



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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## **Aggie of the Year out on the range**

By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

In her second year of college in Curtis, Maddy Carr settled into her comfort zone outdoors on the range.

Often, she rides vast rangeland as cattle graze pastures in Hayes and Frontier Counties. Or, at the shooting range of the Curtis Gun Club.

Both are settings where Aggie students from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture learn, work, compete and bond with classmates.

For Carr, a 2020 graduate of North Platte High School, she found her initial interest in veterinary medicine shifting to livestock industry management. Largely, due to the experiences she had as a student employee on the NCTA ranch crew.

“I feel livestock industry management is going to better suit me for a career path than being in a clinic setting as a veterinarian,” Carr said. She prefers to be outdoors, working with livestock.

The NCTA ranch crew handles chores at the campus farm, assisting with the NCTA cow-calf herd and feedlot cattle during the school year, and at the Leu Ranch in Hayes County mainly during the summer.

Her favorite work is with her big white horse, Maggie, processing, roping and moving cattle, often with the assistance of her Red Heeler-Border Collie dog, Mae.

“Mae goes with me everywhere and does everything with our ranch crew,” Carr said.

The athletic cowgirl who played softball in high school was active in 4-H, particularly with livestock projects.

She was influenced greatly by the Sandhills ranch life of her grandparents, Leon and Rosalea Gift of Thedford, and by family and friends.

### **Natural fit**

NCTA was a natural fit for her college career.

Carr joined the Aggie Shotgun Sports Team coached by Alan Taylor. He hired her for the Ranch Crew. Over spring break of 2021, she spent a week at the University’s Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory near Whitman, helping with spring calving.

“That was a great experience to stay up there and gain some hands-on experience,” she says.

In the spring of 2022, Carr competed in her first collegiate shotgun sports contests. When five members of the team traveled to San Antonio, Texas for the national clay target championships Carr joined teammates for the



*NCTA Dean Larry Gossen presents the Aggie of the Year plaque to Maddy Carr in May. (Crawford / NCTA photo)*

start of their trip, in a warm-up session at the Whittington Center near Raton, New Mexico.

As the team and coaches proceeded to Texas, Carr and teammate Nathaly Dragoo of Lincoln returned to Curtis because of their responsibilities with the campus ranch and farm crew. They had livestock chores to do.

### **Aggie of the Year**

An end-of-semester announcement at the student awards night in May caught her by surprise. Carr was named Aggie of the Year, a selection by faculty and staff for her outstanding representation as an NCTA Aggie.

She stayed in Curtis again this summer for fulltime employment on the NCTA ranch crew. Last week, they weaned spring calves and moved them to the feedlot at campus. They also moved yearlings and the main cow herd from the Leu Ranch summer pasture back to campus.

The Aggie ranch crew enjoyed the camaraderie of summer work, particularly after long hours in hot, drought conditions of southwestern Nebraska. Often, they started their days for big projects such as fencing or construction at 6 a.m. to avoid the warm afternoon temperatures.

“We had some very fun times together with pool parties, cookouts with team roping, and movie nights,” Carr shared. “Memories like these we won’t forget!”

This fall, as NCTA’s fall semester started August 22, Carr has a full load of classes in Range Management, Nutrition, Livestock & Carcass Evaluation, Ag Economics, Success in Animal Science, and Human Relations.

She is on track to graduate with an associate of applied science degree in December 2023. First, however, she plans many hours working or competing outdoors, out on the range.

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*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.*

Online: <https://go.unl.edu/zras>



*Maddy Carr aboard Maggie, on left, roped a cow which needed doctoring out on open range of the Leu Ranch. The NCTA student ranch crew has hands-on learning while at work. (NCTA photo)*