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

Providing research-based information to our producers is a key element of UGA Extension in Wheeler County. One-on-one education and evaluation provide immediate changes in management for the current season and future success.

Through evaluation in 2016, the Wheeler County Extension agent recognized that some of the key disease-management concepts were not understood by a local commercial watermelon producer. The farmer had many years of experience in fertility and weed control, but lacked knowledge in disease-management and fungicides.

The Wheeler County Extension agent rewrote the UGA spring watermelon fungicide spray guide in a different format for the producer. The acronyms for diseases were spelled out and fungicides were linked to diseases covered. Fungicide options on the spray guide were narrowed down for the current environmental conditions and individualized for that farm, based on disease history.

By identifying the issue in 2016 after significant losses of around $500,000, the farmer followed the revised fungicide spray guide and consulted with the agent in 2017. This resulted in a high yield with no disease present throughout more than 200 acres and more than $1 million gross revenue, a $500,000 difference from 2016 to 2017. The 2018 season was difficult, with extensive rain all season. The farmer utilized the revised fungicide spray guide from the agent and kept the vines healthy with very little disease. The excessive rain in 2018 ended up claiming the crop. With the potential yield for 2018 similar to the $1 million profit of 2017, the farmer once again proved that following the revised UGA fungicide spray guide from his agent paid off, even if environmental conditions took his 2018 crop.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Georgia 4-H Project SAFE (Shooting Awareness, Fun and Education) is a program with a curriculum designed to assist youth in personal development, establish a personal environmental ethic, and explore lifelong vocational and avocational activities.

The content provides a framework of knowledge and skills for lifetime participation in recreation, hobbies and careers related to shooting sports and wildlife. Core concepts stress safety, ethical development, personal responsibility and lifetime recreational skills.

The Wheeler County 4-H Club introduced shotgun in 2014. The shooting-sports program offers opportunities different from FFA and other clubs. The shotgun team has grown significantly over the past four years. Wheeler County’s 2018–19 team consists of nine 4-H’ers: Trinity Miller, Megan Lester, Skyler Poole, Joshua Tillmon, Jacob Johnson, Joseph Clark, David Clark, TJ Gillis and Kyelle Harvey. The team shoots rifle and shotgun. Five of the nine 4-H’ers qualified for the state shotgun (trap, skeet and sporting clays) competition. Wheeler County has seen an increase in 4-H membership with the expansion of the shooting-sports program.

Expanding programming provides increased opportunities for 4-H’ers to develop life skills and team-building experience for positive youth development. The Wheeler County shooting sports program, run by Jesseca Campbell, has made an impact in the lives of the 4-H participants and given future 4-H generations opportunities that might not have been available without this program.
**COUNTY AT A GLANCE**

**Population:** 8,101  
2017 Georgia County Guide, Georgia Public Library Service

**Georgia Health Factors Ranking:** 155/159  
2018 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Georgia 4-H Enrollment:** 231  
Georgia 4-H Enrollment system, FY17

**Agriculture, Food, Fiber, Horticulture and Related Total Economic Contribution:**  
- **Jobs:** 1,654  
- **Output:** $46,014,630  
  2019 Ag Snapshots, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

**Farm Gate Value:** $40,501,954  
2017 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report, UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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