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

UGA Extension in Wilkinson County offers 4-H club meetings to youth within the local school system in the fourth through 12th grades. The Wilkinson County 4-H Club offers in–school meetings to sixth– through eighth– graders, during which students have the opportunity to develop life skills though hands–on learning experiences. Wilkinson County youth are involved in leadership and public speaking through participation in Project Achievement at the district level. Club members are active in community–service projects throughout Wilkinson County and have summer camping opportunities. Youth in Wilkinson County also have opportunities to participate in after–school programs in robotics, community service, 4–H Fun Night and the Cooking with the Books program. Youth in Robotics Club worked on activities like the Incredible Wearables project, during which they made robotic hands out of drinking straws. They were also able to explore 3D printing.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Wilkinson County Extension is increasing its influence within the community to assist local residents with many of their questions and concerns. Wilkinson County Extension provides residents with a broad spectrum of free publications to address agricultural concerns, including lawn care, gardening, herbicide and pesticide use, insect control, and livestock management. The Extension office networks with agents and specialists in the surrounding counties and state in order to assist local residents. Wilkinson County Extension works in conjunction with Laurens County Extension to provide producers within the county with yearly updates on the issues UGA researchers study and foresee in the topics of cotton, corn and soybean production, and pest management.

Wilkinson County Extension also works with the Wilkinson County Primary School to provide the students with Agriculture Career Day. During this day, youth meet local farmers, agriculture business owners, personnel from the local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service office and Farm Bureau, the county forester, and the UGA water specialist. Youth were educated on careers related to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) that are available in agriculture.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Wilkinson County Extension doesn’t currently have a Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agent. The Extension office works with surrounding county agents to provide programs on diabetes, high blood pressure prevention, canning, SafeServ® certification and cancer awareness. The Extension office makes efforts to assist local residents with their questions. Common questions are in regard to food safety, food preservation, mold and mildew management, healthy meal planning, family budgeting and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
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.