



SPECIAL EXAMINATION • REPORT NUMBER 22-18 • JANUARY 2023

# Georgia Department of Education – Agricultural Education

## Requested Information on the Young Farmer and FFA Camp Programs

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### Why we did this review

The Senate Appropriations Committee requested this special examination of the Young Farmer and youth camp programs within the Agricultural Education Program at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). Based on this request, we reviewed the extent to which (1) the Young Farmer program has a reasonable approach to accomplish its purpose and (2) the current structure of youth camps contributes to financial and liability risks.

### About Young Farmer and Youth Camps

The Young Farmer (YF) program was created in 1951 to provide educational instruction and opportunities to adults interested or engaged in agriculture, and it seeks to increase proficiency in agricultural production, management, agribusiness, and leadership. Currently, there are 61 active YF programs across the state.

Since 1948, the Georgia Association of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the state have partnered to operate recreational and youth camping programs (referred to in this report as FFA camps). FFA camps consist of two state-owned facilities offering overnight accommodations, dining services, meeting space, and recreational facilities available to FFA and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) members, as well as other educational groups.

## GaDOE Agricultural Education

### Requested Information on the Young Farmer and FFA Camp Programs

#### What we found

GaDOE has established a mission with related goals and has documented program requirements for the Young Farmer (YF) program. However, the program lacks associated performance measures and the activity data collected is not consistent or complete, which limits the ability to evaluate program performance and identify services commonly delivered. Furthermore, GaDOE's role and responsibility are not defined for Future Farmers of America (FFA) camps, which operate on state-owned property.

#### ***While GaDOE has established requirements for YF teachers, the program is not designed to measure progress toward achieving goals.***

GaDOE requires YF teachers to complete an annual program of work (POW), which has 51 standards (requirements) that YF teachers must meet. Teachers are evaluated against their POW annually to ensure requirements are met. Based on data provided by GaDOE, an average of 96% of standards were met on YF annual POW evaluations from 2018-2022. According to program management, GaDOE staff also conduct a mid-year check-in with YF teachers to assess their progress toward fulfilling program requirements.

In addition to the POW, GaDOE performs some oversight of YF activities by obtaining information submitted by YF teachers—including long-range plans, course calendars, and other materials submitted annually. YF teachers must also submit monthly reports that track their activities and the associated hours.

Though the YF program has established goals related to its mission, most are not clearly defined or measurable. The program also lacks performance measures that would help determine whether program requirements and activities demonstrate progress toward achieving program goals.



Finally, while YF teachers' POW can be used to measure compliance with program requirements, the requirements are largely administrative and not clearly tied to program goals.

GaDOE collects program activity data through the required monthly reports and course calendars, but it does not use the information to evaluate program performance on a statewide level. Additionally, current data limitations make it difficult to use for meaningful analysis. For example:

- We found monthly report data to be inconsistent and likely incomplete. For example, YF teachers' reported total hours in school year 2021-2022 varied from approximately 550 to 3,000 hours, with approximately half reporting fewer than the expected 2,000 hours and 16% reporting less than 1,000 hours.
- Monthly activity reports are not designed to track meaningful information such as which service types are most commonly provided and to whom. Instead, there are a large number of categories for activities to be reported within, which creates inconsistencies among teachers. At the same time, two of the most frequently used activity categories (adult technical assistance and adult support assistance) represent a wide variety of activities. In addition, data necessary for tracking progress toward achieving program goals is not currently captured in monthly reports.

***The relationship between GaDOE and FFA camps is not defined, which increases financial and liability risks.***

FFA camps—which operate on state-owned properties and are supported with state funds—are currently not defined as units of the state. GaDOE does not centrally manage the camps (unlike other state entities with similar camps); rather they are overseen by a Camp Administrative Committee made up of representatives from GaDOE and various non-state entities (e.g., local school systems, agribusiness). It is unclear whether FFA camps should operate in this manner; however, the current arrangement creates financial and liability risks, as described below.

- FFA camps do not follow the numerous state requirements related to financial management, including policies regarding credit cards and cash management. Instead, the camps operate under more limited requirements established by the Camp Administrative Committee.
- FFA camp employees and volunteers are not currently covered by the state's liability insurance program, which typically covers state employees and volunteers at other state-run camps. As a result, FFA camp leadership expressed concern that if an incident occurs at a camp, staff could be held personally liable. The state does have property and liability insurance for the properties, including buildings.

