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

There are many challenges for sheep and goat producers in the Southeast U.S., however, with education and proper management, small ruminant operations can become profitable and sustainable long-term. More than 35 small ruminant producers were able to attend the Monroe County Sheep and Goat Short Course, a one-day educational program where they learned from UGA Extension agents and a Fort Valley State University Extension specialist. Topics included lecture sessions on breed selection, production schedules, reproduction, forage management, predator control and parasite management, in addition to a hands-on FAMACHA (FAffa MAlan CHArt) training, the basics of handling sheep and goats, hoof trimming and body-condition scoring.

Hay production in Monroe County generates more than $540,000 in annual retail sales in addition to livestock producers harvesting hay for their own operations. With recent dramatic weather, insect infestations and chemical-resistant weeds, hay producers are continuously facing production challenges. To better educate hay producers in sustainable hay production, UGA Extension in Monroe County held the Second Annual Monroe County Hay Field Day to share pest management strategies, pesticide safety and sprayer calibration with producers.

Farmers and homeowners have access to a variety of diagnostic and laboratory testing services through the Monroe County Extension office. In 2018, 294 soil samples, 41 water samples and 16 feed and forage samples were processed. Additionally, more than 350 weed, plant disease and insect specimens were identified in the field.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Monroe County 4-H Club offers many opportunities for more than 850 youths to gain knowledge and hands-on learning experiences through in-school club meetings, after-school leadership programs and community service projects, judging teams, shooting sports, and summer camp. In 2018, Monroe County 4-H’ers achieved high levels of success through state 4-H competitions, placing first in Horse Quiz Bowl and Senior Modified Trap. The Senior Modified Trap team achieved a perfect score, which 4-H officials said is the first perfect score in state competitions since 1988. In other state 4-H judging competitions, the Dairy Quiz Bowl team placed second and the Horse Judging Team placed third. Monroe County 4-H also had two 4-H’ers advance from District Project Achievement, Georgia 4-H’s largest public speaking and performing arts competition, to State 4-H Congress in Atlanta, where 4-H’er, Rilyn McKallip, placed second in the Performing Arts Instrumental project out of 11 state finalists.

While it is great to have 4-H’ers recognized for their hard work and dedication, success in 4-H is about more than winning the next competition. Success in 4-H is in the process. It is in the process that Monroe County youth challenge themselves, set new goals, gain new skills and truly work to “Make the Best Better.”

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Extension provides information to Monroe County residents on food safety, food preservation, mold and mildew, healthy meal planning, nutrition, family budgeting and more through local newspaper articles, newsletter distribution, local presentations and by answering direct phone inquiries.
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