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

UGA Extension in Long County eagerly assists both farmers and homeowners with a variety of agriculture- and natural resource-related questions and concerns. In 2018, the office processed 49 diagnostic soil, water and feed and forage samples using UGA laboratory services. The Long County Extension staff assists citizens obtaining private applicator licenses and Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption (GATE) cards and aids in the identification of plant diseases and insects. Additionally, clients visit the office to receive print resources to assist with their questions. A large variety of research-based publications is available both online and in-person. Small garden plots, growing pecans and raising a flock of backyard chickens are topics that many hobby enthusiasts enjoy, while farmers are interested in crop management, weed control and soil quality.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

UGA’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) conducted programming in Long County this year. EFNEP, a federally supported Extension community-outreach program, directly served 83 Long County residents and indirectly reached 439 participant family members. EFNEP provides participants with information in four areas: diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety and food security. EFNEP educators provided 452 direct-education sessions, and volunteers donated $1,499 through in-kind service hours to support the programs. Of the participants completing evaluations, 98 percent indicated that they ate more fruits and vegetable or drank fewer sugary beverages, 82 percent reduced the risk of foodborne illness, and 75 percent indicated that they compared food prices more often when making grocery purchases.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Georgia 4-H provides positive youth development programming, and attending 4-H summer camp is a highlight for many Long County children. Whether going down a zip line, hiking through a forest or practicing team-building skills, summer camp is a safe, inclusive environment for young people to learn and grow. Given the current state of the economy, many families are not able to afford opportunities like 4-H summer camp. Many local businesses contribute funding to offer summer camp scholarships, but Long County 4-H wanted to provide additional ways to help 4-H’ers attend camp. Through careful planning and implementation, Long County 4-H coordinated doughnut, strawberry, pizza, Vidalia onion and rib sales to send youth to Georgia 4-H summer camp in 2018. More than $7,900 was raised in five months to provide approximately 55 youths with the opportunity to attend summer camp through full or partial fundraising. Long County had 69 youths attend Cloverleaf Camp, 12 youths attend Junior Camp, 19 youths attend Wilderness Challenge Camp, and four youths attend Marine Resources Camp. Summer camp can be impactful, and the experiences can help 4-H’ers develop critical skills like independence, mastery, belonging and generosity that can benefit them over their lifetimes. Jaden McGowan, a junior 4-H’er, stated, “4-H camp is what I look forward to all year. I wouldn’t miss it for world. It’s more than just camp; it’s about making new friends from different counties involved in 4-H.”
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.