**What we recommend**

GaDOE should take steps to ensure clear, measurable goals exist for the YF program and that performance measures (including outcomes and outputs) and program requirements are tied to the goals. In addition, GaDOE should establish a policy clarifying responsibility for monitoring the YF program and ensure the program is monitored at a statewide level. Such monitoring should be based on meaningful information. Finally, GaDOE, in consultation with the State Office of the Attorney General, should seek to clarify the status of the FFA camps as state or non-state entities.

See [Appendix A](#) for a detailed listing of recommendations.

***Agency Response:*** *GaDOE generally agreed with our recommendations. Specific responses are included at the end of each relevant finding.*

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## Purpose of the Special Examination

This examination was requested by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Subsequent meetings with staff indicated a specific interest in the Young Farmer Program (YF program) and youth camps operated by Future Farmers of America (FFA). Our review focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent does the YF program have a reasonable approach to accomplish its purpose?
- To what extent does the current structure of FFA camps contribute to financial and liability risks?

A description of the objectives, scope, and methodology used in this review is included in [Appendix B](#). A draft of the report was provided to the Georgia Department of Education for its review, and pertinent responses were incorporated into the report.

## Background

### Agricultural Education Overview

Georgia's Agricultural Education Program<sup>1</sup> is one of 17 Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs that educate students in career-specific skills, generally through hands-on learning opportunities. Agricultural Education in Georgia is provided through school-based programs for students in grades K-12, as well as community-based classes and hands-on assistance to adults with an interest in agriculture and agribusiness.

In school year 2021-2022, total enrollment in Agricultural Education courses was approximately 85,000 across 374 middle and high schools. These students are supported by 565 Agricultural Education teachers across the state. In addition, there are 31 elementary schools with agricultural education programs in Georgia. Adult programs are discussed in more detail below.

### Adult Programs - Georgia Young Farmer Program

Adult programs are offered through the Young Farmer (YF) program, which is provided through a partnership between GaDOE and local school systems. Georgia's YF program was created in 1951 as part of an effort to train Georgia's young farmers. The program currently exists to provide educational instruction and opportunities to adults interested or engaged in agriculture and seeks to increase proficiency in agricultural production, management, agribusiness, and leadership. According to its nine stated goals, the program seeks to provide:

1. Instruction to meet the current needs of the agricultural industry;
2. Instruction to meet the needs of cutting-edge technology in agriculture;

This review focuses on two Agricultural Education programs: Young Farmer and youth camps (referred to in this report as FFA camps).

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<sup>1</sup> The Agricultural Education Program covers agriculture, agribusiness, food, and natural resources. High school students can choose from approximately 50 courses that cover topics ranging from agricultural construction and plant science to biotechnology, landscaping, and renewable fuel production.

3. Opportunities for farmers and agribusiness to share best practices;
4. Opportunities for farmers and agribusiness to participate in group discussions;
5. Instruction for skill development to meet the needs of the agricultural industry;
6. Instruction for the application of leadership and personal skill development in the agricultural industry;
7. An opportunity for farmers and agribusiness to expand the mental capacity of the agricultural industry;
8. Instruction to increase the managerial skills needed to operate an agricultural enterprise; and
9. An opportunity for individuals to increase the values for our society.

To establish a YF program, interested local school systems must submit an application to GaDOE. This initial assessment is based on standards and policies established by the State Board of Education, which include teacher qualifications, community participation,<sup>2</sup> and funding requirements. School systems must also commit to providing the necessary facilities and equipment for full-time programs. After GaDOE approves the application (indicating the school system meets all program requirements), a prospective program should operate as a part-time pilot (referred to as a supplemental program) for one year, after which GaDOE evaluates whether the program meets the standards for supplemental programs. If the program meets all standards, school systems must work with a local state legislator to secure state funding for a full-time YF teacher through the state budget process.<sup>3</sup> The cost of a full-time YF teacher is split between the state and the local school system—currently 70% and 30%, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

YF teachers must be certified to teach Agricultural Education and have at least three years of teaching experience. The teacher is responsible for one secondary education class per day, and the remainder of their time is spent teaching adult education classes, providing individual on-site technical assistance, managing the local Georgia Young Farmer Association (GYFA) chapter, and assisting secondary Agricultural Education teachers with curriculum, supervised agricultural experience (SAE), and FFA activities. A full list of duties as outlined in teachers' annual Program of Work (POW) can be found in [Appendix C](#).

