



Youth, Families, Community

PHOTO: USDA

4-H Educates Youths on the Importance of Agriculture

With less than 2% of Americans living on a farm, broad societal misconceptions about farming and aging farmers, it is imperative to inspire, educate and cultivate the next generation of farmers and agricultural leaders. Young people need to hear authentic stories, have access to engaging and immersive education and see demonstrations of 21st-century farming.

Examples of this work include:

- In **Missouri**, Extension staff taught participating youths about college and career paths related to agriculture and the knowledge and skills needed for success in these areas. As a result, 95% are educated consumers of agricultural products, 95% are comfortable discussing agriculture with others, 89% are agriculture-industry advocates and 83% are seeking an agricultural career.
- In **Oregon**, Extension staff and partners developed and implemented a Distant Immersive Virtual Education for Agriculture Literacy or DIVE4Ag Teens as Teachers program. Teens created a virtual-reality experience to introduce agroecology to their peers in schools and at home, and help them understand how agriculture impacts their lives. The teens developed an open-source toolkit and VR apps, leading the project from conception to completion.
- The One **Georgia** 4-H program, a six-week urban/rural educational exchange program for high school 4-H students from across the state, consisted of two sessions: One in rural southeast Georgia and one in Athens, Georgia. Participants actively engaged in tours, interviews and hands-on experiences. Students met with legislators and with UGA Government Relations staff to discuss agriculture issues. They toured produce farms, a dairy farm, Georgia Poultry Lab, Warnell School of Forestry, Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens and the Georgia Ports Authority. As a result, 85% of participants agreed that

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One Georgia helped them understand the diversity of Georgia agriculture, and 93% better understood the impact of agriculture and how interdependent rural and urban areas are, and how they work together to make agriculture Georgia's biggest economic sector.