AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UGA Extension in Lamar County gained a new Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent in March 2018. This change brought new programs to the area. Lamar County Extension hosted several workshops for the surrounding counties, allowing participants to earn credit hours for their private and commercial pesticide licenses and to gain the knowledge needed to identify problems and implement solutions on their farms. Along with producer programs, the Extension office implemented a new lunch and learn series for homeowners. This program allows individuals in the community to learn about a vast range of horticultural and healthy-living information ranging from home gardening to healthy eating. We offered four of these programs in 2018 and will offer six in 2019.

Once again, the Southeastern Hay Contest was a success. More than 60 samples from Lamar and Upson counties were entered, with two placing among the top five in their respective categories. In 2018, Lamar County experienced excess rainfall that may affect the quality of harvest for the next year or so, but the county was lucky not to experience the magnitude of devastation of counties to the south. Our thoughts go out to those individuals. The most successful program of the year was the August Hay Day hosted at County Line Farms. More than 100 individuals attended the one-day event, which kicked off with presentations from three agricultural specialists and concluded with hay-field equipment demonstrations and agricultural sponsors.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, the Lamar County 4-H Club extended the reach of their educational programming to third- and fourth-graders. The educational efforts included hands-on activities focusing on horticulture, literacy, culture, foods, healthy lifestyles and science. These efforts promote children’s positive development through cooperative learning and developmentally appropriate activities.

The MG Sprouts horticulture program, developed to meet Master Gardener Extension Volunteers’ requests for youth materials, was offered as an after-school and summer program to third-grade 4-H’ers. The literature-based program involves the 4-H’ers attending six sessions where a garden-related story is read aloud. The youths explore the world of plants through hands-on horticulture, crafts, writing and games. The hands-on activities included creating compost, planting sunflower seeds and garlic, and making potting soil.

Parental interest was the catalyst for the inauguration of the Lamar County 4-H Cloverbuds program. The Lamar County 4-H Cloverbuds program fosters youth development by creating a positive learning environment to teach lessons focusing on science, healthy lifestyles, personal safety, the environment and art. The program spans the length of the school year with youth attending monthly, one-hour after-school educational sessions. Hands-on activities include water filtration, hand-washing and sensory science.

An international focus was introduced to fourth-grade 4-H’ers to bring awareness of the lives of youth around the globe and enhance their understanding of their roles in the world. The Food, Culture and Reading nutrition education curriculum provided the youth an opportunity to travel the world through 4-H lessons. Through a wide variety of experiential activities, 4-H’ers were privy to the literature, customs, language, food and art of eight different cultures. The hands-on learning activities, which included making Chinese lanterns and aboriginal rainsticks, helped to heighten the learning experience.
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.