YF teachers work under the supervision of the local school system's CTAE director or designee. Each teacher reports on their daily activities through a monthly report, which must also be approved by their immediate supervisor and submitted to GaDOE. Teachers must also annually complete a POW and indicate

Each YF teacher must annually complete a Program of Work, which lists 51 requirements against which teachers are evaluated.

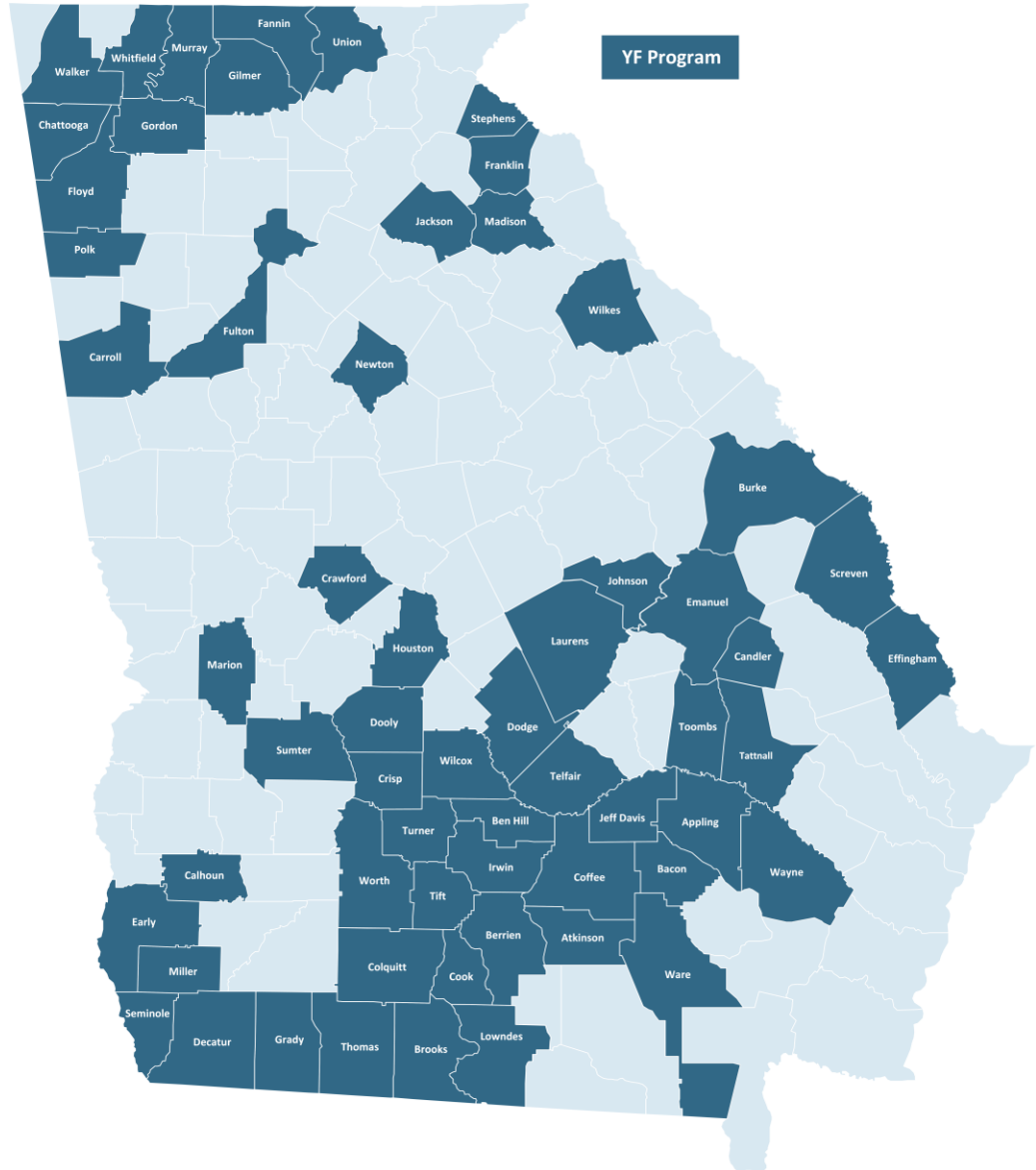
<sup>2</sup> For example, local school systems are required to submit the names of at least 75 individuals who are engaged in farming or an agribusiness occupation in the local area and have an interest in the program.

