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

The Murray County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources agent was invited to speak at all four Georgia Pest Control Association conferences in 2018. While primarily serving the structural pest-control industry, some members also have ornamental and landscape pest control certification, which is where the agent provides education and training for Category 24 continuing education units at each conference. Training locations include Dalton, Ringgold, Athens, and Tifton, Georgia, as well as Hammock Beach, Florida. In post-training evaluations, 86 percent of participants said that they learned at least two things they plan to use in the future, such as identifying some pest species, the acceptable thresholds for pests in lawns and ways to detect turf pests. In a ranking of very useful to not useful, 55 percent commented that the information presented was very useful, 18 percent deemed it useful, and 27 percent gave a fair ranking. When asked if pest control operators would save money as a result of the information they learned through these trainings, 67 percent said yes and 33 percent said no. When asked how they might save money, responses included using less pesticide with healthier lawns and exploring possible options for physical control other than the use of pesticides. One attendee commented on their evaluation, “Good variety of in and out insects; good division of types of feeders and types of damage.” Other highlights for 2018 include gardening and composting programs at Murray Senior Center and Community Christmas and a collaboration with state specialists and neighboring agents in a cover crop demonstration project and workshop. As a result of the workshop, all attendees said that they intended to implement some sort of change and one specified that they would add legumes to their forage practices. When asked if they would save or spend money as a result of what they learned, 56 percent said that they would spend or save. In using a no-till drill, participants indicated they would save money on seed costs or spend more money on better seed or additional fertilizers.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The Murray County 4-H Club reaches more than 1,200 kindergarten through 12th-grade students and helps those students develop the knowledge, life skills and attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. Our mission is fulfilled through hands-on learning experiences offered both in the classroom and during out-of-school activities. Here in Murray County, 4-H’ers are well known for volunteering throughout the community and sharing their knowledge of technology with others. Students not only participate in club meetings organized by the 4-H agent and staff, but they also teach monthly technology classes at the senior center to help bridge the digital divide. Funding for these classes has been made possible thanks to a grant from Microsoft and the National 4-H Council. One of the women who attended the classes said, “I was so worried before coming that the kids would make me feel dumb, but it was the opposite. They made me feel comfortable and capable.” At the district level, Murray County 4-H’ers enjoy attending district events as well as having the honor of one of their members becoming Junior District Board President. Nationally, Murray County 4-H has been invited to Washington, D.C., to present for the Tech Changemaker program twice this year. Although the Tech Changemaker program keeps us busy during the school year, our summer months in Murray County are packed with fun and educational opportunities for our 4-H’ers. Whether their interests lie in cooking, crafts or hiking, Murray County 4-H has something to offer youth of all age groups.

ugaextension.org/murray
**COUNTY AT A GLANCE**

**Population:** 39,841  
2017 Georgia County Guide, Georgia Public Library Service

**Georgia Health Factors Ranking:** 115/159  
2016 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Georgia 4-H Enrollment:** 1,447  
Georgia 4-H Enrollment System, FY17

**Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:**  
Jobs: 950  
Output: $171,708,246  
2019 Ag Snapshots, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

**Farm Gate Value:** $87,676,181  
Top Commodity: Poultry (broilers), Poultry (layers)  
2017 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

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**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.