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

Urban horticulture is a focus in Dougherty County. Landscape professionals, foresters, arborists, golf course superintendents, grounds maintenance workers and public works personnel receive yearly training through seminars, daylong workshops and webinars. These trainings provide the most current horticulture information and management tools in the commercial landscaping industry. These opportunities allow participants to earn continuing education credits that count toward certifications.

With the aid of the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) program, homeowners receive technical assistance in the areas of composting, flowers, fruit and nut production, insect identification and control, lawn and plant care, pesticide safety, shrubs and trees, soil and water testing, vegetable gardening, weed identification and control, and water conservation. In 2017, Dougherty County Master Gardeners donated 734 hours (representing $17,718.00 in labor), traveled 7,618 miles and had 4,479 contacts, which included telephone calls, providing technical information/service to citizens, giving talks to civic clubs or garden clubs, and working in community and school gardens.

The Fort Valley State University (FVSU) Cooperative Extension program provides farmers annual and quarterly educational trainings and workshops to improve productivity while protecting the environment. The Extension agent offers advice to help farmers and homeowners control and/or manage diseases and weeds, market products made from plants and animals, establish co-ops, complete applications for U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency loans and farm plans, and apply for Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share programs.

UGA Extension in Dougherty County has partnered with FVSU Extension on a number of programs and services concerning pesticide safety, pesticide license certification, water management, hydroponics and aquaponics, commercial pecan production, soil sampling, and water sampling. The Extension staff also provides quarterly updates to the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

UGA Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programs and publications provide chronic disease education, prevention and management for Georgians who are at-risk for or suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease and/or cancer. Dougherty County offers a yearly Diabetes Cooking School and Cancer Prevention Cooking School to inform county residents how good nutrition can prevent these diseases. By learning skills that address preventing chronic disease, we can greatly reduce the costs of health care and teach people how to live healthier. Recent statistics reveal that youth in Dougherty County lead the state of Georgia in sexually transmitted diseases and infections. Relationship and health education offered to this demographic teaches healthy relationships and goal setting.

The federal Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) works with low-income families with small children and includes a seven-week nutrition demonstration program.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Dougherty County 4-H Club offers core programming in elementary and middle schools, with additional programming for high school students. 4-H has proven to be an effective asset to our community through service projects, public speaking competitions, summer camps, team building and healthy lifestyle programs.

4-H works in partnership with the Dougherty County School System and private schools to benefit 1,187 young people. 4-H is active in 11 elementary schools and three middle schools. Science, engineering and technology, along with the 4-H AgriScience curriculum, allows youth to receive extended education through experiential activities. Dougherty 4-H teaches good citizenship skills by taking part in community service opportunities like Stash the Trash and local food drives.

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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