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.

**FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES**

Childcare providers in Houston County requested trainings to advance their understanding of early childcare development, with an emphasis on school readiness. One hundred eighteen childcare providers attended several trainings in reading, math, science, art and family involvement to meet the requested advanced training.

The UGA’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is working to alleviate health disparities influenced by socioeconomic status by providing low-income Georgians with the knowledge, skills and resources to improve nutrition practices and increase physical activity. Participants in southwest Georgia improved their diet quality, physical activity, food safety practices and food-resource management skills. Peer educators in Dougherty, Houston, Colquitt and Sumter counties were led by the Houston County Family and Consumer Sciences agent to impact households representing 2,665 individuals.

The ServSafe® Food Handler Program is a complete solution that delivers consistent food safety training to food-service employees. Twenty-four participants received certification, with a pretest score average of 71.5 percent to a post-test score average of 96.8 percent after attending the training.

**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

After outstanding responses at forage production meetings, the success of the Master Cattlemen’s Program and the establishment of the Central Georgia Cattlemen Association, Houston County hosted UGA Extension’s GrassMasters Program for forage producers. Thirty-two forage producers completed the program, receiving education on forage species in Georgia, fertilization, pest management, hay production, understanding forage quality, grazing management, soil health and programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Houston County has the largest Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) program in the Southwest District. In 2018, Houston County had 67 active MGEVs and five trainees. Reported hours for 2018 show that Master Gardeners have contributed 2,717 volunteer hours to Houston County with an in-kind value of $62,707. Through these hours, Master Gardeners made contact with 22,345 people.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

In 2018, the Houston County 4-H Club enrolled 592 youths from fourth through 12th grade to be active members in our clubs. Members are exposed to monthly educational meetings, monthly specialty club meetings, and multiple leadership conferences and community service activities. Though 4-H, 24 youths exhibited livestock, 72 youths attended 4-H summer camp and 45 youths participated in Project Achievement.

All programmatic efforts would not be possible or successful without the Houston County Extension staff or the stewards of the program, Houston County 4-H volunteers. In the 2018 programmatic year, volunteers served more than 1,050 hours, leading youth in areas of agriculture, leadership and communications.

We have already kicked off our 2019 program year with a successful start. Our enrollment numbers have increased as well as the number of programs we offer. Since August 2018, eight youths have competed at the area Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging Competition, the senior team advanced to the state contest and then again to the national contest in 2020. Houston County 4-H has started a Horse Club with 38 members who have the opportunity to learn about the basics of caring for a horse, the tack used, safety around horses and being able to handle a horse one-on-one.
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 FRIIDE, 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.