



**NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF
TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE**



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NCTA and Mississippi State plan poultry partnership

STARKVILLE, Miss. – Leaders from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and Mississippi State University signed a cooperative agreement Wednesday [Feb. 7] designed to train workforce entrants for the midwestern state's burgeoning poultry industry.

The newly developed program includes three semesters at NCTA in Curtis, Nebraska and a semester at MSU's Department of Poultry Science. Upon program completion, students will earn an Associate of Applied Science in Agricultural Production Systems, with a concentration in poultry science.



There are currently no undergraduate poultry science degree programs in Nebraska. Mississippi State's program is one of only six nationally that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in the discipline.

Ron Rosati, dean of the Nebraska two-year college, chose to partner with MSU's Department of Poultry Science because of its reputation for training leaders in agriculture.

"The quality of the teaching, research and extension programs in poultry science at Mississippi State are well known throughout the country," Rosati said. "The MSU program offers hands-on learning in facilities that are similar to those found in a commercial setting. This partnership will give our students the tools they need to succeed in Nebraska's growing poultry industry."

Nebraska currently produces about one million broilers per year. At full operation, the industry expects expansion will allow production of more than 100 million broilers per year. In Mississippi, poultry is the No. 1 commodity with more than 746 million broilers produced in 2017 across 1,430 farms. The production value of the industry in the Magnolia State tops \$2.8 billion.

Mary Beck, poultry science department head, spent 25 years as a faculty member at the University of Nebraska prior to taking the helm at Mississippi State. Her relationship with NCTA, a campus in the University of Nebraska system, helped facilitate the agreement.

"It is exciting to be able to partner with a college in Nebraska to help train the state's workforce in poultry and expand agriculture in a place where I spent much of my career," Beck said. "This is a unique partnership that should be mutually beneficial to our two institutions and states."

Nebraska is seeing expansion with new facilities at Grand Island and Fremont, in addition to existing operations in eastern and central Nebraska. The industry has called for educational programs which offer college degrees and technical expertise suited for commercial poultry operations.

“The new NCTA-MSU partnership is ideal for meeting demands for a well-educated and skilled workforce in Nebraska’s expanding poultry industry,” said Steve Wellman, director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

Upon completion of the 77-hour program, students can enter the workforce in management positions throughout the industry. Students also have the option to further their education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln animal science department or in Mississippi State’s poultry science department.

Judy Bonner, Mississippi State provost and executive vice president, spoke to the benefits of the unique partnership.

“We have developed a number of innovative partnerships with Mississippi community colleges and are excited to partner with the state of Nebraska to help students earn a degree and enter the workforce as leaders in the industry there,” Bonner said. “This partnership further expands MSU’s position as an academic leader in poultry science at the national level while providing students an invaluable opportunity to pursue a career in a growing industry.”

The partnership provides students access to a cost-effective program with low tuition and quality academics at NCTA and MSU, Rosati said. When attending Mississippi State, students will pay the in-state tuition rate of about \$300 per credit hour. Current tuition at NCTA is \$127.50 per credit hour.

Slated to begin in fall 2018, program details may be found at <https://ncta.unl.edu/poultry-program> or from Professor Doug Smith, chair of the NCTA Animal Science and Agricultural Education Division at 1-800-3-CURTIS or at doug.smith@unl.edu. Review MSU’s program at www.poultry.msstate.edu.



Signing a cooperative agreement Feb. 7 for the NCTA-MSU Poultry Program based at Curtis, Nebraska are, seated, left-right, George Hopper, dean of MSU’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Judy Bonner, MSU provost and executive vice president; and Ron Rosati, dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture; back row, left-right are Doug Smith, NCTA chair of Animal Science and Agricultural Education; Peter Ryan, MSU associate provost for academic affairs; and Professor Mary Beck, head of MSU’s Department of Poultry Science. (Photo by Beth Wynn/MSU)

Online article at: <https://go.unl.edu/5ydx>

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