



2016 ANNUAL REPORT: CHEROKEE 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.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Cherokee County 4-H offers many learning experiences for youth to acquire knowledge about agriculture and environmental sciences in the community. In 2016, in-school 4-H curricula covered plant classification, water quality, zoonotic diseases, plant genetics and the rock cycle. Each lesson was presented to 496 students and included hands-on learning experiences in the classroom.



Teachers gave positive feedback, reporting that the lessons reinforced their current fifth-grade science curriculum. Additional learning opportunities were presented after school through specialty clubs and judging teams, including Horse Club, Wildlife Judging, and Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging.

A summer farm-to-fork day camp was offered at a local farm. Youth in attendance experienced a day on a working farm, where they learned about water quality, pests and diseases, crop management and making their own food. Youth took their new knowledge on where and how food is grown into the kitchen to make strawberry preserves. The class taught students about agriculture, enabling them to share their knowledge with their families. At the end of the class, 90 percent of the youth who attended understood the process that food takes from farm to fork, and they stated that they could go home and tell their parents more about how food is grown.

Cherokee County 4-H also works closely with the Cherokee County Farm Bureau to advertise, promote and assist with their countywide first-grade coloring contest. Over 3,000 students participated in the agriculture coloring contest from all 24 elementary schools. Cherokee County Extension also cosponsored an agriculture expo with the Cherokee County Farm Bureau that drew over 300 attendees and vendors from the community. Attendees were exposed to various aspects of agribusiness, including beekeeping, the nursery industry, fruit and vegetable production, grit grinding, food production and commercial preservation, homemade soaps and egg production.

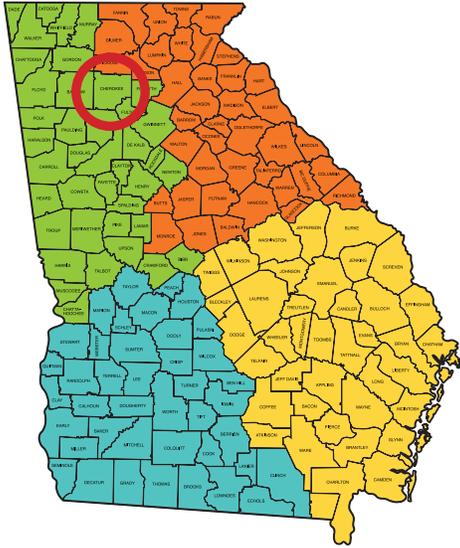
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

To proactively address the interest in home food production, Cherokee County Extension implemented the Backyard Agriculture series in 2016. The series followed the seasonal calendar of growing fruits and vegetables, and seven free courses were taught in the county. The program started in February with garden



planning and seed starting, and it was followed by programs on composting, tool maintenance, pesticide safety, plant disease, insect identification, saving seeds and herbs, and fall gardening. The series finished in late October with lessons on tree and blueberry planting.

An average of 25 participants attended each class, with a total participation of 148 in the entire series. Participants self-evaluated their knowledge and understanding of key topics before and after each course. According to evaluations, the courses saw a 45 percent increase in knowledge.



COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Population: 241,762

2016 Georgia County Guide, UGA

Georgia Health Factors Ranking: 6/159

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

Georgia 4-H Enrollment: 972

Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY16

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

Jobs: 3,955

Output: \$443,130,200

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

Farm Gate Value: \$54,312,122.15

Top Commodities: Greenhouse, Horses, Broiler

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.