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 McIntosh County provides many agricultural services to local residents. Services and resources offered by the office include soil, water and plant-tissue analyses, in-office and on-site consultations for farmers and homeowners, and educational programs focused on environmental sustainability, pesticide safety and conservation.

In 2018, the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent worked with local beekeepers to form a 19-member beekeeping club. Through monthly club meetings, McIntosh County Extension delivered programs on important beekeeping topics such as apiary establishment, beehive management and control methods for common pests and diseases of honeybees.

With materials from UGA’s Trees for Bees program, McIntosh County Extension offered several pollinator-conservation workshops. The more than 50 youth and adult participants in the Trees for Bees workshops gained a better understanding of native pollinator species, built their own native bee hotels and learned how to plant pollinator-friendly home gardens.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, 642 youth in fourth through 12th grades were enrolled in the McIntosh County 4-H Club. In-school club meetings served every McIntosh County student in fourth through 12th grades once per month, plus additional Health Rocks! curriculum in physical education classes. The MG Sprouts after-school program engaged fourth- and fifth-graders in a literacy and horticulture programs led by three community volunteers.

Outside of school, 18 fourth- through sixth-graders participated in Cloverleaf camp at Rock Eagle 4-H Center. Project Achievement participation included seven seventh- through 12th-graders for Junior/Senior DPA and 16 Cloverleaf District Project Achievement participants.

In December 2018, Maggie Van Cantfort joined McIntosh County Extension as the 4-H Youth Development agent. Maggie is a certified middle school science and social studies teacher with extensive experience in farm-to-school and experiential education. She is a former 4-H’er and started her career in education as an environmental educator at Rock Eagle 4-H Center.

In 2019, McIntosh County 4-H will build upon established garden programs, offer STEAM in Action after-school and summer activities and will collaborate with Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) and ANR staff to develop holistic seed-to-fork programming.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

McIntosh County Extension’s FACS program provides research-based information on food and nutrition, food safety, food preservation, financial management, housing, positive youth development, and healthy relationships to a wide variety of audiences. Jasmine Black, the new FACS educator, is focusing on building community relationships and offering FACS programming.

McIntosh County Extension offers free nutrition education through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). EFNEP delivers a series of educational nutrition programs, which give participants the opportunity to develop skills, increase knowledge, influence changes in behavior and improve their daily lives. Food demonstrations and taste-testing encourage clients to sample and prepare new foods.

Savannah Moore, the EFNEP program assistant, began teaching classes in February. Moore studied food and nutrition at Georgia Southern University and is bringing nutrition experience to McIntosh County.
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.