

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture and Natural Resources personnel provide research-based information on agriculture and natural resources to all residents. They assisted homeowners, farmers, and landowners by providing educational seminars and webinars on topics such as landscaping, controlling invasive species, protecting native pollinators, and managing soil fertility. Educational programming is developed and designed to assist individuals in making sound economic and environmental decisions that affect everyday life.

In 2025, the UGA Extension Henry County ANR section received 98 walk-ins, 315 phone calls, 388 emails from citizens with home gardening questions and concerns, and 95 insect, disease, and plant identification samples. The Extension office also processed 300 soil samples and 29 water samples for testing.

UGA Extension Henry County has 50 active Master Gardener Extension Volunteers who contributed 3,339 hours, which are worth \$116,164 in 2025. For the 2025 annual Master Gardener Class, Henry County had 10 interns who completed the program.

UGA Extension Henry County hosted 10 monthly 'Lunch and Learn' sessions for homeowners with 166 participants. The educational programs covered topics such as vegetable gardening, backyard chickens, composting, and other homeowner interests.

UGA Extension Henry held two UGA Extension Southeastern Green Industry Updates online via Zoom, offering pesticide recertification credits for those with a commercial pesticide applicator license, as well as Certified Arborist CEUs. It had a total of 73 participants. A post-class survey was sent via Qualtrics to participants, and 100% responded that the pest management techniques and strategies presented in today's program will help them use pesticides more safely and efficiently. Several commented 'I plan to apply key concepts to improve plant health, sustainability, and overall efficiency throughout my work and our company. Additionally, the course reinforced key principles of pesticide use and safety, helping me ensure compliance with best practices and regulatory standards. The program's information also helped me better understand drift and how to manage specific herbicides. This will allow me to better educate our customers on proper herbicide use and potential environmental risks.'

4H PROGRAM

4-H promotes positive youth development through programs and hands-on educational experiences focused on leadership, citizenship, STEM, and communication.

In 2025, Henry County 4-H reached over 2,500 5th graders through our in-school club meetings. Each month, the 4-H staff provides ELA and science lessons to the 5th-grade classes that correlate to their standards. 4-H staff reached 24 of the 28 public schools in Henry County.

Henry County offers a variety of specialty clubs, including Cloverbuds, Dog Club, Horse Club, SAFE Shooting Sports, County Council, and more. We have a total of 209 active 4-H'ers involved in our specialty clubs, 41 volunteers who help with these clubs, and 10 certified Teen Leaders. We also have other programs such as our judging teams, state events, and Project Achievement, where youth can learn valuable life and career skills. Through Project Achievement, we had one Senior 4-H'er Master in the Food Labs Diary category.

In 2025, our 4-H'ers accumulated 88 service hours through activities, events, and clubs. Some of the community service activities included donating and assembling 25 Easter baskets for A Friend's House, donating and sorting 679

pounds of canned food at Helping in His Name Food Pantry, donating 20 pumpkins for the animals at Dauset Trails Nature Center, and donating 95 items to Toys for Tots.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Henry County Extension continues to take a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to supporting healthier choices through prevention initiatives and community-based education. By facilitating and delivering educational programs, we improve access to nutritious foods and opportunities for physical activity, helping residents adopt healthier behaviors and lifestyles. Through collaboration among residents, community organizations, and local leadership, Henry County is strengthening access to resources that support health, financial stability, and overall well-being for all.

Research shows that behavior change is influenced by more than knowledge alone. In response, we offer both in-person and online programs, including the Diabetes Prevention Program Type 2 (DPP T2) and the Healthy Diabetes for Extension Program (HED). These programs focus on the “how” of behavior change by creating opportunities, building skills, and increasing participants’ capacity to make sustainable lifestyle improvements.

As Henry County continues to grow rapidly and become more diverse, residents face a range of social and economic challenges. Factors such as demanding work schedules, long commutes, time constraints, and financial pressures can limit the ability to achieve and maintain optimal health. These barriers are often associated with an increased risk of chronic conditions, highlighting the need for accessible, community-based support.

In 2026, the Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent offered free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This initiative contributed to community well-being by reducing financial strain, saving residents time, and alleviating stress, factors that can positively influence overall health. Approximately 80 clients were served, with more than 65 receiving direct financial resources and assistance. Collectively, clients saved an estimated \$24,000 in tax preparation fees (based on typical filing costs of \$200–\$300 per return). Client feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

- 100% of participants expressed appreciation for the free tax preparation service, noting significant financial relief—especially when taxes were owed.
- 25% reported that the financial education and resources provided helped them better plan for retirement and adjust tax withholdings for the coming year.