills based at Thedford, or a single county office such as here in Curtis.

In fact, Frontier County Extension is housed here in Ag Hall at NCTA. The Extension board chair is Emily Garrison Lenz, an NCTA alumna. Extension Educator Kathy Burr and newly-elected board member Leighlynn Obermiller attended the Saturday sessions held at the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte

Nebraska Extension liaison to NACEB is Hilary Maricle, a producer from Albion and Extension Engagement Zone Coordinator. She organized the board's virtual Friday session for those unable to attend due to the winter storms that weekend.

"NCTA offers a unique opportunity for students who want a personalized, hands-on experience in college. The NACEB Directors were impressed with the opportunities available on campus, it's not every day that you get to visit with students at the end of an AI (artificial insemination) class on a Friday afternoon," Maricle shared.

The Directors also enjoyed learning more about Ag Mechanics, seeing the "zoo" and exotic animals, such as a giant python, in the Veterinary Technology program, and understanding the history of the campus.

NCTA partnership with the WCREC at North Platte is integral to the Aggie academic mission and provides opportunities for NCTA students with research and internships. Students and faculty actively engage in livestock education such as beef cattle production and management programs at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory near Whitman.

Nebraska Extension programming for 4-H youth also is a significant part of the NCTA partnership, as are seminars, field days and clinics for the public, students and southwestern Nebraska residents. From disaster education to rural prosperity, to water management and beef systems, there is tie-in with our NCTA academics.

"As NACEB focuses on connection, collaboration and communication in 2021, NCTA's partnership with Nebraska Extension will play a key role in ensuring that County Extension Boards across the state understand how to best serve the future generations in the areas they represent," Mogensen said.

Bek said Saturday workshops held virtually across the state and for the 21 directors in attendance at WCREC included recruitment and leadership development for Extension boards, diversity and equity, and "story telling about Nebraska Extension" during legislative advocacy.

"NCTA is not like a community college with students just from the region," Bek adds. "We have students from states far away from Curtis."

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 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.

EDITOR'S Note:

Names and counties of the directors in the photograph:

Directors of the Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards recently visited University of Nebraska partners at NCTA. They are: Back Row (L to R) Ryan Ridenour, Hooker County; Steven Stettner, Merrick County; Larry Wilhelmi, Hall County; Doug Yoder, Seward County; Front Row (L to R) Amanda Mogensen, Boone County; Jo Bek, Frontier County; Sandy Archuleta, Butler County; and Vernon Waldren, Douglas County. They toured campus and met with NCTA Dean Larry Gossen. (Photo by Hilary Maricle / NACEB)

Online article: <https://go.unl.edu/4d6u>