



2016 ANNUAL REPORT: BERRIEN 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.

LIVESTOCK FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The Berrien County Agriculture Center was built 30 years ago to provide space for youth to exhibit livestock. In 2008, Berrien County secured \$26,000 to expand facilities. Since then the livestock program has grown, and the county now needs to improve infrastructure to accommodate 90 youth learning life skills and developing responsibility through animal projects.

The county agent and the Berrien Youth Livestock Association (BYLA) met to discuss improving local livestock exhibition. Action items discussed included new scales, a shelter over the wash rack, weigh-in area, extra hog pens, show ring improvements and concrete under the pavilion. The BYLA earmarked dollars for these projects and asked Berrien County to subsidize.

Over the past four years, fundraising dollars were used to purchase digital scales, add extra hog pens and improve the ring and pen system. The BYLA partnered with the county to split the construction cost of a shelter over the wash rack. Recently, Berrien County invested \$12,000 to complete the concrete under the pavilion.

Nearly \$60,000 has been invested to improve the facility and livestock exhibition since 2008 via partnership with the county and the local livestock association. During that time, 600 youths have benefited from the improvements by participating in 16 local livestock shows. Funds are being raised for further advances, including a matching shelter for more covered pavilion space.

One member states, "Ag Center advances have made it much more functional to exhibitors. The updates to the facilities and equipment shows that others see the value of youth livestock exhibition."

IMPROVED FUSARIUM WILT MANAGEMENT

Fusarium wilt is a devastatingly aggressive watermelon disease. Although the disease is not necessarily more prevalent than other watermelon diseases, for the fields infected by the disease, it can be very problematic. Disease incidence has reached 50 percent or more in select fields, causing significant losses. Fungicide treatment, crop rotation and classic fumigation methods have suppressed the disease, at best, and other means of management, such as grafted varieties, are expensive. A more sustainable approach to managing fusarium wilt is needed. Fumigant trials were placed among various Berrien County growers



to evaluate a new technique of fumigant application and compare it to grafted varieties and fungicide application.

Local and area watermelon growers have witnessed an alarming amount of fusarium wilt incidences with the inability to acquire new land to rotate production. Since crop rotation is not feasible,

other control methods must be obtained. Traditional techniques of fumigation have suppressed disease incidence inconsistently and are not affordable when considering marginal losses. New fumigation techniques proposed by other research needed to be explored.

Research was directed in high watermelon production areas. Three side-by-side comparisons were observed in relation to other equal methods of control, such as grafted varieties and fungicide applications.

After observing, there was an absolute side-by-side difference in the "new" technique as opposed to the classic fumigant application. Although the cost is typically expensive in practical management strategy, it was observed that this could be a promising method to salvage land populated by fusarium wilt.



COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Population: 19,008

2016 Georgia County Guide, UGA

Georgia Health Factors Ranking: 117/159

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

Georgia 4-H Enrollment: 439

Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY16

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

Jobs: 1,321

Output: \$142,921,194

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

Farm Gate Value: \$113,582,225.40

Top Commodities: Peanuts, Cotton, Layers

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.