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.

**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

UGA Extension in Cook County provides lifelong learning to the people of Cook County through unbiased, research-based education about agriculture, the environment, communities, youth and families. This information is generated by university specialists and disseminated through the Cook County Extension office to residents of the county via informal educational meetings, newsletters, blogs, emails and newspaper articles. This county delivery system has been an effective tool for UGA Extension for more than 100 years.

Cook County is an agriculture-based community. In 2017, Cook County had a total farm-gate value of more than $102 million. Cook County is home to traditional crops like corn, cotton, peanuts and soybeans, but it is the county’s vegetable production that is exceptional. Cook County’s vegetable production comprised 16 percent of the total value. The Cook County Extension office is a Cook County farmer’s go-to source for accessing the latest, unbiased, research-based information related to agricultural production. In 2018, this information was disseminated directly to Cook County farmers from the Cook County Extension office via seven formal agriculture production update meetings; nine published newspaper articles; and 39 emailed or blogged “Ag Updates,” which highlighted current crop production challenges with UGA recommendations. Much of this research-based information was generated locally on Cook County farms through research trials investigating pecan ambrosia beetle trapping, crop fungicide effectiveness and cotton and peanut variety performance, among other things. A total of six research/demonstration trials were conducted in Cook County in collaboration with local growers and UGA crop specialists. In 2018, data from the local peanut fungicide trial was presented at the National County Agents Association (NACAA) Annual Meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as well as the American Peanut Research and Education Society (APRES) annual meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, by Cook Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent Tucker Price. Data from this trial is referred to by UGA peanut specialists during peanut production meetings in other peanut-producing counties, as well as during the Annual Peanut Farm Show attended by peanut producers across the U.S.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

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. This mission is accomplished through experiential learning focused on agricultural and environmental issues, agriculture awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation and citizenship. The Cook County Extension 4-H agent coordinates programming for the youth of Cook County. This vibrant 4-H program has a total of 291 Cook County 4-H’ers enrolled. Sixteen 4-H club meetings are conducted in Cook County schools each month. The Cook County 4-H program boasts active participation in 4-H District Project Achievement competition, cotton boll and consumer judging, forestry judging, poultry judging, Project SAFE (Shooting Awareness, Fun and Education) Modified Trap Team events, community service and 4-H summer camps. The Cook County 4-H staff also offers in-school lessons on topics such as bullying prevention, coping with stress on standardized tests, proper etiquette and healthy living.
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.

Learn more at: extension.uga.edu