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

Fannin County is one of the leading counties in the state for agritourism. Apples are the main agritourism enterprise, but there are also blueberries, strawberries, brambles, wine grapes and cherries. Fannin County has more than 200 acres of apples. Some of these acres are devoted to pick-your-own operations, while others are traditional retail. The growers host schools and other groups to tour their orchards. Some offer hay rides in the orchard. Because of new regulations such as the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), the UGA Extension in Fannin County conducts workshops to educate growers. The Extension office also offers classes on topics such as insect, disease and weed control, and orchard management. In addition to activities in the orchard, they offer other value-added products such as jams, jellies, donuts, fried pies and cider. One wine grape producer has developed a tasting room that attracts visitors to his vineyard.

Fannin County is home to numerous second homes. Many of these homeowners have never lived in an area that utilizes private domestic wells. Because of this, the Fannin County Extension office has been able to educate them on water quality. Fannin County Extension sends more microbacterial water samples to the Feed and Environmental Lab than any other county in the state. Mineral tests are also provided. In addition to water testing, education about well water and test results are provided to the clientele so that they better understand how wells and the water supply work. A format has been developed for the clientele to understand wells regardless of whether they are homeowners, foster parents, realtors, restaurants or other public businesses that depend on domestic wells for their water supply. This education tool has allowed a smooth transition for homeowners moving into a rural setting.

MASTER GARDENERS

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers are trained volunteers that assist the Fannin County Extension office and the Fannin County 4-H Club. This past year, they developed a nature trail that is supported by the city of Blue Ridge. Master Gardeners developed a key to showcase the native plants on the trail. They also labeled names of various plants throughout the walk. In addition to keeping the trail clean, they took extra strides to remove any invasive plant species from the area. Master Gardeners conduct community projects, including a seed library, plant sale and memory garden, as well as projects to provide scholarships to local students. They provide office assistance during times when UGA Extension agents are making site visits.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Fannin County 4-H has an enrollment of 272 young people. 4-H provides various opportunities to these youths. In the past year, the young people worked on a community project that helps local veterinarians to inoculate pets to help control the spread of rabies. This low-cost activity helps educate young people and the public on the dangers of rabies. In addition to helping with this event, 4-H members brought joy to nursing home residents with visits and gifts. Leadership is another aspect of 4-H in Fannin County. Older members are developing leadership skills as they assist younger members in their project and community work. Besides county activities, members have participated in various competitions that teach life skills. Other opportunities that 4-H provides include the chance to see other parts of the state. Because of community participation, many 4-H’ers have earned scholarships to take part in statewide activities.
COUNTY AT A GLANCE

**Population:** 24,093
2017 Georgia County Guide, Georgia Public Library Service

**Georgia Health Factors Ranking:** 26/159
2016 County Health Rankings and Roadmap, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Georgia 4-H Enrollment:** 302
Georgia 4-H Enrollment System, FY17

**Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:**

- **Jobs:** 315
- **Output:** $47,966,477
- **Farm Gate Value:** $32,185,269
- **Top Commodities:** Poultry (broilers), Poultry (layers)

2017 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

was founded in 1914 by the federal Smith-Lever Act. It’s a unique partnership between UGA, county governments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities. Today, UGA Extension serves more than 2.1 million Georgians annually through a network of specialists, agents and staff who provide unbiased, research-based information driven by local needs and clientele input. From publications to in-person workshops and events, UGA Extension is ready to meet the needs of the state and its communities.

Learn more at: extension.uga.edu

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.