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**

As Georgia’s largest industry, agriculture relies on water resources to maintain profitability. With irrigation costs being between $6 and $12 per acre-inch, the timing of irrigation cycles are very important. Soil-moisture sensors measure the availability of soil moisture in fields, allowing for much better timing of irrigation cycles.

Due to increasing concerns about the consumption of state waters for irrigating row crops, the county Extension coordinator (CEC) in Jenkins County surveyed local farmers’ irrigation scheduling methods. Survey results determined that 9 percent of surveyed farmers used soil-moisture sensors on their farms in 2016. Of the acres surveyed, only 1.2 percent were being monitored by moisture-sensing devices. In 2017, the CEC organized a field day to provide an opportunity for local producers to learn more about soil-moisture sensors. To further efforts in this programming, the CEC worked with other UGA Extension personnel and Central Savannah River Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) personnel to develop a plan to further water conservation efforts in Jenkins and surrounding counties. This team’s plans were put into action as grant funds were received through Central Savannah River RC&D in the amount of $33,900 for the 13 counties within the council.

Through this multiyear project, efforts to manage water by agriculture users have greatly improved. After two years of UGA Extension programming and $22,469.42 in grant funding for Jenkins County, the total area being managed and/or influenced by these sensors amounted to more than 1,600 acres of irrigated cropland in year one and more than 2,800 in year two, an 81 percent increase.

Using soil–moisture sensors allows for an estimated water savings of one acre–inch per year, resulting in the conservation of an estimated 76 million gallons of water per year. At an estimated pumping cost of $8 per acre–inch, the 60-sensor stations will save an estimated combined total of $22,400 each year in pumping costs.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

UGA Extension held Ag in the Classroom at the Southeast Georgia Research and Education Center in Midville, Georgia, for Jenkins and Jefferson County fifth-grade 4-Hers. Ag in the Classroom is a program largely supported by the community. This two-day program consisted of 10 20-minute classes taught by local experts. Class topics included poultry, cotton, Native American history, honeybees, cows, goats, grapes, peanuts and ornamentals. The program gave students their first experience with many of these crops in production agriculture. Some of the experiences, such as the grape stomp, will leave a lasting impression on the kids. During the grape class, kids also learned about the history of grapes and grape varieties, and they even enjoyed a homemade biscuit with grape jelly. 4-H’ers from other counties gave demonstrations with their animals, growing their demonstration and presentation skills. Students were able to learn about cattle and goat production along with the milking process by observing a portable milker. Overall, Ag in the Classroom gave students with very little farm experience a chance to learn about where their food and fiber comes from. More than 295 kids participated in this program in October.
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.