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.

NEWTON COUNTY ANR

Newton County continues to be stronghold of agriculture in North Georgia. The traditional commodities of beef cattle, forage crops, pasture land, Christmas trees and nurseries still dot the landscape of the county, but the proximity to I-20 has brought an influx of new businesses, new extension consumers and the opportunity for Extension to serve a more diverse clientele. Newton County Cooperative Extension processed more than 500 soil and water samples in 2019, along with addressing landscaping, pest and disease questions, and provided pesticide training for commercial applicators.

The Newton ANR program had a transitional year in 2019. Ted Wynne, Extension agent and agriculture leader retired after a long and successful career with extension and, after a thorough search, UGA Extension hired Ashley Best to succeed Wynne. Best comes to Newton County with a stellar background in traditional agriculture, a successful career in the classroom teaching and a unique understanding of working with a suburban population. As Newton County agriculture changes, so does Newton Extension.

4-H AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, Newton County 4-H’ers participated in an “AG-venture” by traveling the southern U.S., meeting new friends, and experiencing the impact of agriculture and natural resources in southern communities. The group explored national parks, family farms, wildlife refuges and state parks in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Tennessee. Of course, 4-H is a is “learn by doing” youth organization, so these 4-H’ers experienced riding on a wheat combine, how to soil sample a field, held a live cotton boll weevil, and explored natural environs including restored prairies, longleaf pine forest and even a petrified forest.

Overall the 4-H’ers camped in five different states and traveled 2,500 miles. This Ag-Venture was an opportunity to focus on STEAM learning and was funded by the Newton County Farm Bureau. 4-H continues to have a presence in Newton County schools and is working with home school parents and youth with the focus on Making the Best Better!

PROJECT FREE
(Fostering Relationships and Economic Enrichment)

Project FREE (Fostering Relationships and Economic Enrichment) is a federal-grant funded program that provides evidence-informed programs that enhance healthy couple and co-parenting relationships and financial capability. Our Elevate program provides couples (married or unmarried) with strategies to manage stress and conflict. In 2019, the fourth year of the grant, Newton County Extension served nine couples in two four-week sessions.

Our Together We Can program helps single parents develop strategies and skills to manage stress and conflict, promote a positive co-parenting relationship with their child’s other parent, and develop future healthy romantic relationships. In 2019, the fourth year of the grant, Newton County Extension served 16 clients in two four-week sessions.

We empower our clients to building financial capability in our Discovering Money Solutions program. In 2019, the fourth year of the grant, Newton County Extension served 18 clients through the program in Rockdale County, with families from Newton County participating.

ugaextension.org/newton
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 $76 billion. More than 399,200 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 nearly 243,000 fourth- through 12th-grade students across the state. It helps them 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.