



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**  
EXTENSION

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT: WALTON 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

UGA Cooperative Extension in Walton County offers numerous services such as soil testing, water testing, plant identification and on-site consultations to local clientele. The Walton County Extension office processed more than 500 diagnostic samples in 2019, and the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent, Joel Burnsed, conducted 90 on-site consultations at farms and homes in Walton County. Also, the ANR Agent lead more than 34 educational classes open to Walton County citizens. Topics included well-water maintenance, soil testing services, gardening and pollinators. With a farm gate value of more than \$38 million dollars in Walton County, the ANR agent serves an important role in assisting farmers with everyday issues that may arise. Other services available to farmers through the Extension office include plant disease identification, soil tests, forage nutrient tests, pesticide recommendations and sprayer calibration. The Walton County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) program contributed more than 2,500 hours of service to the community through free gardening classes at local libraries, the "Ask A Master Gardener" booth at the farmers market, and several other community-oriented projects.

### 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Walton County 4-H programs are offered for youth to learn and excel in leadership, citizenship, public speaking and critical-thinking skills.

The Walton County school system focuses on career readiness and the Walton County 4-H program offered a wide range of in-school and extracurricular activities to more than 1,500 students in 2019.

Walton County 4-H gives students opportunities to participate in several specialty clubs including Shooting Sports disciplines (Air Rifle, Archery, BB and Shotgun), Goat Club, Horse Club, Homeschool Club, Wildlife Judging, Poultry Judging, Horse Judging and Hippology. The Walton County 4-H Senior Precision Air Rifle and Senior Hippology

teams both placed first at state contests and achieved Master Status. Walton County 4-H BB Team placed second at the Daisy National BB Competition. The Walton County 4-H Goat Club was awarded a first place Junior Herdsmen Award at the Georgia National Fair. The Walton County 4-H Shotgun team was the second place Senior Team at the Georgia 4-H State Modified Trap Contest.

### PROJECT F.R.E.E. (Fostering Relationship and Economic Enrichment)

Project F.R.E.E. (Fostering Relationship and Economic Enrichment) programs are helping parents develop skills to strengthen the quality of their couple and/or co-parenting relationships.

Parenting responsibilities place demands on all couples. Our Elevate program provides couples with strategies and skills to manage stress and conflict while strengthening their relationship. In 2019, 40 couples enrolled in five Elevate programs.

For parents who are apart, parenting can be challenging. Our Together We Can program helps single parents develop strategies and skills to manage stress and conflict and promotes positive co-parenting relationships and developing future healthy relationships. In 2019, 53 individuals enrolled in four Together We Can programs.

These no-cost, eight-hour programs include a meal, child care and gift cards for attending each class. Parents can also participate in research that will support future programs. Each participant can earn up to \$175 for completing research surveys. More information is available at [ugaprojectfree.com](http://ugaprojectfree.com).





## COUNTY AT A GLANCE

**Population:** 93,503  
*2019 Georgia Population Estimates,  
Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budgets*

**Georgia Health Factors Ranking:** 32/159  
*2019 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin  
Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

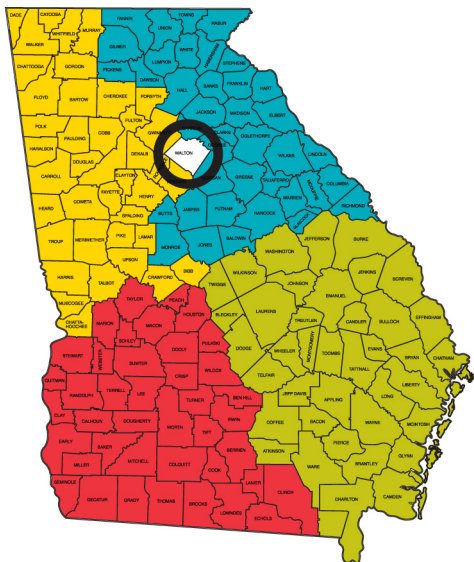
**Georgia 4-H Enrollment:** 1,928  
*Georgia 4-H enrollment system, FY17*

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

**Jobs:** 2,586

**Output:** \$162,015,193  
*2020 Ag Snapshots,  
UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development*

**Farm Gate Value:** \$57,508,081  
**Top Commodities:** Greenhouse,  
Field Niursery, Broiler-Integrator  
*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.