



Membership Survey For UGA Cooperative Extension Service

Conducted August 4-10, 2010

The Georgia Green Industry Association is a statewide trade organization serving the horticulture industry. Composed of six divisions, our membership includes wholesale growers, retail garden centers, floriculture growers, landscape contractors, irrigation contractors and allied product suppliers. The following survey was completed by 98 members via an internet based service to provide feedback to CES as to the needs of the industry and the relationship between GGIA members and CES agents across the state.

1. What is your primary area of focus?	Response Percent	Response Count
Greenhouse Crops	9.2%	9
Container Crops	19.4%	19
Field Grown Crops	9.2%	9
Allied Products	3.1%	3
Landscape or Irrigation Services	31.6%	31
Other (responses below)	27.6%	27

Other responses: Education, landscape design and maintenance services, retail, public garden forestry, water utility

2. What services offered by CES do you find most beneficial?	Response Percent	Response Count
Pest and disease assistance	50.0%	49
Crop advice and instruction	5.1%	5
Landscape information	19.4%	19
Water and irrigation information	11.2%	11
Other (responses below)	14.3%	14

Other responses: CEU programs, consumer based info, soil testing and all of the above

3. Please rank your level of interaction with CES Agents	Response Percent	Response Count
Often- multiple times per year	51.5%	50
Periodic- a few times per year	36.1%	35
Rarely	9.3%	9
Never	2.1%	2
I have no interest in meeting with an agent	1.0%	1

4. Do you currently have an Ag Agent in your county?	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	87.6%	85
No	8.2%	8
I don't know	4.1%	4

5. Do you currently have a 4H Agent in your county?	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	62.5%	60
No	4.2%	4
I don't know	33.3%	32

6. In your opinion, would CES agents working in multiple counties be effective?	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Effective	7.4%	7
Effective	25.5%	24
Neutral	28.7%	27
Ineffective	25.5%	24
Very Ineffective	12.8%	12

7. What changes could be made to make Cooperative Extension more relevant to your business ?

1. We are fortunate to have a county agent who has a range of experience and has a working knowledge of cattle production and best management practices. We speak to him at least twice each month.
2. Have a faster response time - even if we have to pay for it. Have more trainings - and at a reasonable cost - not the ones offered at trade shows.
3. more webinars Mon, Aug 9, 2010
4. Public news letter or info on "Green", most residence in our co. don't have a clue, when I refer them to the agent.
5. Floriculture Specialists should make regular visits to the greenhouse operations to stay abreast of problems. Right now, we may only see someone at a tradeshow.
6. None Our agent is very active in all aspects of our business
7. I do not know.

8. we have cut back on labor and being more money wise.CEC needs to also. lean times to come for all of us.
9. Provide more training
10. Just keep providing the services that are there now. Promote the agriculture part of CES more, because with no farms there's no food.
11. No changes we interact regularly
12. Have a full time agent in our county
13. no changes. the extension service is a vital part of the green industry.

14. They help with on going education to be more competitive in the field.There are always new pest and disease issue's that pop up from time to time.Education can give you an edge in the field.
15. My agricultural resources have been cut for almost 20 years. My taxes used to take care of most of these resources but Agriculture has taken a back seat to social programs that do not generate any income. I am being taxed but don't know where it is going any more.
16. do not cut back, i value their services - soil testing, hort advice from a county office, and some field inspections of significant problems. Unfortunately you can't bring Walter Reeves back, but he personifies the value of extension service to all Georgians

17. I work primarily with homeowners and the information provided to them by agents is almost always wrong. Agents are not well educated on responsible pest and disease management for the average homeowner.
18. No changes, unless the staff or volunteer Master Gardener numbers are reduced
19. perfect as is
20. Things are good

21. i do think they need to survey the industry more often to find out what the industry feels is relevant, while I understand that might reduce the number of new ventures and research I do think a key component is whether private industry would personally invest in a site or project, if private industry is not willing to financially support an opportunity that speaks volumes about the value they see in a project.

