



## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT: GILMER 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.*

### **BUDGETING PROGRAM**

Many Gilmer County citizens are suffering from tough economic times, and to help overcome these challenges, the Extension office offers a budgeting and identity theft class. Participants learn to protect themselves from identity theft, stretch their food dollars, save money, track spending, set up a spending plan and pay their bills on time. After completing the class, participants are asked to secretly write down what they learned. The following is a response from the class. "I learned what to do if I am a victim of identity theft, not to keep my social security card with me, how to save money, track spending, cut spending, freeze my child's credit to protect them from identity theft, a better way to look at what I spend, and ways to improve my financial well-being." Responses to follow-up questions a month after the class revealed that all respondents were tracking their spending habits and trying to pay bills on time. One participant commented, "I am tracking my spending and look at what we really need versus what we want; I pay my bills on time, it saves late fees and high interest and I pay a few days in advance."

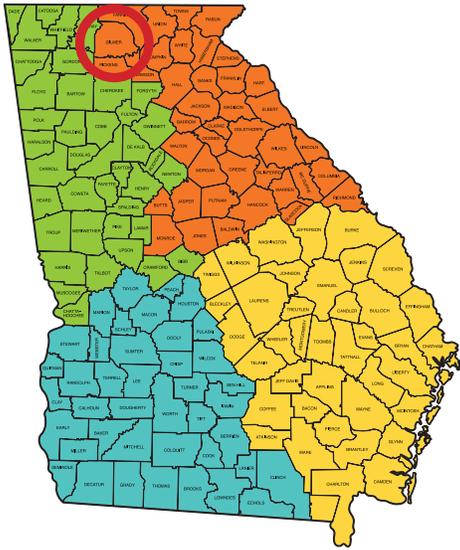
### **PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE**

Career readiness is the focus of in-school clubs. Students in fifth through 12th grades explored career fields through hands-on learning experiences. Fifth-grade students learned lessons in finance, information technology, marketing, government and public administration. The middle and high school students explored manners and etiquette, personality styles and how to interview for a prospective job. The kindergarten through third-grade Cloverbuds explored careers in agriculture.

Gilmer County 4-H members gave oral presentations related to their areas of interest and gained valuable public speaking skills. Members showing livestock gained experience and knowledge in animal science and the management of livestock. Summer and after-school programs explored the arts, science, engineering and technology with an emphasis on careers related to these areas. The 4-H program continues to grow with the addition of Darcie Pritchett, the new 4-H AmeriCorps State member. Sixteen new 4-H clubs have been added for the 2016-2017 school year, enabling 4-H to positively influence more Gilmer County youth.

### **DIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture in Gilmer County is very diverse. Poultry is the No. 1 agricultural enterprise, consisting of broilers, meat production, hens, baby chick production and a processing facility. Information about ventilation has been shared with producers to help improve production. Apples, wine grapes and agritourism are thriving. Gilmer Extension assists producers in using integrated pest management (IPM) to control insects and diseases using the minimum amount of pesticides to make the area more appealing to a large public presence. Bees are very important to agriculture. Gilmer County is also home to several beef cattle operations. The office helped producers understand how to decrease the use of antibiotics through the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). The office works with a local beekeeping group to help increase awareness of honeybees and increase the number of beehives in the county. As more people move into the county, homeowner needs have increased. A very active Gilmer County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer program carries out several projects throughout the year, including the farmers market.



## COUNTY AT A GLANCE

**Population:** 29,098

2016 Georgia County Guide, UGA

**Georgia Health Factors Ranking:** 58/159

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

**Georgia 4-H Enrollment:** 542

Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY16

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

**Jobs:** 2,290

**Output:** \$581,953,218

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

**Farm Gate Value:** \$184,325,493.60

**Top Commodities:** Broiler, Layers, Agritourism

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](http://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.