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

This year, the White County 4-H Club began having regular meetings with the student-led 4-H County Council. These 4-H’ers have been an enormous help with ideas and planning for community-service activities, fundraisers and programs. Our membership consists of seven students: three high-school students and four middle-school students. They have volunteered to serve at the Farm City Week Breakfast, helped with Agri-fest and Country Market, recorded 4-H public service announcements at WRWH Radio, showcased their projects during the Tractor Supply Paper Clover Campaign, competed at the 4-H Tri-County Trivia Contest, and served lunches and sang Christmas carols at the White County Senior Center. They are very enthusiastic, have been extremely busy and are a great asset to the White County 4-H program. We look forward to sharing more successful programming in 2019.

Another successful program was our Summer Outdoor Adventure and Education Program. This program was conceived with a dual purpose, to get kids outdoors and active during the summer and to teach them practical life lessons about spending time outside. In our technology-driven society, many kids are forgoing spending time outside in order to spend time engaged in more sedentary activities like browsing social media or playing video games. In a wonderful show of community spirit, local experts from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the White County Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT), Truett-McConnell University and Habersham and White County Extension all worked together to provide interesting and educational information and demonstrations for the group.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

UGA Extension in White County continues to provide reasonably priced environmental testing for soil, water, animal waste (poultry litter), and feed and forage for livestock. All samples are sent to UGA labs in Athens, Georgia, for processing, and 189 samples were submitted in 2018. White County submitted more animal waste samples in 2018 than any other county in Georgia!

The White County Extension office offered three opportunities for pesticide license holders to obtain continuing-education credit hours. We also work to support local events such as the White County Kids’ Fun and Farm Day, Farm City Breakfast, White County Farmers Market, Rotary Club fundraisers, and United Way fundraisers each year.

White County Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent Nathan Eason has continued to offer programming in four areas of need in the county.

For cattle and hay producers, Eason worked with the Cattlemen’s Association in monthly meetings and annual program planning. He also collaborated with Hardman Farm State Historic Site to plant annual forage gardens to promote planting forages for grazing and cover-crop demonstration workshops.

Eason worked with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources fisheries and wildlife staff to track the population and genetics of shoal bass on the Chattahoochee River in order to help direct future management and stocking protocol decisions for protection of the species.

He continued assisting UGA viticulture specialists to research vinifera grapes in Georgia by working with vineyards in White and surrounding counties. We are already seeing huge economic impacts coming from the work that has been done in just two years.

Eason continued to provide workshops pertaining to sheep and goats, fruit trees, and gardening for small landowners. A grant obtained through a partnership with the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation and Development Council secured $10,000 in small farm equipment that will be available to the public in 2019.
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.