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22. None...our agent Billy Skaggs is great.
23. Our extension agents are so stretched thin right now!! They need our support is what they need!!
24. I am in favor of eliminating these positions or make it market based (charge the client for calls/technical help) not tenured positioned, most of the information provided is on the internet or available from chemical reps to the growers. The county extension agent system can be eliminated.
25. More workshops tailored to horticulture production and pesticide credits
26. Stay the course. AT this time they are able to serve my needs very well.
27. Easier access and more interaction
28. Hold more trainings and pesticide certification credit courses so we don't have to drive to Perry.
29. The strength of Extension is its ability to react quickly to an issue that can cost green industry a loss in a hurry with no targeted effective reaction, with no local Extension Agent to respond this will be delayed.
30. I am not sure. I have not had an issue come up that they have not been able to solve or help me with an issue. I do know you take away CES or weaken it further I think it would adversely effect the nursery business.
31. More Agents
32. have a CES agent in every county
33. The CES is a vital area of information and help. We need more well educated agents available to the public. My change would be to add more agents not cut agents.
35. Giving extension agents multiple counties to cover would be very ineffective in my opinion. In the City of Atlanta (where I am located) there are literally millions of metro Atlantans relying on a handful of agents for information. Reducing the number of agents would be highly ineffective for getting reliable information quickly to Georgia taxpayers.
36. update the literature for homeowners
37. Make and publicize area and statewide market surveys.
38. Very helpful to myself and many people I know.
39. Periodic meetings with landscapers/irrigators with current info
40. Extension agents have very little awareness of or connection with the current gardening consumer. I'd like to have agents who know better than to use words like "chore" to describe gardening activities and who support local garden centers instead of recommending gardeners plant seeds. Their outdated and often confusing recommendations are certain to create failures for most gardeners.
41. I would add personnel in the counties with the greatest concentration of agriculture. Perhaps some of the resources could be redistributed between the counties.
42. convenient, unbiased information allows for a more complete service that I can provide for my clients.
43. It is understandable that the CES is getting more urban oriented in Bartow County due to the county is growing. It would be very helpful if the CES could assist in marketing our trees to state government jobs or DOT jobs. If they had some tie in to state jobs that might need trees would be helpful. Just a thought.
44. more news as problems and solutions are developed

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45. I like the way it is working now.

46. maybe alerts or recommendations sent out in mass emails to watch for certain insects or diseases by county or region based on people calling in with that problem or determined by the agent from his knowledge of seasonal problems or the cycle of particular insects, similarly alerts when drought or humidity levels warrant increased irrigation, ie sept. dryness alert if needed to remind landscapers or homeowners to water trees or shrubs planted in late spring during Sept/ Oct if lack of rain warrants

47. They should have a list of all business in their area. How about visiting them instead of concentrating on the home owner

48. serve the commodities by size of economic value

8. Please use the space below to include any other comments you may have

1. In our rural county and many others across the state, the economy depends on the health of the agricultural community. If producers are left without adequate support or access to the benefits provided by county agents, the farming community will suffer. In turn, agribusinesses and the many local businesses these owners and employees support will certainly be negatively impacted by the downturn in the farm economy. For too long, it seems the agriculture community, and especially CAES, has taken a backseat to other interests at the University. This needs to be seriously re-examined lest we end up with even more poverty and economic hardship in rural Georgia.

2. The Extension Service has taken hits when no other groups have. They've been stripped to the bone over the years. Please don't let CES go the way it has in other states, where it barely exists.

3. Webinars in cooperation with UGA Dept. of Ag have been super in getting education on various topics. please continue.

4. Kevin is very active in the Green Industry in our area, heading up the West Ga. Green Association. He is ever present and willing to help in any way from heading up special projects to one on one help.

5. With UGA in Athens, our location, we have resources available which allow us to by-pass our local agent.

6. We need an ag agent in our county!

7. having grown woody ornamentals for 30 years, I have called on the extension service for advice more than any other agency or resource..without ext. agents and specialists' advice, I doubt I could haave even started a nursery, much less, have lasted for 30 years.

8. I feel the agents add value to educating and informing people in and out of the green industry on issues that are important and impactful to every day life when managing any type of 'green' areas (lawn, landscape, nursery and others)

9. A good service

10. Budget cuts in personnel and layoffs would be very damaging to the agriculture industry. Food production and landscaping is too inportant to shortchange.

11. I am convinced without CES support the Grower will suffer and the industry will continue to face issues detrimental to industry growth much less decline.

12. I have worked in the industry for 30 years and have an incredible interaction with both my County Agents

13. Having the CES available is of huge benefit.

14. The services of ces is a vital part of our every day life whether most people realize it or not. If cuts have to be made, If cuts have to be made, do it to an agency that doesn't affect most all of us.

