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 Pulaski County 4-H Club provides foundational education through the Health Rocks curriculum to help instill healthy decision-making skills in youths to prevent the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Reaching more than 160 youth a year in seventh and eighth grades, the in-school 4-H club meetings provide youths with the knowledge to comprehend risky behaviors and their consequences.

Youths from low-income families engage in more risky behaviors during adolescence than youths from middle-income and high-income families. With a school system that has 100-percent free meals, a lot of our youths meet the criteria to become vulnerable to engaging in risky behavior. The earlier an adolescent begins using and/or abusing substances like alcohol, tobacco and drugs, the higher the risk for dependence.

Pulaski 4-H partnered with Pulaski County Middle School (PCMS) to offer the Health Rocks curriculum to educate youths on making healthy decisions concerning alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Middle school is a key development age for youths and also a time of increased peer pressure. Health Rocks is a wellness and life-skills curriculum developed by the National 4-H Council that focuses on positive youth development and life-skills development as an approach to creating a firm foundation for youths to develop positive decision-making, critical-thinking and stress-management skills. In 20-2018, Pulaski 4-H secured $2,100 in grant funds for Health Rocks programming. All seventh- and eighth-grade students were seen in school club meetings during educational time once a month for the 20-2018 school year. More than 160 youth engaged in the 10 hours of instruction from the Health Rocks curriculum and participated in the evaluation. Four Health Rocks Ambassadors and one adult were trained from Pulaski 4-H in 2017-18.

A PCMS teacher stated, “This is real-world knowledge that our youth need to combat peer pressure, deal with stress in a positive way and reduce risky behavior. 4-H provides this needed education to our students so that they can succeed in life. It is obvious that 4-H cares about the well-being of our youth.” The Health Rocks curriculum creates a positive impact by providing knowledge and hands-on activities to reinforce the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and drug use. By instilling healthy decision-making skills through Health Rocks, Pulaski County 4-H is helping create a trend toward helping youths decrease risky behaviors in Georgia.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Cotton is the most widely planted crop in Pulaski County, accounting for nearly 25,000 acres and between $15 million and $20 million in annual value. Cotton variety selection is one of the most critical steps in producing a cotton crop, as it can have an effect on yield, fiber quality and pest management options. Annually, UGA Extension in Pulaski County partners with a local cotton producer to take part in the UGA On-farm Cotton Variety Performance Evaluation Program. This year, 14 popular cotton varieties were planted in replicated plots on the grower’s farm. At harvest, the plots were measured and the harvested cotton was weighed and ginned. The yield and fiber quality data collected from this trial will be used in the UGA Cotton Variety Performance Calculator to help cotton producers across the state make better-informed decisions about their cotton variety selections. Due to the impact of Hurricane Michael, the Pulaski County variety trial was utilized to research the possibility of a varietal difference in the amount of cotton lint lost due to the heavy wind and rains associated with the hurricane.
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 FRIIDE, 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:
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university of georgia cooperative extension

was founded in 1914 by the federal Smith-Lever Act. It’s a unique partnership between UGA, county governments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities. Today, UGA Extension serves more than 2.1 million Georgians annually through a network of specialists, agents and staff who provide unbiased, research-based information driven by local needs and clientele input. From publications to in-person workshops and events, UGA Extension is ready to meet the needs of the state and its communities.

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