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.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

In Coffee County, the second half of 2016 brought the introduction of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and its Food Talk class. Food Talk consists of six lessons covering meal planning, sodium and its effect on blood pressure, the importance of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, how to read a nutrition label, understanding fats and food safety. Classes are taught in a relaxed session and typically last 60 minutes. Participants hear a lesson, receive take-home items to help reinforce the lesson and sample two recipes prepared in a cooking demonstration. Food Talk recipes can be cooked in less than 25 minutes using inexpensive and readily available ingredients, demonstrating that healthy eating doesn’t have to be expensive or time consuming. The classes are free to participants thanks to a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program has been well received in Coffee County and continues to grow.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A Coffee County Senior 4-H member saw a need to help supply snack foods to elementary students on extended school breaks who are at risk of not getting regular meals. Acting on that need, she started a project called “Bagging Hunger.” She gathered granola bars, chips, snack cakes, juice pouches and similar products from the local food bank to ensure students would not go without during their break. She recruited older 4-H members to help fill more than 300 bags and then delivered them to the school for distribution to the students. The school principal stated, “This 4-H member approached me with the idea of providing snack bags for my students before our spring break. I thought it was a wonderful idea. The bags provided needed nourishment to over 300 students during their school break until they could get back on the school meal program.” She provided bags three more times and plans to continue the project throughout this school year. This 4-H member is making a difference in her community by “Bagging Hunger.”

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Coffee County continues to be one of Georgia’s 10 largest agricultural counties. Coffee County’s 2015 farm gate value is over $257 million! Coffee County’s top agricultural commodities are poultry, $120,779,593; peanuts, $24,309,514; greenhouse, $21,348,756; cotton, $18,818,796; timber, $10,012,686; beef cattle, $10,571,544; tobacco, $6,792,500; hay, $5,250,000; blueberries, $4,930,119; and corn, $3,432,996.

In 2016, the Coffee County Extension office conducted 48 agricultural educational meetings with 608 attendees. The county agent made 420 farm visits, had 423 office visits, answered 1,130 phone calls and had 3,905 written correspondences. He hosted a daily radio program on WULS in Douglas, Georgia, producing 293 radio programs reaching 2,500 contacts daily with a total of 732,500 total contacts per year. The Coffee County Extension office offered technical support through UGA laboratories by submitting 255 soil, 12 water, 18 poultry litter, 47 feed and forage, 42 plant disease, 20 pond water and 18 tissue samples. Extension agriculture specialists visited Coffee County 16 times to provide group educational programs and individual troubleshooting assistance. The Coffee Extension office conducted nine on-farm research projects to provide growers with valuable information about insect and disease control as well as variety performance.
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 41,000 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.