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

In 2018, the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) program offered by UGA Extension in Henry County conducted 104 adult educational programs with 3,459 contacts, processed 392 soil samples, conducted 28 water tests, made 3,248 office contacts and conducted 34 site visits.

In addition to the educational programs, 11 television shows were produced featuring gardening tips and healthy-eating advice. These shows have a viewership of 30,000 per show. The Henry County Farmers Market completed its ninth season with approximately 3,000 consumers attending this weekly market. Master Gardener Extension Volunteers contributed 3,740 hours to assist the Extension office with educational programs. These volunteer hours have a value of $94,209.

Topics covered in adult classes included backyard fruit production, spring vegetable gardening, pesticide safety, well-water testing, growing tomatoes, tree care and nuisance wildlife.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

There are 200 childcare centers and in-home childcare providers in Henry County serving nearly 9,000 children, most under the age four. With provider-to-child ratios as low as 1 to 6 for infants and 1 to 18 for 4-year-olds, there are hundreds of providers requiring training for licensure in Henry County. Although research indicates that the quality of childcare is the most important determining factor in young children’s readiness for school, recent studies indicate that the quality of most childcare in Georgia is marginal or poor. Programs with well-trained and well-educated teachers are more likely to provide high-quality care for children. According to Bright from the Start’s Georgia Child Care Market Rate Survey, on average, families pay $128 to $148 weekly per child for preschool to infant care, respectively.

In 2018, Henry County Extension trained 150 childcare providers and professionals with 665 hours of instruction. In adherence to licensure requirements, the 150 providers have the capacity to care for up to 2,890 children. Data from the evaluations showed that 80 percent of participating providers would introduce new activities for phonological awareness, incorporate what they learned into lessons, teach kids creative activities, provide activities with reading, and provide more sensory activities.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is a comprehensive school-improvement program that not only measures student performance in reading, language arts and math, but also includes science, social studies, career preparation and graduation rates. In the 2017–18 school year, the career indicator in the CCRPI required that students receive grade-specific lessons on career awareness that are aligned with the Georgia Department of Education’s career clusters.

The Henry County 4-H Club partnered with local elementary schools to provide lessons on career readiness during in-school lessons throughout the school year. Four 45-minute standards-aligned lessons were conducted in more than 130 fifth-grade classrooms for just over 3,000 students. Each lesson focused on careers in one of four different fields: finance, information technology, government and public administration, and marketing. An elementary school counselor shared the following about 4-H lessons: “Each facilitated lesson reinforced necessary career-cluster information as well as soft-skill development. The 4-H partnership has been a vocational bridge between school and community. We are grateful for 4-H’s help as we collectively mold students prepared for every facet of their future.”
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 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.