



## 2015 ANNUAL REPORT: WALTON COUNTY

*UGA Extension is working hard for your constituents. Here are some examples of successful projects completed in your county over the past year:*

### **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

With an estimated farm gate value of more than \$34 million and supplying more than 800 jobs, agriculture in Walton County is thriving. Walton County's University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agent has been collaborating with other counties and universities to deliver high-quality programming that meets the needs of county citizens. Services offered through the Extension office include water, soil and hay nutrition testing, plant identification and educational classes. The Extension office also offers farm and homeowner site visits and the securing of funds to help establish school and community gardens. UGA Extension plays a pivotal role in the agriculture industry and will continue providing unbiased, research-based knowledge to the citizens of Walton County.



### **Walton County Pollinator Habitat Field Day**

There has been a rapid decrease in pollinators across the U.S. and worldwide. Farmers and homeowners of Georgia need to be educated about the declining number of pollinators and how to properly provide habitats for pollinators to thrive. To address the needs of this audience, UGA Extension collaborated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Walton EMC, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Athens Land Trust and Georgia Farm Bureau to offer a free Pollinator Habitat Field Day. The field day was

held at the Foster-Brady Farm in Walton County. Speakers included Jennifer Berry, UGA Bee Lab; Keith Fielder, UGA Extension; Trina Morris, Department of Natural Resources; and Jennifer Anderson-Cruz, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service biologist. As a result, there were a total of 87 participants, with some participants traveling from out of state, and 100 percent of participants said the field day was worth their time. The field day was also televised on the "Georgia Farm Monitor" TV show sponsored by Georgia Farm Bureau.

### **4-H Youth Development**

Walton County 4-H programs and events are offered for youth to learn and excel in leadership, citizenship, public speaking and critical thinking skills. A total of 129 youth participated in 4-H Project Achievement, 966 competed in the county educational poster contest and more than 130 attended camp at one of the five 4-H centers throughout the state. Most Walton County 4-H clubs teach teamwork, character building and good sportsmanship skills. In 2015, more than 200 Walton County youth participated in clubs and judging teams such as Consumer Judging, Culinary Club, Home-school Club, Horse Club, Poultry Judging, Project S.A.F.E. and Wildlife Judging. These teams and clubs traveled throughout the state and nation for numerous events and competitions.

### **Nutrition Education and Health Promotion**

Walton County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) enrolled 136 low-income parents in 2015, who completed 600 hours of training. Seventy-three graduated. Results show the average intake of fruit increased 35 percent; average consumption of vegetables increased by 55 percent, and dairy consumption increased by 49 percent; the number of participants who improved nutrition practices, such as checking nutrition labels, improved by 58 percent; and the number of participants practicing money-saving behaviors, such as comparing prices and shopping with a grocery list, increased by 92 percent.

## COUNTY AT A GLANCE

**Population:** 92,627

2015 Georgia County Guide, University of Georgia

**Health Factors Ranking:** 28/159

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**4-H Enrollment:** 1,678

Georgia 4-H Enrollment System FY15

**Farm Gate Value:** \$34,049,899

2014 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report

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

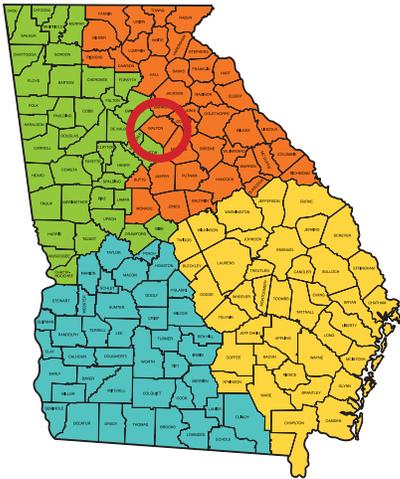
**Jobs:** 1,165

**Output:** \$77,484,828

University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development

**Top Commodities:** Beef, Field Nursery, Greenhouse

2014 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report



### 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 USDA's system of land-grant universities. Today, UGA Extension serves more than 2.6 million Georgians annually through a network of specialists, agents and staff by providing unbiased, research-based information driven by local needs and clientele input. From publications to in-person workshops and events, Extension is ready to meet the needs of the state and communities. For every dollar invested in UGA Extension, \$3 is returned to Georgia's economy, saving money in the long run.

The University of Georgia is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

### Agriculture & Natural Resources

Georgia's agriculture and natural resource goods and services impact every community of the state every day. It's the state's largest industry with \$74 billion of direct and indirect economic impact. More than 411,000 jobs in Georgia are involved directly 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 such as 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 and gardening through a variety of workshops. Some agents also work with schools on programs, like farm-to-school, as well as with community gardens. Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteers give thousands of hours of service to their communities through educational opportunities and by answering questions in the county office.

### 4-H Youth Development

As the youth development program of UGA Extension, 4-H is part of a national network. Georgia 4-H reaches more than 175,000 students in the state, ages 9 to 19, through developing 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, core learning experiences in agricultural and environmental awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship.

Georgia 4-H'ers are well known for sharing their knowledge and volunteering throughout their communities. Students can participate in school and county club meetings organized by 4-H Youth Development Extension agents as well as the state level through competitions, summer camps and conferences. Some 4-H competitions and events are also offered regionally and nationally.

Research indicates that as a result of 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 than youth who do not participate in 4-H.



### 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 the latest information and programs on obesity, chronic disease, food and financial insecurity, family stresses, and unhealthy housing, food safety and preservation, nutrition, and more.

UGA Extension offers resources for parents, caregivers and others to help promote the positive development and safety of pre-school, school-age and adolescent youth. 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 — a virtual, fitness-tracking resource — encourages increasing physical fitness and healthy lifestyles in order to improve the wellbeing of communities. Other health programs managed by UGA include the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the 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.