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.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The mission of the Pike County 4-H Club is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive, contributing members of society. This is accomplished through hands-on learning experiences focused on agricultural and environmental issues, agriculture awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship. Georgia 4-H is all about exploring, discovering, encouraging and challenging. Members of 4-H share their research-based knowledge and technology with people where they live and work. Pike County 4-H Youth Development offers a variety of programs and activities. Youths have the opportunity to participate in monthly 4-H club meetings, Project Achievement, community-service projects, summer programming and camping opportunities. Youth can participate on judging teams and project clubs. Judging teams include cotton boll, consumer judging and poultry judging. In 2018, Pike County 4-H received recognition for increasing its Cloverleaf camp participation by 10 percent. Campers experienced a week of fun, learning, making new friends and creating lifelong memories. Campers follow an exciting learn-by-doing agenda that includes outdoor recreation, canoeing, archery, swimming, craft workshops, entomology and wildlife. This was a dream come true for many youths. Project clubs are led by certified 4-H volunteer leaders. The Project SAFE (Shooting Awareness, Fun and Education) program is successful because of these volunteers. The Pike County 4-H Project SAFE program offers archery and shotgun disciplines for any experience level. The 4-H’ers who engage in the sport learn sportsmanship, how to work on a team and the art of competition.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Due to the resurgence of consumer interest in locally grown produce at farmers markets, Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agents have developed a series of “Farm, Fresh and Fast” publications to be distributed at local farmers markets and U-pick farms. These educational pamphlets, along with many other publications on health and nutrition, are also available at the Extension office. The easy-to-read publications will help residents make wiser food choices and save money because they have information on how to use fresh products when they are in season.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

For more than 100 years, UGA Extension has provided free, reliable, research-based information that anyone can understand. UGA Extension in Pike County can assist citizens with questions about crops, livestock, home lawns, gardens, fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, natural resources, and the environment. Pike County Extension provides information in the form of consultations both in person and on the phone, educational programs and agricultural commodity meetings through the work of the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) county agent. The Extension office also offers laboratory testing services for soil, water, forage, feed, plants and radon. Furthermore, the ANR agent is able to serve the community through personal laboratory interpretations, making recommendations and performing site visits to truly serve the Pike County community and its needs.
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.