



The University of Georgia

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Cooperative Extension

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Administrative Overview:

Our new Dean has been in place four months and we are settling into a new administration. We also added Dr. Harald Scherm, new Plant Pathology Department Head, and the third new Department Head in <6 months. In addition, Dr. Sue Chapman became the Associate State 4-H Leader as of July 1. Currently, additional administrative positions being advertised are the Assistant Dean for Research and Director of County Operations, Cooperative Extension. Positions are listed here <http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/abo/hr/>

Budget/Funding:

We are in the process of making our 'B budget' request to the legislature for FY18. In the past several years, the legislature has been generous with specialist and agent positions as well as one time bond money for buildings, repairs and equipment. However; we remain extremely underfunded for continuing maintenance and operation funds in both Extension and Experiment Station. We have a shortage of over \$8M split fairly evenly between Extension and Experiment Station. The College's budget request for FY18 will be to have these funds, or at least part of them, added to our base budget. Previously, the legislature had indicated that we have too much square footage in our College and this has been decreased over the past five years by selling farms and tearing down older facilities. We hope these actions will find favor with the powers that be. Georgia's economy continues to have a slow steady recovery and tax revenues remain positive. The state's rainy day fund' has been replenished to pre-recession levels.

We continue to depend on county funds for about 1/3 of our budget in Extension. Overall, county contributions continue to increase. However; a recent study showed that 83 of Georgia's 159 counties lost population in the last census. This loss of population could eventually translate into decreased tax revenues in rural counties and that will be a future challenge that we could face. On a bright note, we have substantially increased our number and caliber of personnel in the urban area, particularly around Atlanta, and Extension programming is stronger in this area than it has been in decades. We continue to need to build stronger relationships with our urban stakeholders and urban legislators.

Personnel Changes:

In the last few months, we have added a Fruit Entomologist (shared with Clemson), a Livestock Economist and a Crop Economist and have commitments from a Cotton Economist and a Poultry Processing Specialist. Searches are active for a Regional Agronomist, Grain Agronomist, Vegetable Nematologist, Viticulturist as well as Public Service positions to work with the Livestock and the Dairy industries.

Programing Focus and Challenges:

The College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences increased grant acquisition funds substantially and ended the year at over \$69M. Extension accounted for more than \$22M of this and our goal is to continue to increase this number. Sponsored Programs and Extension are working to streamline the process for receiving contract funds for short-time projects in hopes that this will Encourage Extension Faculty to utilize the SP system so that funds they receive are counted in the official totals.

UGA has a new VP for Marketing and PR and there is a push to standardize University identity and logos. This will mean changes for almost everyone at UGA. Extension (and athletics) is the most visible UGA program across the entire state and these changes and how UGA and UGA Extension are branded will mean a lot to us.

Agent retention and recruitment of highly qualified agent applicants continue to be a challenge. The pool of qualified applicants for production ag and urban positions is not as deep as we would like. In addition, industry continues to recruit from our ranks, often offering large salary increases. To combat this, as well as improve the salaries of our agents with Master's degrees, we are working to raise the starting salary and provide compression raises to some of our current employees. We will not make any salary adjustments for agents with BS degrees and the starting salary with a BS degree will remain at \$34,500 to incentivize hiring agents with Master's degrees and to encourage existing agents to utilize the Tuition Assistance Program and go back to school and get a Master's. Any agent hires at the Bachelor's level will be provisional faculty and will be expected to obtain a Master's degree within 6 years.

All of our 4-H paraprofessionals will become non-exempt employees after December 1 due to the FLSA. Currently, we have an exempt category called 4-H Associate as well as the non-exempt Program Assistant. Tracking time and managing employees to work 40 hours per week will be a big change. We have not worked out all of the details of this to date, but non-exempt employees working in a county without local supervision will be a challenge.

Due to the recession and resulting hiring freezes and retirements, we have many new employees at both the agent and specialist level. While these new employees are incredibly talented and bring many great skills, there is still an enhanced need for organizational training. UGA Extension has a very organized and rigorous system for onboarding and training agents, but we need to enhance our trainings for specialists. This as well as leadership development opportunities at all career stages is an ongoing challenge and a focus of our newly formed Office of Learning and Organizational Policy. Finally, documenting impact, both economic and otherwise, is a priority of the UGA President and Provost. Documenting the impact of Extension and college-wide programs is a focus at all levels.