Agriculture and Natural Resources

UGA Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent Bobby Solomon, who also serves as a Fort Valley State University (FVSU) county Extension agent, provides specialized, research-based educational information and technical assistance to farmers and homeowners countywide. Extension handled 1,475 office visits, including 107 in-person contacts, 390 phone contacts and 978 written or email contacts. In addition, the agent made 125 site visits and processed 51 soil and water samples through UGA laboratories. Also, recommendations were made through Extension publications pertaining to aquaculture, large and small ruminants, forage and small-grain production, forestry production and marketing, general agriculture and natural resources, horticulture, ornamentals, poultry, pond management, pecan orchard pest management, soil fertility, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm programs, water quality, and wildlife food plots.

To be eligible for payments and benefits under specified USDA farm programs administered by the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, must provide significant contributions to the farming operation to be considered “actively engaged” in farming. Contributions can consist of capital, land and/or equipment, active personal labor and/or active personal management. The management contribution must be critical to the profitability of the farming operation and the contributions must be at risk. In collaboration with the USDA, the Extension agent successfully provided unbiased education and outreach to nine new individuals and entities in Talbot County, which resulted in NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract obligations of $227,000.

A beginning-farmer small ruminant producer needed 3,000 feet of fence installation and the county agent helped locate a contractor, saving the producer $5,800. Through the FVSU Cooperative Extension Teaching Enlightening Achieving Mentoring (TEAM) program, the county agent trained and supervised a Central High School student learning about the many available ANR disciplines and agricultural careers. At the end of a six-week period, she received a stipend amounting to $2,100.
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-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.