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.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Food safety education, offered to the food industry, encourages proper food safety as an avenue to prevent foodborne illness. In the U.S. each year, foodborne disease results in an estimated 48 million people with gastrointestinal foodborne illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In 2018, the Candler Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agent collaborated with other Southeast District FACS agents to deliver food safety education to 238 participants. The Candler agent coordinated, conducted and evaluated the ServSafe® Manager and ServSafe® Food Handler course and exam for local food service, state school nutrition students and high school students completing the Nutrition and Food Science pathway.

The agent developed a PowerPoint presentation and coordinated with the state specialist to distribute UGA Extension food safety posters in schools. The agent distributed three articles on food safety to two local newspapers, reaching 12,000 readers.

Two hundred thirty-eight participants received 74 hours of food safety education and 67 participants completed the ServSafe® Manager course and exam, resulting in a 73 percent passing rate. Forty-nine participants received national certification and 14 students completed the ServSafe® Food Handler Safety course and exam, resulting in an 86 percent pass rate. Twelve students became certified and completed the pathway.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Candler County Extension County Council is comprised of representatives from each program development team as well as 4-H’ers, 4-H parents, farmers, business leaders and community leaders.

After meeting with this group about the lack of connection between residents and agriculture in Candler County, they proposed a farm tour to educate the community and business leaders on the importance of agriculture in Candler County.

The county Extension coordinator (CEC) worked with six local farmers to schedule stops at their farms. Each farmer was selected to demonstrate the variety of agriculture grown in Candler County. Highlights of the tour included a guided tour of our local Vidalia onion grower’s operation, a tour of a satsuma orange grove as well as a visit to the Georgia Grown Soy Candle Company. The team also secured an educational speaker who addressed the group at lunch on the importance of UGA Extension and the role it plays in agriculture in Candler County. This year’s tour also served as the backdrop to introduce our newly hired Agriculture and Natural Resources agent to the community and to our local farmers. With the tour covering only a part of the agriculture in Candler County, a date for the 2019 farm tour has been set to further educate the community and business leaders on other aspects of the largest industry in the county.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Over the last year, the 4-H agent has worked to change the way young people view leadership. The agent has shifted students’ perspectives from “I’ll be a leader one day” to focusing on what they can do every day to make the life of another person better. To date, the program has been delivered to 245 middle- and high-school students, as well as four middle school administrators and 35 college after-school workers. One hundred percent of participants stated that this “new” definition of leadership has inspired them to see themselves as potential leaders. One participant stated, “You can change someone ...and never realize the impact in their lives.” Another participant added, “Being a leader isn’t as big as everyone makes it seem. It can be as small as helping someone today to change their perspective on tomorrow.”
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.