MANAGING SOUTHERN ROOT KNOT NEMATODES

Colquitt County cotton producers have historically struggled with the economical management of southern root-knot nematodes. According to UGA's Department of Plant Pathology, the southern root-knot nematode is the most prevalent plant-parasitic nematode affecting cotton in Georgia. The studies show an infestation of this potentially devastating pest in an estimated 70 percent of the cotton acreage in Georgia. In response to this issue, UGA Extension in Colquitt County implemented a field trial consisting of nine treatments replicated four times. Treatments in this field experiment included nematode-resistant and non-nematode-resistant cotton varieties and their responses to fumigants, aldicarb, seed treatments and seed mixtures. The highest-yielding treatment in this field experiment consisted of DP 1646 with the fumigant applied pre-plant. A 125-pound yield increase was noted when fumigant was applied to DP 1646 compared to DP 1646 without fumigant. Assuming $0.80 per pound cotton price, the increase in yield would be a $40 increase in profits per acre.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Colquitt County 4-H agent sought an effective way to reach more students, improve writing skills and help fifth–grade teachers improve student scores on the Georgia Milestones Test. She met with language arts teachers about supporting the Project Achievement essay contest as part of the test preparation. The teachers agreed to use this project as a teaching tool and allow students to work on their essays during school. Some teachers chose to require this for a grade and others just for the Georgia Milestones Test practice. The language arts teachers were in support of the 4-H agent teaching the Project Achievement Essay lesson during regular club meetings. Out of the classes taught, 50 percent of students completed and submitted essays for the Colquitt County 4-H Project Achievement essay contest. There were approximately 433 essays submitted and approximately 65 percent of all 4-H students participated in the Cloverleaf essay contest. The teachers shared how the 4-H essay contest assisted their students in enhancing their writing skills. The Cloverleaf essay contest provided teachers with an additional opportunity to assist with improving the informational writing skills of their students.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

In 2018, Colquitt County Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) participated in the virtual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Participants learned about important tax deductions and credits and received free tax preparation. Participating taxpayers began to take action to start and/or increase savings while utilizing free tax assistance. The Colquitt County FACS agent facilitated 17 appointments and completed 15 tax returns through UGA, and 20 appointments and 18 tax returns through the University of Florida (UF) program, totaling 37 appointments and 33 returns. Total federal tax returns received were $19,261 and state refunds received totaled $7,800, equaling $27,061 in tax returns. This collaboration resulted in the Internal Revenue Service asking the Colquitt County FACS agent to conduct a brief de-escalation training in fall 2018 for the UF VITA team so that they may begin basic client-management training with their individual site teams and volunteers.
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.