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**

Jeff Davis County farmers plant more than 15,000 acres of cotton annually. About half of those acres are irrigated. The average irrigation cost is $7 per acre-inch for electric and $11 for diesel power. Eighty-eight percent of Georgia farmers use visible stress as their trigger for irrigation according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agriculture Statistics Service. By that point, the crop has already lost yield. Through research plots and educational meetings, the county agent increased farmer adoption of irrigation scheduling methods. Over the past two years, five farmers and one consultant were involved in the Agricultural Water Efficiency Team (AgWET) research program. This consisted of placing three water sensors in two cotton fields and scheduling irrigation based on the readings. Participating growers then watered a comparable field using their normal standards to compare. Meetings on water use and irrigation efficiency were held, reaching 41 people. When cooperators were asked to name what they learned from using moisture sensors, they said: “I learned more about how much of a difference soil type influences water needs from field to field — some don’t lose moisture as fast as you think. I saw that wilting does not always mean the field is dry.” Another stated that, “Seeing the sensors before and after an irrigation reinforced things that I had thought about planning ahead when watering.” One-hundred percent of participants said that they have changed the way they irrigate cotton as well as other crops by using the data the sensors provide. They also said that using the sensors reduced the number of times they watered and often changed the amount. Eliminating one irrigation event with this group of farmers saved, on average, 814,620 gallons of water and $270.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Are leaders born or made? According to Colin Powell, the answer to this age-old question is that “Effective leaders are made, not born.” Leadership is defined as the action of leading a group of people or an organization. Youth need opportunities to both learn about and practice leadership in meaningful and authentic ways. In order to improve leadership opportunities for youth, the county agent offered Georgia 4-H Teen Leader training to certify members. Following training, the county agent offered numerous opportunities for youth to apply the skills that they learned, such as team building, conflict resolution, presentation skills, group leadership and taking on leadership roles and responsibilities. According to post-training survey results, 85 percent of participants agreed that they were more confident in their leadership abilities after their involvement in 4-H training and leadership experiences. Participants agreed (71 percent) that, after involvement in 4-H activities and training, they could initiate and lead groups of younger youths with confidence. One-hundred percent of youth agreed that they would seek and serve in leadership roles outside of 4-H because of the trainings and opportunities they experienced. When asked, trained leaders stated that their favorite aspect of serving as a 4-H leader was “learning to speak to a crowd,” “teaching others what I have been taught,” and “to be a good example to younger kids.” The Jeff Davis County 4-H Club continues to offer leadership training and opportunities for students to use the skills they have learned. Students have improved public speaking skills, leadership skills and self-confidence in leading others. Participants of the leadership program (50 percent) are pursuing other leadership opportunities as officers of other clubs, through community involvement and as student-council representatives within their school.

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COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Population: 15,398
2017 Georgia County Guide, Georgia Public Library Service

Georgia Health Factors Ranking: 129/159
2016 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin
Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Georgia 4-H Enrollment: 404
Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY17

Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:
Jobs: 1,231
Output: $199,785,855
2019 Ag Snapshots, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

Farm Gate Value: $77,559,615
Top Commodities: Poultry (broilers), Cotton, Peanuts
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

extensive work 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.

4-H Youth Development

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.

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

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