University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is working hard for its constituents. The following are examples of Extension’s impact in the county over the past year.

CANCER PREVENTION COOKING SCHOOL

Cancer is the second-leading cause of death in the U.S. and in Georgia. One-third of all cancer cases could be prevented by lifestyle choices, including maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet and increasing physical activity.

In a grant-funded partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Appling County Family and Consumer Sciences agent presented the Cooking for a Lifetime Cancer Cooking School six times, with four follow-up programs, reaching 122 participants. Individuals learned about individual risks for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, screening recommendations and nutrition and physical activity recommendations for cancer prevention. The data showed this program reached participants who are never or rarely screened for cancer, motivating men and women to consider getting cancer screenings. Evaluations noted participants definitely planned to get the following:

- Pap smear – 89 percent
- Mammogram – 87 percent
- Colonoscopy – 78 percent
- Fecal occult blood test – 61 percent

Earlier detection through screening can contribute to reduced health care costs as well as improved survival rates. The program is motivating participants to work to prevent cancer and promote health by being more physically active; achieving and maintaining a healthy weight; and eating healthier by choosing whole grains, limiting red meat and avoiding processed meat. One participant said, “I now understand more about how just eating healthy and exercising can help prevent cancer.”

SOUTHEAST GEORGIA PECAN FIELD DAY

Southwest Georgia plays host to many pecan field days, but more than 33,000 acres of pecans are grown in southeast Georgia. To provide growers in the southeast region with more local pecan trainings and field days, Appling County Extension has hosted the Southeast Georgia Pecan Field Day for the past three years. Topics addressed include fertilization, diseases, the pecan market, thinning, hedging and transplanting. Each year new topics that interest growers are discussed. More than 271 growers from 31 counties attended the 2018 field day. One grower had the following praise for the Southeast Georgia Pecan Field Day: “It gives growers a place to go that’s close to their farm; it’s basically the same insects and the same seasons we all have to fight down here together. I think we can learn to better produce pecans when everybody comes together and talks about it in our section of the state.”

GROWING FOR THE FUTURE

The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. To fulfill this mission, Appling County 4-H participated in Georgia 4-H Project Achievement, a public speaking competition. 4-H’ers chose projects from more than 50 project areas, researched topics of interest and prepared oral presentation with visual aids. In 2018, 20 4-H’ers from fifth to 12th grade competed in various project areas. After-school workshops helped prepare 4-H’ers to compete at their best. Ten fifth and sixth graders competed at Cloverleaf District Project Achievement. All 10 placed first, second or third in their projects. Ten seventh- through 12th-graders competed at Junior/Senior District Project Achievement. Six placed first, second, or third and one advanced to State Congress and earned the Master 4-H’er level by placing first. These competitions give youth experience in organizing their thoughts and building the confidence necessary to make successful public presentations.
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, and its direct and indirect economic impact totals $73.7 billion. More than 392,400 Georgia jobs are directly involved 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 is a virtual, fitness-tracking resource that encourages physical fitness and healthy lifestyles 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.

ugaextension.org/appling