<sup>3</sup> GaDOE does not decide which YF programs to fund. Any local school system that meets initial and continued program requirements and receives funding through the state budget process can have a YF program. Individual state legislators determine which programs to seek funding for through the state budget process.

<sup>4</sup> State Board of Education rules state that local boards of education with a YF program must provide a minimum of 20% of the funds required for program operation. GaDOE set a requirement for 30% in the fiscal year 2022 Budget Guidance for Specific Grant Programs.

whether they have completed each of the 51 outlined requirements (e.g., conduct adult classes, maintain accountability to supervisor). GaDOE formally evaluates YF teachers annually against their POW requirements and conducts a mid-year status check with YF teachers.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Approximately Half of Young Farmer Programs are Located in South Georgia**



<sup>1</sup> There are two YF programs in the Fulton County School System (North and South) and none in Atlanta Public Schools. The YF Chapter located in Calhoun County is based out of a state charter school rather than a Calhoun County School. Source: Georgia Department of Education

There are currently 61 YF programs across the state (see **Exhibit 1**); each employ one YF teacher. Counties with YF programs generally offer a significant number of K-12 Agricultural Education classes. Approximately 87% of school systems with YF programs held more than 30 Agricultural Education classes during the 2021-2022 school year, with 42% holding more than 60 classes.

### Georgia FFA Youth Camps

The Georgia Future Farmers of America (FFA) Association is the state-level governing body of the National FFA organization. The FFA Association manages the FFA activities and programming for career and leadership development events and collects state and national dues from nearly 400 local chapters across the state. All students in Georgia enrolled in recognized Agricultural Education programs are FFA members.

FFA, in partnership with Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), uses two educational facilities to conduct youth camps and host other activities: the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington, GA (Newton County), and Camp John Hope FFA-FCCLA Center in Fort Valley, GA (Macon County)<sup>5</sup>. The primary purpose of both camps is to host programs for FFA and FCCLA throughout the year. Both have additional programs available to all youth and rent out their facilities to other organizations for additional income.

In total, the FFA-FCCLA Center was occupied for just over 300 days per year in 2018 and 2019; Camp John Hope was occupied for just over 200 days per year. For both camps, approximately 50% of the attendees were from outside groups. Standard camp usage is discounted for FFA-FCCLA groups as compared to outside rental groups.<sup>6</sup>

### Organization, Governance, and Staffing

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-307 gives the State Board of Education authority to operate the YF program and FFA camps, which are the focus of this review. As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the Agricultural Education program is administered by GaDOE's CTAE deputy superintendent. The program's operations are overseen by the Agricultural Education program manager, who directly manages region coordinators and support staff.

In each of the state's three regions, agricultural education is overseen by a region coordinator and four area teachers. Other personnel who report to Agricultural Education program management include the executive secretary of the Georgia FFA Association, director of FFA camps, director of Agricultural Education curriculum, executive director of the FFA Foundation, and director of the YF program.

According to GaDOE leadership, six Agriculture Education positions are GaDOE employees. As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the remaining positions are funded by GaDOE and paid through a local school system serving as a fiscal agent, with a few seasonal camp employees funded with camp generated revenues. Positions held by former teachers are generally paid on the teacher salary schedule, which includes area teachers, the director of Curriculum and Technology, and the

