AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2018, legislation went into effect that required all commercial haulers to install electronic logging devices and limited the drive time of these haulers to 11 consecutive hours with a mandatory 14-hour break immediately following. Animal agriculture is dependent on transportation across the country. Regulations limit the number of hours that livestock can be in a trailer, and this new legislation prolongs the time that it takes to reach a destination, increasing the stress and incidence of sickness in livestock. Infrastructure for unloading and reloading loads of livestock at the number of locations that the drive-time limit would require does not currently exist. The Morgan County Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent, Georgia State Patrol and Department of Public Safety provided an informational program on the new regulations, including a question-and-answer session with individuals from the departments enforcing the laws. Forty-seven representatives of the livestock and row-crop industries from five counties attended. Attendees learned about new regulations and their potential effects on different segments of agriculture. In August, Congress voted to extend the electronic logging device and hours of service exemption for livestock haulers to September 30, 2019. One-hundred percent of attendees learned new information about these regulations.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

A change in policy in October 2015 called the Standard Medical Deduction, or SMED, means there will be more availability of food stamps for seniors aged 60 years and older and for people who get Social Security disability or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits. UGA Extension in Morgan County educates seniors about the policy and assists with the application process. The American Community Survey provides the characteristics of participants from Georgia’s Congressional District 10, which includes Morgan and Oconee counties, who qualified for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits during 2011 to 2013. Of households with one or more people 60 years and over, 25.6 percent received SNAP benefits, while 31.5 percent did not. Seventy-two seniors in Morgan and Oconee counties were educated about the SMED program through UGA Family and Consumer Sciences Extension programs. To date, 10 seniors have been assisted with completing the Senior SNAP application. Eight of the 10 seniors began receiving benefits or increased their benefits. Actual benefits increased by $6,888. Moody's Analytics estimates that, in a weak economy, $1 in SNAP benefits generates $1.70 in economic activity. Therefore, these benefits could equate to $11,709.60 returning to the local economies.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Teenagers face potentially life-altering decisions daily and some decisions result in devastating consequences. UGA Extension agents and staff led a team of 4-H youth and adult volunteers to form a coalition of stakeholders to study possible solutions and educational endeavors that would combat these issues. Through investigation and research, the team discovered an effective educational tool called a Teen Maze to address the issues highlighted in their findings. The Teen Maze is a live interactive maze that demonstrates to teens the consequences of their actions. Students, through scenarios, see the potential consequences of poor choices. This team served as a catalyst to offer a Teen Maze and ultimately educate local students on how their decisions could impact their future. The goal of the maze is to help students make smart choices. Due to the success of this program, the high school requested the Teen Maze be offered annually for high-school freshmen.
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–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.