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

Eleven million school-age children are left alone and unsupervised in the hours after school. After-school programs are essential to keep kids safe, and they engage children in enriching activities during the out-of-school hours. According to the U.S. Department of Education, youth who do not participate in organized after-school programs are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse and they show poorer academic performance than children who are able to attend out-of-school programs. Johnson County is a low-income, rural area with many concerns for youth, making these programs extremely valuable.

With limited resources and enrichment opportunities available to Johnson County youth, more programs and services are needed to enable them to gain life skills and develop strong values, make educated and positive choices, and operate in an independent manner.

With these factors in mind, the Johnson County Extension 4-H agent stepped up the availability of after-school programming to provide a variety of safe and nurturing out-of-school programs for youth. Most of the programs that were developed were offered at no cost or with full or partial scholarship funds secured through local donations, 4-H fundraisers and grant programs.

In 2017-18, 69 out-of-school 4-H programs were provided both inside and outside the county. After-school programs reached a total of 989 youth (duplicates included) with classes in the areas of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), citizenship, leadership, community service and healthy lifestyles.

Following a two-day out-of-school event designed to enhance good decision-making skills, one fifth-grader said, “It helped me think about my future.” Ninety percent of the 27 youth agreed and, in a post-event survey, reported an increase in their understanding about how their choices will affect their future.

### AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

In the larger scheme of Georgia agriculture, Johnson County is not the first county that comes to mind. Johnson County is bordered by larger and more populated areas. One should be careful forming opinions on what doesn’t meet the eye. The producers in Johnson County are fewer in numbers, but remain strong in the production of food and fiber. Agricultural producers in this county produce soybeans, corn, peanuts and cotton. There’s still a large presence of small grains here, despite a decline in other areas. Timber and cattle are still our two biggest commodities. Last year’s farm-gate report had brood cows estimated at 5,000 head and another 6,000 or more yearling cattle on feed. Some of these are preconditioning cattle that will go to feedlots elsewhere. It’s also becoming more common for cattle to be fed to harvest weights right here at home.

The timber acreage in the county remains strong. Last year’s farm-gate value showed timber sales in the county holding near $6 million. In conjunction with the acreage of harvested pine straw, pine trees and their by-products continue to build wealth for the citizens.

The agricultural presence has also helped build a strong list of businesses that support these producers. Mechanics, welders, oil companies, grain elevators and fertilizer businesses thrive in our community. Many students who graduate high school locally go right to work in the agricultural industry. A community that can provide workers to keep industries profitable seems like a well-oiled machine.

ugaextension.org/johnson
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.

Learn more at: extension.uga.edu

county at a glance

Population: 9,729

2017 Georgia County Guide, Georgia Public Library Service

Georgia Health Factors Ranking: 85/119

2016 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Georgia 4-H Enrollment: 325

Georgian 4-H Enrollment system, FY17

Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:

Jobs: 787

Output: $48,546,910

2019 Ag Snapshots, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

Farm Gate Value: $29,812,284

Top Commodities: Timber, Beef (stockers), Beef (cattle)

2017 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development