Ramsdale wins national honor

CURTIS, Neb. – Dr. Brad Ramsdale, agronomy professor and crops team coach at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, has received a national award for agricultural college professors.

Ramsdale was recognized with the NACTA Judging and Student Service Award by the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) organization. The professional society represents two-year and four-year colleges in agriculture.

Ramsdale, who joined the NCTA faculty in 2007, is the division chair of agronomy and agricultural mechanics. He was nominated for the NACTA honor by Dr. Kevin Donnelly, professor of agronomy and crops team coach at Kansas State University.

Dr. Brad Ramsdale (right) agronomy professor and crops team coach at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, received national recognition in Twin Falls, Idaho this summer with award nominator Kevin Donnelly, agronomy professor and crops team coach of Kansas State University. (Courtesy photo)
NCTA Professors Eric Reed and Ramsdale attended the NACTA Annual Conference held at the College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Idaho in June. Reed gave a presentation on general education in agriculture and Ramsdale a poster presentation on his NCTA Crop Practicum.

The conference theme, “Connecting to STEM”, emphasized professional advancement of faculty engaged in classroom and laboratory teaching, and allowed participants to share teaching methods, philosophies and styles of instruction.

“The NACTA Judging and Student Service Award is a well-deserved honor for Dr. Ramsdale,” said Ron Rosati, NCTA dean.

Many of Ramsdale’s courses, including Crops Judging I and II, teach career skills to NCTA students so they can become certified crop advisors. Additionally, each fall, several of Ramsdale’s graduates go on to four-year programs for bachelor’s degrees in crop science or agriculture.

Ramsdale led NCTA Aggie teams to three consecutive national championships in crops judging for 2016, 2017, and 2018. Individually, Aggie students swept the top four placings in 2017 and 2018, as well as the champion judger in 2019.

In 2018, Aggie teams scored higher than 75% of the teams from four-year universities, Rosati noted.

“Dr. Ramsdale effectively uses the NACTA contests as a teaching tool for improving student success in his agronomy program. Rather than the contests as an end in itself, preparation for the competitions serves to motivate students to develop the technical skills needed for career success,” Rosati said.

Other NCTA programs he coordinates or assists with include precision agriculture, on-farm practicum, honors classes, a 16-credit-hour on-line certificate in agriculture, and coordinating 220 acres of crop production at the NCTA farm near campus.

Ramsdale also teaches dual credit classes with Nebraska high schools, partners in youth education with Nebraska Extension in Frontier County and regional FFA programs, and teaches agricultural science for summer camps and field days.

On Wednesday, August 7th Ramsdale partners with Nebraska Extension educators for the annual Youth Agronomy Field Day held at NCTA.

He serves as the 2-year college representative on the NACTA Crops Contest steering committee, has attended four of the last five NACTA Annual Conferences, and has led NCTA’s participation in the NACTA contests since 2010.

The NACTA organization annually recognizes outstanding teaching and publication, said NACTA president Foy D. Mills, Jr. The 2020 NACTA Conference will be held at New Mexico State University.

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