Project S.A.F.E. (Shooting Awareness, Fun and Education)
The Berrien County 4-H Project S.A.F.E BB Competition Team was rebooted in 2015. Project S.A.F.E. gives youth the opportunity to learn shooting safety, enjoy marksmanship and compete at the district and state levels. While looking for volunteers to continue the popular program, the Berrien County Project S.A.F.E. program went on a three-year hiatus. The re-introduction of the S.A.F.E. BB team within Berrien County 4-H provides new opportunities to retain more youth in the overall 4-H program, which provides youth with a place to discover self-worth and an opportunity to build positive relationships with adults.

In the fall of 2014, volunteers completed certified coaching training and then met with 4-H staff to discuss future plans. The team started small in order to learn the basics of a full season. Parent involvement was identified as mandatory for participation. Safety was a priority and safety protocols were identified and implemented. In 2015, five additional volunteers were certified and students competed in three matches. Despite being limited to three months of practice, seven of the eight members (88 percent) qualified for state competition. At state, three of the seven (43 percent) made perfect scores on the exam portion. The team also shot their highest scores of the season. The team raised more than $2,300 their first year. Seventy-five percent of these team members also participated in other 4-H events, such as Project Achievement competition, judging teams, summer camp and Georgia National Fair contests.

Lesser Cornstalk Borer Education
In 2014, the lesser cornstalk borer was a serious issue for farmers in Berrien County. The lesser cornstalk borer is the most destructive pest of peanuts in the Southeast, and the insect is most abundant and damaging in hot, dry years. The lesser cornstalk borer is the only caterpillar pest of peanuts that feeds directly on developing pods and seeds, but control options are limited to a single, broad-spectrum active ingredient.

The University of Georgia Peanut Entomology Program, in cooperation with UGA Cooperative Extension agents, conducted research to evaluate the efficacy of reduced-risk alternative chemistries against this pest. Two active ingredients, applied as liquid foliar sprays, showed promising activity against the lesser cornstalk borer. Both products represent reduced-risk chemistry compared to the standard organophosphate that is used. Though preliminary in nature, the research results were useful to growers who desperately needed alternatives to granular chlorpyrifos for lesser cornstalk borer management.

The UGA Extension agent in Berrien County provided farmers with information concluded through this preliminary research, and helped make recommendations regarding treatment. Lesser cornstalk borers only being prevalent in extreme hot and dry weather, many farmers had no prior knowledge. Identification of the pest as well as educating growers on how to identify the lesser cornstalk borer was also achieved. The procedure of determining thresholds for the pest was also provided to growers.
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Georgia’s agriculture and natural resource goods and services impact every community of the state every day. It’s the state’s largest industry with $74 billion of direct and indirect economic impact. More than 411,000 jobs in Georgia are involved directly in commodity or food- and fiber-related industries.

UGA Extension faculty and staff play a key role in the success of this industry by sharing university-based research for Georgians to use on the farm and at home. Recommendations in areas such as soil fertility, pest management, plant and crop varieties, water quality, and herd health and management focus on maximizing production and profits while minimizing environmental impacts.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension agents also provide homeowners and communities with information on lawn care, landscaping and gardening through a variety of workshops. Some agents also work with schools on programs, like farm-to-school, as well as with community gardens. Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteers give thousands of hours of service to their communities through educational opportunities and by answering questions in the county office.

4-H Youth Development

As the youth development program of UGA Extension, 4-H is part of a national network. Georgia 4-H reaches more than 175,000 students in the state, ages 9 to 19, through developing knowledge, life skills and attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. This mission is fulfilled through hands-on, core learning experiences in agricultural and environmental awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship.

Georgia 4-H’ers are well known for sharing their knowledge and volunteering throughout their communities. Students can participate in school and county club meetings organized by 4-H Youth Development Extension agents as well as the state level through competitions, summer camps and conferences. Some 4-H competitions and events are also offered regionally and nationally.

Research indicates that as a result of 4-H, members are more engaged in their academic studies, less likely to be involved in risky behavior and more likely to graduate from high school and continue their education than youth who do not participate in 4-H.

Family & Consumer Sciences

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension specialists, agents and staff assist in addressing real-life issues faced by Georgians of all ages. They provide the latest information and programs on obesity, chronic disease, food and financial insecurity, family stresses, and unhealthy housing, food safety and preservation, nutrition, and more.

UGA Extension offers resources for parents, caregivers and others to help promote the positive development and safety of pre-school, school-age and adolescent youth. Extension professionals in this program area lead consumer economics trainings and programs such as ServSafe®, Relationship Smarts and PRIDE — a parent and teen driving education course.

Extension also promotes healthy lifestyles through statewide programs. Walk Georgia — a virtual, fitness-tracking resource — encourages increasing physical fitness and healthy lifestyles in order to improve the wellbeing of communities. Other health programs managed by UGA include the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-ED). These classes teach families how to stretch their food dollars, eat healthier meals and snacks, and reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.