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.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) has been the word in Carroll County 4-H over the past year. By increasing the volume of curriculum offered within the county program, Carroll County 4-H staff have implemented fun and innovative activities to be used during in-school programming. The goal of the 4-H program is to continue to grow in order to reach and serve as many students as possible.

By collaborating with both the county school system and the city school system, the need for additional staffing has become evident. By adding the city school, our program gained 16 additional classrooms and 400 students. This year, the 4-H office gained a part-time AmeriCorps position to assist in reaching a steadily increasing 4-H enrollment, now at 1,800 4-H members. The AmeriCorps service member looks to provide direct service to address critical community needs. This program is funded through a federal grant in cooperation with the local government.

Education and preparation is a large focus within 4-H, and an important issue in Carroll County is community involvement and awareness. With the help of the new AmeriCorps service member, community service has been made a priority in the county program. Nearly 200 “Blessing Bags” were gathered and distributed to the local emergency shelter.

Carroll County 4-H continues to make strides in connecting with youth to help them achieve their goals and prepare for the future. From competitions and judging events to community service and college preparation, the 4-H staff and wonderful volunteers work to make the best better in their 4-H’ers.

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**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated production losses in excess of $38 million for livestock operations due to imported fire ants. At $16 per acre, the expense of treating heavily infested pastures is relatively cheap when considering livestock production losses associated with imported fire ants. Fire ant mounds can also result in costly damage to mowing and hay-baling equipment.

Producers needed reliable information on proper control measures to help combat imported fire ants in pastures and hayfields. To demonstrate the relative ease and effectiveness of using bait products to manage fire ant populations, demonstrations have been conducted on a Carroll County farm. Using a Herd GT-77 seeder calibrated to spread 1.5 pounds of bait per acre, Amdro® Pro Fire Ant Bait was applied to a 10-acre pasture. A second untreated pasture was used for comparison. Three sampling plots were established within each of the treated and untreated areas. At the time of application, the treated and untreated areas had an average of 64 and 82 mounds per acre, respectively. Eight weeks after the application, an evaluation of the project revealed an overall 98-percent reduction of fire ant mounds in the treatment area while the untreated area had a decrease of 45 percent.

The Carroll County Extension office purchased a Herd GT-77 seeder for farmers to rent in order to encourage more farmers to treat their pastures for imported fire ants. After two years, a total of 300 acres have been treated using the Herd GT-77 spreader. Two hundred producers have attended six presentations to learn about managing fire ants in their pastures and hayfields. Fire-ant bait products marketed for fire-ant management can be used to safely and effectively control fire ant populations to reduce their negative impact on livestock operations.

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[ugaextension.org/carroll](ugaextension.org/carroll)
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.