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

Rural Dade County supports a farm-gate value of more than $36 million, underscoring the need for UGA Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources and 4-H programs. While the majority of Dade’s citizens are generations removed from agriculture, their roots go deep, and we are making strides to encourage agricultural ties through Extension education and events. Ag Day is a favorite of schoolchildren and consistently reaches more than 300 students each spring. This event gives pre-K, second- and fourth-grade, and middle school students the chance to visit the UGA Extension office and experience agriculture through unique hands-on learning opportunities in beekeeping, looming, spinning, seeds, vegetables, livestock, wildlife, blacksmithing, forestry and more. We hosted another successful Dade County Family Agricultural Fair in September 2018. In contrast to Ag Day, the Family Agricultural Fair is held in the evening to better accommodate working families and incorporates the agricultural aspects of Ag Day with interested community partners. In just two hours, more than 400 community residents attended the 2018 Family Agricultural Fair, which featured more than 20 agricultural and community business exhibits, including Farm Bureau, Colmore Farms, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Spinning Fibers and the Dade County High School FFA Chapter. These events stimulate exciting conversations with children and adults about the connection between the animals and crops they see and the food on their tables. Dade County Extension provides much-needed education and support to local farmers, producers, county residents and youth regarding the importance of agriculture. We are looking forward to a successful 2019 with the addition of personnel after seven months without an Agriculture and Natural Resources agent. On January 1, ANR Agent Sarah Flowers joined the team of County Extension Coordinator Wade Hutcheson, 4-H Educator Alison Henderson and Secretary Carey Anderson. The team’s goal is to usher in a renewal and revitalization of agricultural sciences in the coming years so that agriculture once again thrives in Dade County.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Dade County 4-H Club serves more than 350 third through 12th graders, offering in-school club meetings, after-school clubs, judging teams, Project SAFE (Shooting Awareness, Fun and Education), summer camp and public-speaking opportunities. Elementary school counselors requested College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) lessons to help fourth- and fifth-graders prepare for Georgia-required career portfolios at the end of their fifth-grade year. Fifth-graders are following the “Your Money, Your Future” lessons that culminate with in-class businesses. Fourth-grade classes will be presenting science projects after participating in the “How to Make a Science Project” lessons. Third-grade classes are experiencing hands-on science demonstrations that supplement their Georgia science standards. The afterschool 4-H Activity Club met twice weekly in the fall and once weekly in the spring. The club encompasses gardening, science experiments, crafts and service projects including maintaining raised beds and flower gardens, starting a worm garden and building a small greenhouse. They participated in a Rivers Alive clean-up project, sent thank-you notes to farmers and made Christmas cards for residents of a local nursing home. Almost 50 percent of Activity Club members participated in District Project Achievement this year. Clover the 4-H cow is a great magnet for 4-H displays, starting conversations with staff, parents and students about what 4-H has to offer at events she attends, including Ag Day, Family Ag Fair, Read-to-Lead and the local Fourth of July celebration.

ugaextension.org/dade
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

UGA 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 P.R.I.D.E., 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.