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

Troup County has transitioned from a largely agrarian county that ranked as one of the top cotton-producing counties in Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century to an economy that has integrated industrial growth while maintaining the charm of an agricultural setting. Agricultural tourism is second only to livestock production in revenues produced in Troup County. Livestock production adds approximately $6.8 million per year to the county economy and agritourism adds another $4.4 million. The interest in homegrown produce and livestock grown in a sustainable manner has increased. The Market on Main and October Harvest Fest have been a hit with local citizens wishing to purchase fresh, locally grown food. Nearly 900 people are currently employed in agriculture-related businesses. The forest resources of Troup County provide an additional $2.6 million to the local economy. These lands not only provide wood and fiber to Georgia’s forest product industries, they also provide recreation in the form of hunting and fishing to many local citizens and tourists from outside the county.

UGA Extension in Troup County provides access to the most up-to-date information from the university. The office fielded more than 1,100 calls and made more than 190 site visits concerning home gardening, small orchards, small poultry flocks, livestock, pasture management, horticulture, wells, insect problems and myriad other subject areas. There are 241 farms comprising nearly 38,000 acres in Troup County. The county’s Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR agent makes site visits to these farms to help farmers make informed decisions, identify potential problems and determine solutions. Site visits are made to homeowners with horticulture problems as well. The city of LaGrange also relies on the Extension office to provide expertise with agricultural and horticultural issues. The Extension office acts as a liaison with other agencies, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to deliver more services to Troup County. UGA specialists from Griffin and Athens are available to add their input. Another valuable service that the office delivers is soil testing, water testing and forage analysis. The Master Gardener Extension Volunteer program has, in this past year, provided more than 1,900 hours of volunteer service for more than 34 projects in the county area.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The 4-H program has been serving youth in Troup County for many years. More than 300 students are participating in leadership activities, community service and citizenship projects, contests, summer camps, judging teams, conferences, science activities and special-interest clubs such as BB and shotgun. Project Achievement provides 4-H’ers with the skills to grow from year to year by completing projects and preparing demonstrations, speeches or illustrated talks on topics of their choice. These activities form memories and teach life skills that they will carry the rest of their lives. One benefit of 4-H participation is that each student is able to learn and grow in project areas of interest to them. Projects include poultry, economics and science. This investment in the children of Troup County provides a foundation for success.

ugaextension.org/troup
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-track 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.