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

Local 4-H programs are “making the best better” across Toombs County. The Toombs County 4-H agent and 4-H program assistant deliver research-based programming to youth in Toombs County. Issue programming focuses on agriculture, nutrition and safety. Youths also gain life skills through participation in leadership, service and communication opportunities. Last year, nearly 100 4-H’ers participated in district-level public speaking events and more than 120 attended camp, learning about responsibility at one of Georgia’s 4-H natural camping environments. Because experiences for young people often allow them to travel outside county lines, they build a network of friends across the state of Georgia. By making the best better, our staff assist youth in becoming productive citizens of tomorrow.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Vidalia onion is world-renowned. To be labeled a Vidalia onion, the onion has to be grown within a certain region in the Southeast. One of the biggest problems facing worldwide onion production is center rot, which is caused by the bacteria Pantoea ananatis. This disease causes an internal rot to occur in the onion, leaving it unmarketable, hence its common name, “center rot.”

In order to address this major issue facing onion production, researchers conducted an experiment at the UGA Vidalia Onion and Vegetable Research Center to evaluate the efficacy of chemical fungicide and bactericide applications. The Toombs County Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent, in cooperation with other local agents, the area onion agent and a vegetable pathologist, conducted an experiment to see whether center rot of onions could be controlled through chemical sprays at certain growth stages. Throughout 2017 and 2018, research concluded that by utilizing Kocide 3000 during bulb initiation, bulb swelling or all three growth stages, farmers can reduce their center rot incidence by up to 20 percent. This would add a value of more than $5,000 per acre to the grower in fields with significant center rot incidence.
COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Population: 28,174
2017 Georgia County Guide, Georgia Public Library Service

Georgia Health Factors Ranking: 138/159
2018 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Georgia 4-H Enrollment: 967
Georgia 4-H Enrolment system, FY17

Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:
Jobs: 3,234
Output: $384,942,041
2019 Ag Snapshots, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

Farm Gate Value: $125,990,135
Top Commodities: Onions, Agritourism, Greens
2017 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 2 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

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.

ugaextension.org/toombs