15. I really hope that this budget cut nonsense from sonny does not effect Georgia's green industry.We need to keep are county ext service going.There tech support and guidance is most definatly needed and has helped propell my skill level.

16. About the last straw! I will definately be changing my Will not to include UGA because of lack of administrative support of agriculture.

17. CES, in a time when more people turn to home gardening, neighborhood community gardens, this is better use of our tax money than many other forms of wasteful spending (like nice cars for administrators!)

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20. Our agent has helped draw about 250 customers to workshops at our utility who would otherwise not have come. His expertise was invaluable to us. We almost had to turn the lights out to make folks leave one of the workshops because they were so interested in the presentation.

21. Has meant lots to this community. 4-H is invaluable

22. private businesses have had to make the hard decisions over the past 3 years on staff reductions based on revenue, we all have to live within our budgets.

23. I believe this is a very valuable public service. I am not sure it would be possible to place a dollar figure on it.

24. The CES has been around for as long as I can remember. I was in 4H back in my younger years and it had an impact on my career choices. CES provides a source of information to all homeowners that need information about their landscape. Small and large farming operations alike obtain information from CES. Smaller, more rural areas have more of a need than the larger metro areas. I would hope that other state budget cuts could be found besides the CES. It is a valuable service to the entire state.

25. The cooperative extension agency is very important to my business and to my clients. The knowledge, resources and assistance with landscaping and pest issues is invaluable.

26. I as a child was brought up learning in 4H and the extension groups, which even lead me to the career I am in now, horticulture! My grandchildren are now entering these programs in hopes to learn even more broad areas that will build our economy which as it looks they will need even more than we did or do right now. So cutting Education is like taking a bullet to your children's future!!

27. This is one area for web based interaction and pay per phone call as a business model otherwise save our tax money.

28. Cooperative Extension gives the Green industry in Georgia accurate, consistent information and assistance. Our industry needs to retain all the stabilizing resources afforded through The Georgia Cooperative Extension Agency.

29. Losing an agent in my area would be bad. I used them regularly for soil sampling, pest ID, and Pesticide recertification credits.

30. Our extension office is convenient for dropping off soil samples or picking up literature. Their e-mail information is most helpful.

31. CES is important to those of us who know about it. The problem is Walter Reeves is the only one who is doing that. CES impacts all of us and that message needs to get out.

32. cuts do not need to be made in this area if anything cut the salaries of the people in Atlanta that sit behind the desks and do nothing

33. I would like to see more people know about the services that are available from CES. My neighbors and the community at large would benefit.

34. Cooperative Extension is extremely valuable to our business and the community. We rely on extension as our link to UGA regarding expert advice on anything associated with the green industry. Also, our county currently has not filled the 4H position but has part time temporary employees functioning in this role. The 4H program is important for our youth to provide direction in their lives which most do not get from any other source. The extension program benefits all residents young and old, businesses and individuals.

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35. The county extension agents and the University of Georgia have been overwhelming supportive of helping me to resolve Urban Ag, gardening, and landscape issues in the City of Atlanta. The quality and amount of information they provide is invaluable. Reducing the number of county extension agents should not be considered as part of the State of Georgia tax cuts. As much as county agents do for the community, they deserve the full support from the State of Georgia in consideration for saving their jobs.

36. Extension is the most valuable part of the University's overall mission in terms of reaching the public with valuable, useful, and applicable information.

Budget cuts should come from other areas that do not benefit the tax-paying public so directly.

37. Almost impossible for CES agents to serve multiple large rural counties in South Georgia effectively.

38. The Cooperative Extension Service has aged itself out of the current trends in gardening. Information is most often directed to the 2% of the gardening public who grow gardens in rows and speak Latin. This entire group is out of touch. Want to see evidence - take a look at the newsletter that comes out of the Chatham County Extension office.

39. I use the extension service under Jean Woodward regularly to diagnose plant diseases and disorders. Without this service we would have to pay a considerable amount of money to have the diagnosis done. Also, we are unable to send certain plant material across state lines so in many cases we would not be able to get an accurate identification. This would lead to us guessing and wasting time and chemicals. In a worst case scenario we could treat a disease incorrectly and create a resistant strain. Jean recently tested 17 different coleus cultivars for INSV and determined that 2 were infected. Without this diagnosis we would have continued to have issues. I greatly appreciate all that the extension services do for me.

40. Losing our local agent would be detrimental to our programs and operations. We use Master Gardeners extensively.