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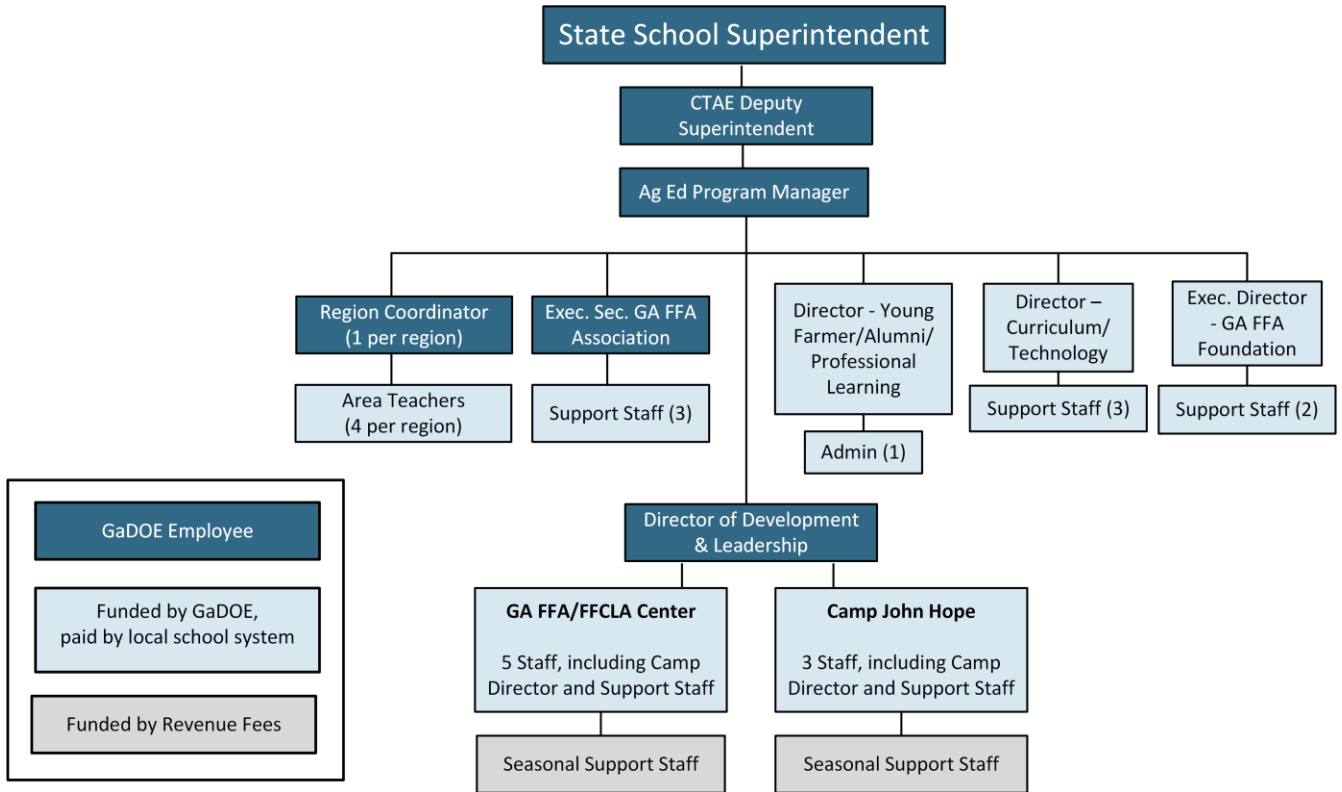
<sup>5</sup> Even though Camp John Hope is located in Macon County, the Houston County school system serves as the fiscal agent for the camp. GaDOE personnel are unsure of the reason for this structure, though they indicated it may be because of the size of the school systems and the administrative burden of serving as fiscal agent.

<sup>6</sup> For example, rental rates for a bunk range from \$13 to \$16 per night, and meals range from \$7 to \$11.



executive director of the Georgia FFA Foundation. The remaining Agricultural Education employees are paid according to the state salary schedule.

**Exhibit 2**  
**YF and FFA Camp Leadership Report to the Agricultural Education Program Manager**



Source: Georgia Department of Education

**Financial Activity**

As shown in **Exhibit 3**, since fiscal year 2018, Agricultural Education program expenditures have increased by 26%—from \$13.3 million to \$16.7 million. Between fiscal years 2018 and 2022, combined YF and FFA camp (Youth Camp) expenditures accounted for an average of 30% of total Agricultural Education program expenditures, ranging from \$3.9 to \$4.9 million.

Expenditures related to YF and FFA camps are discussed in more detail following the exhibit.

