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 Grady County 4-H Club has always encouraged 4-H’ers to participate in 4-H Project Achievement, Georgia 4-H’s public speaking program. To provide additional leadership opportunities, agents created a program called “Green Crusaders.” The program allowed seventh- through 12th-grade Project Achievement participants to serve in mentoring roles, thus improving their leadership and communication skills while providing opportunities to improve the Sharing and Helping and Certified Teen Leader sections of their portfolios. During Green Crusader meetings, junior- and senior-level 4-H’ers created and taught hands-on lessons related to their main project area. 4-H agents provided guidance to older 4-H’ers as they planned their lessons and challenged them to go beyond lecture-style teaching and facilitate a self-learning, exploratory lesson for the younger 4-H’ers. Grady County 4-H staff organized five Green Crusader meetings after school at the 4-H office. We achieved great results from the program: 30 fourth- through 12th-grade 4-H’ers attended one or more meetings, 11 out of the 30 participates attending Project Achievement for the first time, and six out of the 11 participants went on to compete in Project Achievement. Five high-school 4-H’ers led hands-on lessons that related to their main project area. A summative assessment was conducted to measure knowledge and attitude with seventh- to 12th-grade 4-H’ers after the orientation meeting. Interviews were conducted in small focus groups and three recurring themes emerged from the raw data regarding mentorship and Project Achievement. One, being a mentor is being a leader and giving support, advice and guidance. Two, being a mentor is fun and it’s exciting. Three, portfolios seem like a lot of work, but with the club, it seems like it will be easy. First year Project Achievement participant Cheyne Norton stated, “Coming to Green Crusader meetings makes Project Achievement more interesting. It adds a little fun.”

**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

For years, peanut variety ‘GA-06G’ has been the standard variety in Georgia. ‘GA-06G’ was planted on more than 90 percent of the peanut acres in Georgia last year. Recently, Grady County growers have expressed interest in other peanut varieties that have come on the market. UGA Extension in Grady County worked with local growers to plant, evaluate and harvest four different peanut varieties this year. Since ‘GA-06G’ has been the standard for so long, Georgia growers have extensive experience with the variety. It has been a consistently high-yielding peanut, but growers are looking for a new standard for various reasons. The peanut market is requesting more varieties with high oleic-oil content. Growers have little experience with the new high-oleic varieties. Grady County Extension and UGA peanut agronomist Scott Monfort worked with local growers Sammy and Lafe Perkins to evaluate new peanut varieties. The study included peanut varieties ‘GA-06G’, ‘GA-16HO’, ‘TUF2 297’ and ‘AUNPL17’. All four varieties were evaluated and taken to yield. In this trial, the highest-yielding variety, ‘GA-16HO’, out-yielded the lowest-yielding variety, ‘AUNPL17’, by 600 pounds per acre. With the price of peanuts at $0.21/lbs., the 600 pound-per-acre difference in varieties could mean more than $126 per acre. Grady County grows 9,000 acres of peanuts annually; the impact of $126 per acre would result in more than $1.1 million in increased income. The results of this study will be shared at county production meetings and at statewide UGA Extension meetings.
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.