

April 10, 2017  
By NCTA News

## **NCTA wins reserve sweepstakes; trifecta for agriculture colleges**

Manhattan, Kansas – The NCTA Aggies set the academic bar high for their peers in agriculture over the weekend.

Twenty students of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture returned to their Curtis campus from Manhattan, Kansas, bringing home the 2017 Reserve Champion Sweepstakes among two-year colleges.

They repeated as national champs in crops judging, and won team honors in precision agriculture and knowledge bowl.

The North American Colleges of Teachers in Agriculture (NACTA) Conference and Judging Contest drew more than 40 colleges to Kansas State University. There, about 850 students tested their agricultural skills in exams and hands-on competitions.

The NCTA Aggie team defended its national title in Crops Judging, and added team titles in Precision Agriculture and the multidiscipline Knowledge Bowl, said Brad Ramsdale, PhD, agronomy professor and one of two NCTA faculty and a teaching assistant who coached the Aggie students.

“The NACTA contests provide a great learning experience for our students with many real-world knowledge examples,” said Ramsdale, after coaching his eighth national contest. “I am very proud of all the work done by our students in preparation for the contests and for their achievements.”

Aggie teams won seven team awards, said Jeremy Sievers, NCTA agribusiness professor.

NCTA students captured 15 individual academic or separate sub disciplines, including first-place individuals in crops judging, dairy judging and computer applications.

“NCTA came through with the best overall finish for the college in NACTA history,” Sievers said Sunday. “I am proud of everyone who went this weekend and even prouder of how the students all performed as a team in different disciplines.”

The Aggie students will be formally recognized at campus events on April 27 for the Animal Science and Agricultural Education Division, and on May 3 at the 2017 Awards Ceremony, said NCTA Dean Ron Rosati.

“The stellar performance of NCTA students at this national contest documents their high level of knowledge and skill in their disciplines,” Rosati said. “I appreciate the dedication, intelligence and hard work from our students and faculty that resulted in this significant achievement.”

Aggie students who will graduate on May 4 with an associate degree in one of more subjects earned high marks in multiple categories at NACTA. Some will be transferring to four-year colleges in the fall for their bachelor's degrees, while others are poised for the agricultural workforce.

NCTA Aggie Team results from the NACTA contest, in alphabetical order by subject:

Ag Communications - Team 3rd Place

Rachel Dather, Verdigre, 5th place individual

Team Members: Dather, Nate Montanez, Grand Island; Dalton Johnson, Gering.

Agribusiness - Team 3rd Place

Alyssa Novak, Eldorado, Neb., 2nd place individual

Team Members: Novak, Wade Vallery, Plattsmouth; Andrea Burkhardt, Winnetoon; Maggie Brunmeier, Bayard.

Computer Applications: 2nd Place team

Alyssa Novak, 1st place individual

Team Members: Novak, Dather, Johnson, Kayla Reynolds, Litchfield.

Crops - 1st Place team

John Paul Kain, McCook, 1st place individual, High Lab Practical, High Identification, High Agronomic Exam

Vincent Jones, Kirwin, Kansas, 2nd place individual

Maggie Brunmeier, Bayard, 3rd place individual, High Math Practical

Team Members: Kain, Jones, Brunmeier, Brent Thomas, Alliance.

Dairy Judging - 2nd place team

Nathan Lashley, Curtis, 1st place individual

Braden Wilke, Columbus, 4th place individual

Team Members: Lashley, Wilke, Dean Fleer, Pierce, 8<sup>th</sup>; Joe Calvo, Bassett, 12<sup>th</sup>.

Horticulture - Andrea Burkhardt, Winnetoon, 2nd place individual

Knowledge Bowl - 1st Place team

Team Members: Braden Wilke, Wade Vallery, Katharine Schudel, John Paul Cain, Andrea Burkhardt.

Livestock Judging – 8<sup>th</sup> sheep and goats, 10<sup>th</sup> beef cattle, 11<sup>th</sup> reasons, swine and overall team.

Team Members - Wilke, Calvo, Fleer, Katharine Schudel, North Loup; Wyatt Duskie, Jewell, Kan.

Livestock Management – 5<sup>th</sup> in ID, 6<sup>th</sup> overall team. Katharine Schudel 4<sup>th</sup> individual on test.

Team Members - Schudel, Wilke, Calvo, Duskie

Precision Agriculture - Team 1st place

Vincent Jones, 2nd place individual

John Paul Cain, 4th place individual, High Harvesting

Team Members - Jones, Cain, Will E. Kusant, Comstock; Lee Jespersen, Hemingford.

## Sweepstakes - 2nd place overall

In addition to Sievers and Ramsdale, Bailey Hinrichs of Ayr, Nebraska, attended NACTA as an assistant coach for the livestock judging team. She is a third-year student with a double major in livestock management and agribusiness management.

Other NCTA instructors who prepared the Aggies for national competition are Tee Bush, horticulture; Mary Rittenhouse, agribusiness management; and Terri Jo Bek, Joanna Hergenreder, and Doug Smith, animal science.

The 2018 NACTA events will be hosted by Northeast Community College at Norfolk, Nebraska.

See additional information about academic programs at [ncta.unl.edu](http://ncta.unl.edu) or call 1-800-3CURTIS.

Online article at <http://go.unl.edu/kwz0>

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### **Sources:**

Brad Ramsdale, PhD, agronomy professor, 308-367-5225, [bramsdale2@unl.edu](mailto:bramsdale2@unl.edu)

Jeremy Sievers, M.S., agribusiness professor, 308-367-5250, [Jeremy.sievers@unl.edu](mailto:Jeremy.sievers@unl.edu)

### **Writer:**

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

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Runner-up Sweepstakes Team is the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, Curtis, at the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture contest are: (Front, from left) Dalon Koubek, Katherine Schudel, Andrea Burkhardt, Maggie Brunmeier, Alyssa Novak, Kayla Reynolds, Dalton John, Wyatt Duskie, Braden Wilke, and Joe Calvo. (Back, from left) Will Kusant, Lee Jespersen, Nate Montanez, Wade Vallery, Vincent Jones, Nate Lashley, John Paul Cain, Brent Thomas, and Dean Flier. Not pictured is Rachel Dather, or coaches Brad Ramsdale, Jeremy Sievers and Bailey Hinrichs. (Sievers/NCTA Photo)