**Exhibit 3**

**Agricultural Education Program Expenditures Have Increased Between Fiscal Years 2018 and 2022**

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
Young Farmer	\$3,333,000	\$3,358,000	\$3,695,000	\$3,406,000	\$3,374,000
Youth Camps (FFA)	\$533,000	\$617,000	\$1,212,000	\$953,000	\$1,516,000
<b>Total YF and Camp Funds</b>	<b>\$3,866,000</b>	<b>\$3,975,000</b>	<b>\$4,907,000</b>	<b>\$4,359,000</b>	<b>\$4,890,000</b>
<b>Total Agricultural Education Expenditures</b>	<b>\$13,266,715</b>	<b>\$13,805,000</b>	<b>\$12,747,000</b>	<b>\$12,926,000</b>	<b>\$16,699,385</b>

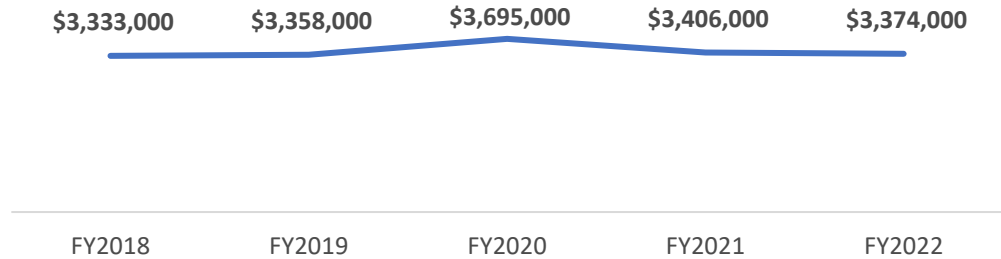
Source: PAD analysis of GaDOE TeamWorks Financial Data

**Young Farmer**

YF program funding is administered through a grant to local school systems. Approved funding is made available to local school systems through GaDOE’s Consolidated Application system and school systems draw down funding as reimbursement.<sup>7</sup> As shown in **Exhibit 4**, the YF program’s expenditures have averaged approximately \$3.4 million annually between fiscal years 2018 and 2022. During that period, YF program expenditures remained relatively stable, increasing by only 1.2%. Costs are primarily for the state’s share of YF teacher salaries (currently 70%).

**Exhibit 4**

**YF Program Expenditures Were Steady Between Fiscal Years 2018 and 2022**



Source: PAD analysis of GaDOE TeamWorks Financial Data

**FFA Camps**

FFA camps are supported by state and federal funds as well as funds generated by the camps themselves (e.g., camp fees), as discussed below.

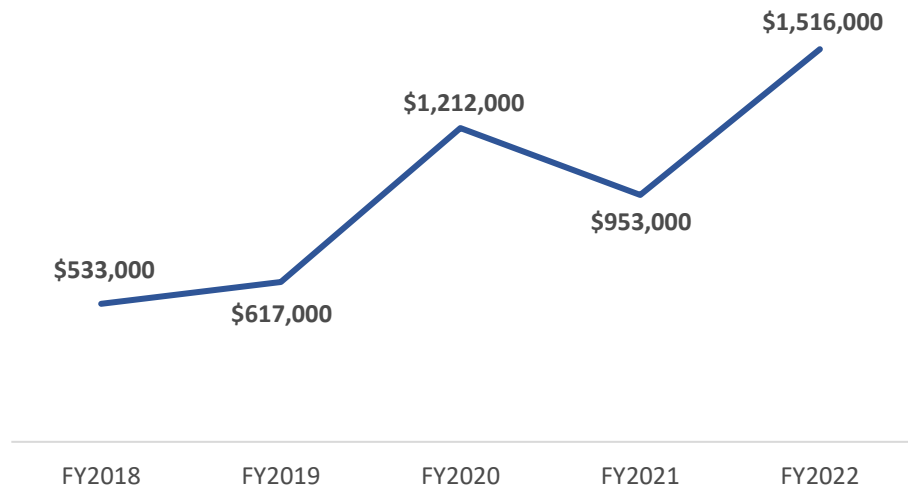
- **State and Federal Funds** – State funds are allocated to the camps as grants. GaDOE annually determines the amount needed for FFA camps, largely based on the number of positions supported by state funds. The funds are primarily distributed to two local school systems (Newton and

<sup>7</sup> The State Board of Education approves the amount allocated to local school systems. Georgia’s Consolidated Application allows systems to submit one comprehensive application for funding for several federal and state programs.

Houston County) that act as the fiscal agents for these grants.<sup>8</sup> The camps request and receive these funds as reimbursement from the local school systems for eligible expenses, which include salary, benefits, and travel for certain camp employees (camp managers, maintenance director, and educational program specialists), part-time staff, and the purchase of supplies and equipment.

