**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

The Elbert County 4-H Club established the PROUD (Purposefully Reaching Out to a Unique Demographic) Program in 2013 as a way to reach a cohort student group who were not traditional 4-H’ers. With the development of this program, members created their own unique 4-H involvement and participated in traditional 4-H programming. To enhance this diverse group of students’ experience, the 4-H agent planned and executed a cross-cultural study with another 4-H program, which serves a Native American population in North Dakota. During summer 2018, Elbert County PROUD members traveled to Standing Rock Reservation to learn about our country’s indigenous people and the North Dakota Extension program serving the Sioux tribe. The road trip involved many stops, allowing students to see, explore and learn about other regions of the U.S. Historical events, routes and lessons were a major component. Students visited more than ten national parks, historic sites and monuments, multiple state parks and several museums. The group traveled through 17 states and more than 5,314 miles. This trip was truly a life-changing event for the youth who participated.

## Agriculture and Natural Resources

Elbert County produced more than $181 million in revenue for the Georgia economy in 2018. Poultry, beef cattle, timber and row-crop production are the largest economic contributors. UGA Extension Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) programs in Elbert County reach hundreds of local citizens annually. In 2018, more than 500 site visits were conducted by the Elbert County ANR agent. Multiple programs were offered to provide educational opportunities to several hundred participants and assist private pesticide license holders in acquiring 84 recertification hours for the timber industry. The ANR agent also works closely with local beautification groups on tree planting and landscape construction projects. One such project, funded by the city of Elberton and Elbert County government, was estimated to cost more than $54,000 had it been contracted privately. By utilizing city, county and volunteer resources, the project was installed at a cost of $12,700, saving taxpayers more than $41,000.

## Family and Consumer Sciences

Many issues facing our communities can be addressed by Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) programming. In 2018, the Elbert County FACS agent made an impact in three areas. The agent and the Virtual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers at UGA completed 21 free tax returns with federal refunds totaling $20,363 and state refunds totaling $4,820. More than $6,500 was saved by Elbert County filers in tax preparation fees. Food safety education was offered to food service workers, volunteers and the public. A total of 47 participants attended a ServSafe® Manager Certification course, and 40 successfully passed the ServSafe® Manager exam and received certification. Forty-five participants attended a ServSafe® Food Handler course. Forty-five participants successfully completed the pre- and post-tests, passed the post-test and received their certificate of completion. Six Cooking for a Lifetime Cancer Prevention Cooking Schools were offered to 87 participants. Evaluation data indicated significant (p < 0.05) improvements in the likelihood of participants engaging in all nutrition and physical activity guidelines following the program.
**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.