



## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT: TIFT COUNTY

*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

Tift County is one of the most diverse agricultural counties in the state. Vegetable crops, row crops, forages, ornamental horticulture, livestock, forestry, fruits, tree nuts and more are grown in Tift County. UGA Cooperative Extension in Tift County provides research-based information for agriculturists through educational production meetings, on-farm research and individual engagements. Tift County producers faced many challenges in 2019. Extended periods of drought complied with extreme heat made for a challenging year. With the drought and heat, insect pests were more prominent than in recent years. Lesser Cornstalk Borers and Southern Corn Rootworms were a major factor in our peanut fields this year. Cotton and watermelon prices were down this year, which brought difficult decisions regarding inputs that would normally protect the crop. Throughout 2019, Tift County Extension agents conducted applied research with local growers comparing cotton varieties, researching chemistries for greenhouse applications, managing diseases in vegetables and cotton, and controlling insects in cotton, peanuts and vegetables.

### FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FACS)

Tift County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) provides programming that increases the health, wellness and financial capability of individuals and families served. All first graders participate in a handwashing lesson. Proper handwashing is the No. 1 way to prevent the spread of the flu virus. Preventing the spread of germs allows students more instructional time and parents fewer missed workdays. All second graders receive a nutrition lesson about added sugar. Creating an awareness of how much sugar they consume and the negative effects of too much sugar in the body helps prevent childhood obesity.

Food safety programs provide employees and restaurant managers the opportunity to complete the National ServSafe® Managers certification. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each year roughly one in six

Americans gets sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne illnesses.

The free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) tax preparation service is now in its fifth year, saving residents hundreds of dollars. Providing the community with resources for overall wellness is the top priority for Tift County's FACS Agent Roxie Price. Price represents Tift County and Georgia by serving as President for the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS).

### 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Young people become self-directing, productive, contributing members of society through 4-H. Tift County Extension 4-H leaders work with a total of 800 public, private and homeschooled youths, delivering educational opportunities for students in fifth through 12th grades. Our program complements and enhances basic grade-level curriculum by bringing UGA resources to each classroom where 4-H programs are taught. Tift County 4-H offers opportunities for youth of all ages, backgrounds and ability levels. Project Achievement gives 4-H'ers the opportunity to research, develop and present a demonstration on a topic of their choice. These projects can highlight any hobby or interest the 4-H'er may have. This is a great tool to build public-speaking skills and to showcase the 4-H member's hard work and success. In addition to participation in activities like Project Achievement, Tift County 4-H'ers can take advantage of spending a week at summer camp at one of Georgia's five 4-H centers. They may also participate in judging and team events, including quiz bowls, poultry and consumer judging, livestock projects or shooting sports teams. Tift County 4-H also believes in giving youth a chance to serve their community. Members of 4-H have served at events and contributed to causes including Relay for Life, Ronald McDonald House Charities, the local soup kitchen and the Adopt-a-Mile program.





## COUNTY AT A GLANCE

**Population:** 40,571  
*2019 Georgia Population Estimates,  
Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budgets*

**Georgia Health Factors Ranking:** 60/159  
*2019 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin  
Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

**Georgia 4-H Enrollment:** 2,763  
*Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY17*

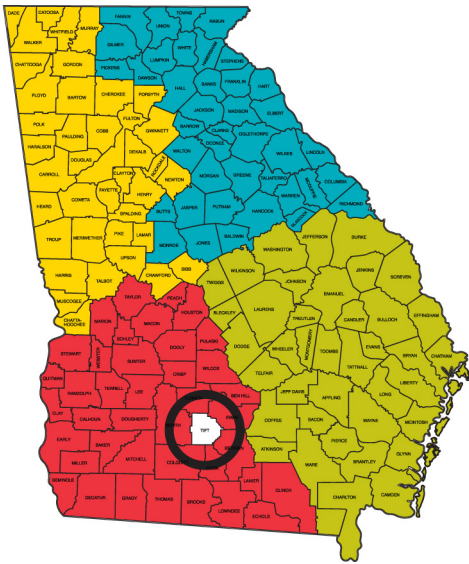
**Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and  
Related Total Economic Contribution:**

**Jobs:** 2,255

**Output:** \$403,117,987  
*2020 Ag Snapshots,  
UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development*

**Farm Gate Value:** \$144,667,602  
**Top Commodities:** Cotton, Other Vegetables,  
Watermelon

*2018 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report,  
UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development*



## 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 21 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.

**Learn more at:**  
[extension.uga.edu](http://extension.uga.edu)

### 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.