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

Through participation in 4-H, students are given opportunities to grow and learn as they develop important life skills such as leadership, responsibility, critical thinking, public speaking and citizenship. Jasper County Extension Coordinator and 4-H Agent Kasey Hall strives to offer a variety of educational programs and activities to appeal to the youth in her rural county. Many 4-H’ers enjoy competing in judging and quiz bowl events. Not only did a record number of 43 Jasper County students participate in these competitions in 2018, they also excelled at the area and state contests in all three events. There were 21 members who competed in Poultry Judging, an increase of 13 from 2017. In the area contest, the junior team placed fourth, one 4-H’er placed fourth overall as an individual in the junior division, while a senior 4-H’er placed third as an individual. For the fourth consecutive year, a team from Jasper County placed first in the state 4-H Challenge Bowl contest, and one team placed third for the first time. Together these two teams earned $1,250 in prize money. At the area Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging contest, two Jasper County 4-H’ers placed first with the highest individual scores in both the junior and senior divisions, and the junior team placed first overall. District Project Achievement (DPA) is a favorite competition for many 4-H’ers, where they present illustrated talks on topics of their choosing. A total of 33 competed in the Cloverleaf, junior and senior divisions, and one seventh-grader was elected to the Northeast District Junior Board of Directors. A senior 4-H’er placed first at district and then advanced to state, where she placed third in her project.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UGA Extension in Jasper County offers many services to local clientele. Soil, forage and water tests are conducted through UGA’s laboratories, and in-office and on-site consultations are provided on an extensive number of topics, such as lawn health and maintenance, pond management, home gardening, insect control, herbicide and pesticide use, livestock herd management, land use decisions and orchard care, among others. Jasper County Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent Charlie Todd went on more than 300 on-site consultations in his first year of service in the county, mainly focusing on the production of timber, hay and cattle. While not in the field, Todd often attended meetings where he represented the county’s agricultural interests with groups such as the Upper Ocmulgee River Resource Conservation and Development Council, Piedmont Cattlemen’s Association, Morgan County Cattlemen’s Association and area dairy-production meetings. Todd has also become more involved with youth programming with his recent certification as a 4-H shotgun team coach. He was responsible for leading 4-H’ers in maintaining the raised garden beds at the local office and he partnered with Jasper County Primary School, where he spoke to more than 200 students on the importance of agricultural sustainability.
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.