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**

The Whitfield County 4-H Club held a two-day regional financial literacy conference targeting middle school students in May. The 4-H conference program theme “Life 101” was held at Dalton State College to provide the 31 participants with a college-life experience. 4-H’ers enjoyed staying overnight in the dorm and participating in financial literacy classes comprised of experiential learning activities that addressed basic financial topics including budgeting and financial goals, consumer spending, interest, debit and credit cards, checking and savings accounts, career and college preparation, the importance of workplace soft skills and the value of leadership smarts. Students dealt with life issues in a life simulation and entered their unique piggy banks in a contest to earn prizes that included a scholarship to 4-H conferences. After their Life 101 courses, students were surveyed to measure the financial knowledge they acquired and the financial skills they are likely to use in the future. Responses overwhelmingly showed the students understood the importance of comparison shopping, that the salary a worker receives is not based on luck, and that, generally, more training and education will result in earning a higher income. More than 80 percent of the students indicated that they plan to use these financial practices in the future, including spending less than they earn, saving money regularly and obtaining additional education to increase their earning potential. Additional comments made by the 4-H’ers were:

- “I liked that the program helped me learn more about money and how important it is to save for the future.”
- “I feel I understand college much better!”
- “Can we stay all week?”

**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Pasture and hay fields represent the largest land use in Whitfield County at 36 percent, comprising more than 14,000 acres and representing a land value exceeding $60 million. This acreage is used primarily for cow-calf production, supporting more than 8,000 cattle and generating farm-gate revenue exceeding $4.5 million. Winter feed costs exceed 50 percent of variable costs of production. Excellent hay quality may require the purchase of minimal supplemental feed to meet animal requirements. Poor quality hay, if not supplemented, reduces productivity. Hay testing provides a substantial return on investment, but few utilize the hay testing service provided by UGA Extension. During the previous two years, only three hay samples had been submitted for analysis through UGA Extension in Whitfield County. The Master Cattleman Program was hosted in Whitfield County in fall 2018. Sponsorship funds provided free forage analysis for participants from Whitfield and surrounding counties. Twenty-three samples were tested. Responding to questions about hay testing, 16 of 23 respondents indicated they previously had “rarely or never” had hay analyzed. Offering a free sample provided producers unfamiliar with the practice the opportunity to learn how to sample, submit and understand the results of analyses provided. One local producer learned that excellent harvest and storage management had resulted in high-quality hay. Based on recommendations from the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent, supplementation was unnecessary for the producer’s mature cows. Following UGA Extension recommendations resulted in a savings of more than $1,500 for the year.
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.