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By NCTA News

## **Aggies on track with equine care**

CURTIS, Neb. - First-hand experience and opportunities to see veterinary care in action are some of the best teaching tools in the stable.

This week, at a veterinary clinic which specializes in equine care, three students from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis stepped into that surgical classroom.

“Our field trip to the Equine Veterinary Associates clinic in Grand Island was an awesome experience,” says Rachel Schmitz, an NCTA second-year veterinary technology student from O’Neill.

“We were given the opportunity to watch two surgeries, two lameness exams, and a checkup on a horse that had a subpalpebral lavage system,” said Schmitz, noting the treatment of a horse’s cornea with a procedure using an ophthalmic catheter.

Schmitz graduates May 4 from NCTA’s Veterinary Technology Division with an Associate of Applied Science degree in equine health care.

Her professor and one of NCTA’s veterinary faculty, Dr. Ricky Sue Barnes Wach, coordinated the field trip.

Each year, students visit Grand Island equine-related businesses such as Dr. Doug Brunk’s Equine Veterinary Associates, P.C.

His clinic is located just across the street from Fonner Park, home of central Nebraska’s horse racing industry.

There, Schmitz and her classmates Sarah Waltemath of Elm Creek and Carli Johnson of Hastings, gained first-hand insights.

“After each surgery, we were able to ask Dr. Brunk any questions we had, and he took the time to explain each procedure,” Schmitz said.

“The vet techs and Dr. Brunk worked together like a well-oiled machine to efficiently complete each surgery in a short amount of time.”

NCTA’s Veterinary Technology program offers five options of study for an Associates of Applied Science degree: veterinary technician, veterinary assistant, equine health care, animal health management, and animal husbandry.

More students were planning to attend the field trip to Grand Island but a Sunday snowstorm hampered some student travel during finals and commencement week.

Following graduation, Schmitz plans to complete job interviews and hopes to begin her career soon with a business emphasizing an equine breeding program.

“It was a fun and educational day in Grand Island, and I'm glad that I was able to attend the field trip,” Schmitz said.

Waltemath and Johnson are studying to become licensed veterinary technicians and combine equine health care into their programs for an added degree.

Information about NCTA programs is available at 1-800-3CURTIS, or at [ncta.unl.edu](http://ncta.unl.edu).

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Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture Professor Ricky Sue Barnes Wach, DVM, visited Grand Island with students (from left) Carli Johnson of Hastings, Rachel Schmitz of O`Neill and Sarah Waltemath of Elm Creek. The students are in NCTA's Veterinary Technology program. (Courtesy photo)

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