



2016 ANNUAL REPORT: ECHOLS COUNTY

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is working hard for its constituents. The following are examples of our impact in the county over the past year.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

With the loss of methyl bromide, alternative fumigant systems have been developed and adopted. These alternative fumigant systems are effective, but are more challenging than methyl bromide, primarily because the time interval between fumigation and planting is extended greatly. Plant back intervals for methyl bromide never extended past 10 days, while current fumigants have been documented to stay in the soil for over 45 days. It is not possible to predict how long current fumigants will stay in the soil, because soil moisture and environmental conditions, which change daily, determine this plant back interval. Because of this challenge, in 2014, the UGA Extension office bought a fumigant meter for the Echols County area. This fumigant meter allows the agent to check grower fields prior to planting to determine if it is safe to plant. This program addressing grower requests to check fields has exploded, with over 80 fields checked for soil fumigants in 2015 and 2016.



One producer laid plastic on 40 acres over a two-day period with a small rain in between. When the field was checked with the fumigant meter, it was found that half of the field was ready to plant and the other half still had fumigant

levels high enough to kill transplants. If the producer had gone on the calendar alone, or if the field had not been checked properly, the producer would have lost around 20 acres of bell pepper plants. The loss would have been around \$38,500 for the plants alone, not including labor, fertilizer and other costs associated with transplanting.

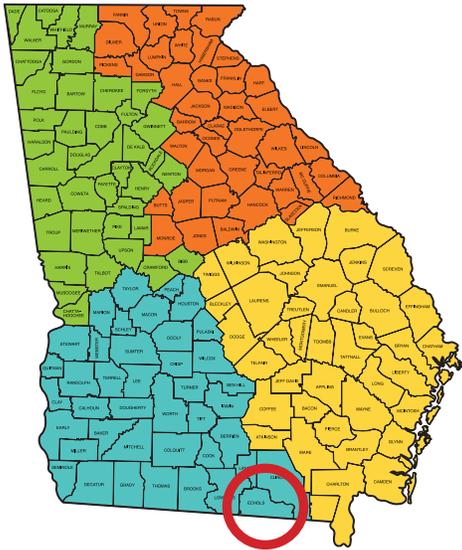
The grower commented, "The fumigant meter is one of the best resources offered by the Extension office to help vegetable growers. There is no way, at my size, I could have overcome a \$38,500 loss at the beginning of a crop." Producers reported that they were able to get into the fields an average of 1.5 weeks earlier, which gave them a longer growing season and a better return on their investment.



4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Echols County 4-H offers a variety of activities for youth. We partner with the school system to offer in-school club meetings to students in fourth to seventh grades, and we provide hands-on learning opportunities that follow Georgia Performance Standards. In 2016, we

reached 275 students through in-school programming. Public speaking is a big part of what 4-H is all about. This year nine students competed in public speaking competitions. Students in sixth through 12th grade can participate in our modified trap shotgun program. Echols County 4-H also offers traditional livestock show programs in which members can exhibit hogs in the local and state shows. Forty-one students have participated in various hog shows, including the Georgia National Fair, the local hog show and the state hog show. Summer camp is offered to students of all grade levels at different locations throughout Georgia. Our office has worked hard to make camp affordable for as many youth as possible. We offer several fundraisers for parents to choose from to reduce the out-of-pocket cost of camp. We also promote leadership conferences to students in seventh through 12th grades throughout the year. By participating in community service projects, students learn the importance of giving to others. Each year, we donate pop tabs and cans to the Ronald McDonald House Charities.



COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Population: 4,107

2016 Georgia County Guide, UGA

Georgia Health Factors Ranking: 93/159

2016 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Georgia 4-H Enrollment: 283

Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY16

Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:

Jobs: 3,602

Output: \$267,265,359

2017 Georgia Ag Snapshots, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

Farm Gate Value: \$194,625,931.56

Top Commodities: Bell Peppers, Other Vegetables, Cucumbers

2015 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

was founded in 1914 by the federal Smith-Lever Act. It's a unique partnership between UGA, county governments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities. Today, UGA Extension serves more than 2.6 million Georgians annually through a network of specialists, agents and staff by providing unbiased, research-based information driven by local needs and clientele input. From publications to in-person workshops and events, Extension is ready to meet the needs of the state and its communities.

Learn more at:
extension.uga.edu

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Agriculture & Natural Resources

Goods and services related to Georgia's agriculture and natural resources affect each of the state's communities every day. Agriculture is Georgia's largest industry, with \$74 billion of direct and indirect economic impact. More than 411,000 Georgia jobs 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 including 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, gardening and water conservation through a variety of workshops. Some agents also work with schools on projects like community gardens and farm-to-school programs. Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteers give thousands of hours of service to their communities by answering questions in county offices and creating educational opportunities.

4-H Youth Development

As the youth development program of UGA Extension, 4-H is also part of a national network. Georgia 4-H reaches more than 170,000 fourth- through 12th-grade students across the state and helps students develop the 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 learning experiences in agricultural and environmental awareness, leadership, communication skills, citizenship, energy conservation, health, and food and nutrition.

Georgia 4-H'ers are well known for sharing their knowledge and volunteering throughout their communities. At the school and county levels, students participate in club meetings organized by 4-H Youth Development Extension agents. At the state level, students participate in competitions, summer camps and conferences. Some 4-H competitions and events are also offered at the regional and national levels.

Research indicates that, as a result of participating in 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.



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 programs and the latest information on obesity, chronic disease, food and financial insecurity, family stresses, unhealthy housing, food safety and preservation, nutrition and more.

To help promote the positive development and safety of preschool, school-aged and adolescent youth, UGA Extension offers resources for parents, caregivers and others. 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 improving physical fitness and healthy lifestyles in order to better the lives of Georgians. Other health programs managed by UGA include the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and 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.