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**

Forestry is a major industry in Twiggs County, providing jobs, resources and income for stakeholders in Twiggs County. The Twiggs County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent targeted this audience through a pine-management short course to help landowners apply research-based forestry practices to increase productivity in their pine stands. There were a total of 16 participants who were also able to earn two hours of forestry continuing-education credits and two hours of logger continuing-education credits, which are necessary to maintain Georgia Master Timber Harvester status. In post-program evaluations, participants stated that they would change their current pine-management practices based on the course. By implementing the pine-management strategies covered in this program, primarily competition control and species selection, landowners were expected to save about $5,000 over the long-term production of their trees.

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

The Twiggs County 4-H program is a product of UGA Extension and Fort Valley State University (FVSU) Cooperative Extension. It operates under the leadership of FVSU 4-H and maintains consistent participation numbers every year. The FVSU 4-H program's mission is to empower youth to reach their full potential while working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The program provides positive youth development and experiential learning opportunities for youth in various areas, including leadership, healthy living, financial literacy, agriculture and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). At the end of the 2018 school calendar year, FVSU 4-H collaborated successfully with Georgia 4-H to facilitate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise program to 4-H family participants for the final year of a successful eight-year national grant. The FVSU 4-H agent delivered in-school club meetings and educational programs to 352 Twiggs County public-, private- and home-schooled audiences that included a 4-H raised-bed garden for the third year at the elementary school. The agent takes club members to events including cotton boll and consumer judging, the Georgia National Fair, 4-H summer camps and FVSU 4-H campus-based activities. Youth are involved in leadership and public-speaking activities through participation in Project Achievement events on the district and state levels.

**FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES**

The FVSU Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agent provided nutrition education and materials for adults and youth through various programs and activities. As a result, consumers are more likely to make better food choices for themselves and their families. Programs used grant funding to establish community and school gardens. The agent went on home visits to reach citizens at risk for or suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease and/or cancer. Healthy living activities were also implemented, including walk-a-thons, Zumba dance classes, recipe cards, vegetable giveaways and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) events.

These practices will lead to healthier youth who attend school regularly with better academic success and adults who have the ability to eat healthier and lessen the occurrence of expensive chronic diseases. By improving the overall health habits of county residents, fewer hospitalizations and medications will be required, reducing health care costs for individuals, taxpayers, small businesses and corporations. The FACS program provided research-based publications about food safety.
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.