As shown in **Exhibit 5**, state spending for the camps increased from \$533,000 to \$1.5 million between fiscal years 2018 and 2022. The most notable increase of 96% occurred between 2019 and 2020, when additional state funds were provided to cover personnel costs normally covered by camp funds, as well as funding for equipment and repairs. In addition, due to COVID-19 and the corresponding decline in camp generated revenues (as discussed below), federal pandemic relief funds<sup>9</sup> were authorized to support camp operations during fiscal years 2020-2022. While expenditures decreased slightly in 2021, they increased again by 59% in fiscal year 2022.

**Exhibit 5**  
**State Expenditures on FFA Camps Have Increased**



Source: PAD analysis of GaDOE TeamWorks Financial Data

In addition to state general funds, major repair projects are funded with general obligation bonds, including \$5 million in fiscal year 2021 for renovations to a cabin and an assembly hall/administrative building. According to camp management, bonds have been used for infrastructure upgrades in the past, including a new water system.

<sup>8</sup> Some grant funds are distributed directly to the camps for personnel and supply costs.

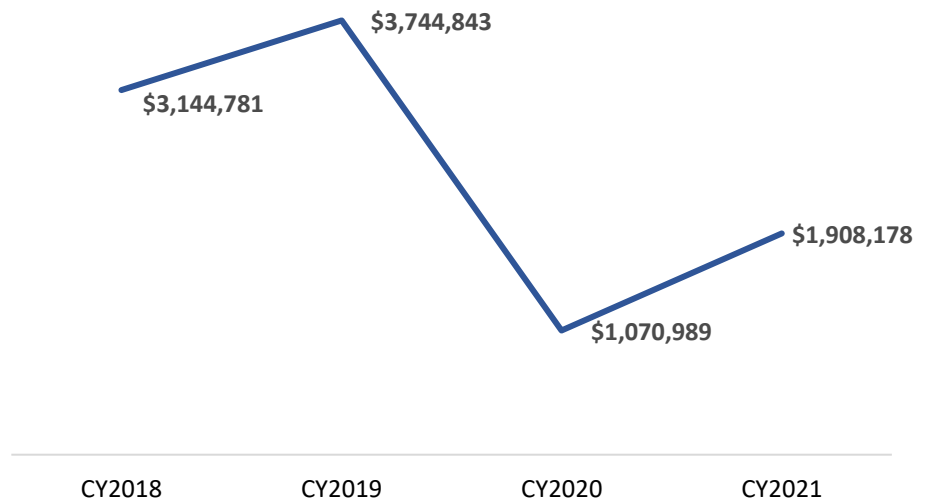
<sup>9</sup> The camps received federal pandemic funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). In June 2020, the State Board of Education authorized \$1.5 million in CARES funds to be allocated to the camps. In May 2021, the Board authorized \$1.6 million in ARPA funds to be allocated. The purpose of the allocations was to offset expenses and lost camp revenue related to COVID-19.

- Camp Generated Revenue** - FFA camps are also supported by camp generated revenues, which are retained by each of the camps. Revenues are primarily generated from rental fees assessed by the camps and are used to cover the costs associated with additional camp staff—including housekeeping, reservations, and seasonal staff—and operating expenses. These funds are managed separately by each camp manager, with oversight provided by the Camp Administrative Committee.<sup>10</sup>

As shown in **Exhibit 6**, camp generated revenue fell significantly (71%) between calendar year 2019 and 2020 due to COVID-19 before increasing in calendar year 2021. It should be noted that FFA camps manage their funds on a calendar year basis rather than the state fiscal year, and the most recent data available was for calendar year 2021.

**Exhibit 6**

**Camp Generated Revenues Declined Due to COVID-19 (CY 2018-2021)<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Camp generated revenues consist of income generated from room and board fees, credit card sales, dining hall/banquet services, canteen sales, donations, sale of livestock, and other miscellaneous sources.  
Source: FFA Camp Financial Statements

<sup>10</sup> The Camp Administrative Committee oversees the two FFA camps' finances, usage, capital improvements, and other business decisions. The committee is made up of the State Agricultural Education program manager, the State Family & Consumer Sciences specialist, Agricultural Education teachers, business and industry leaders, and the heads of the FFA and FCCLA student organizations.



## Requested Information

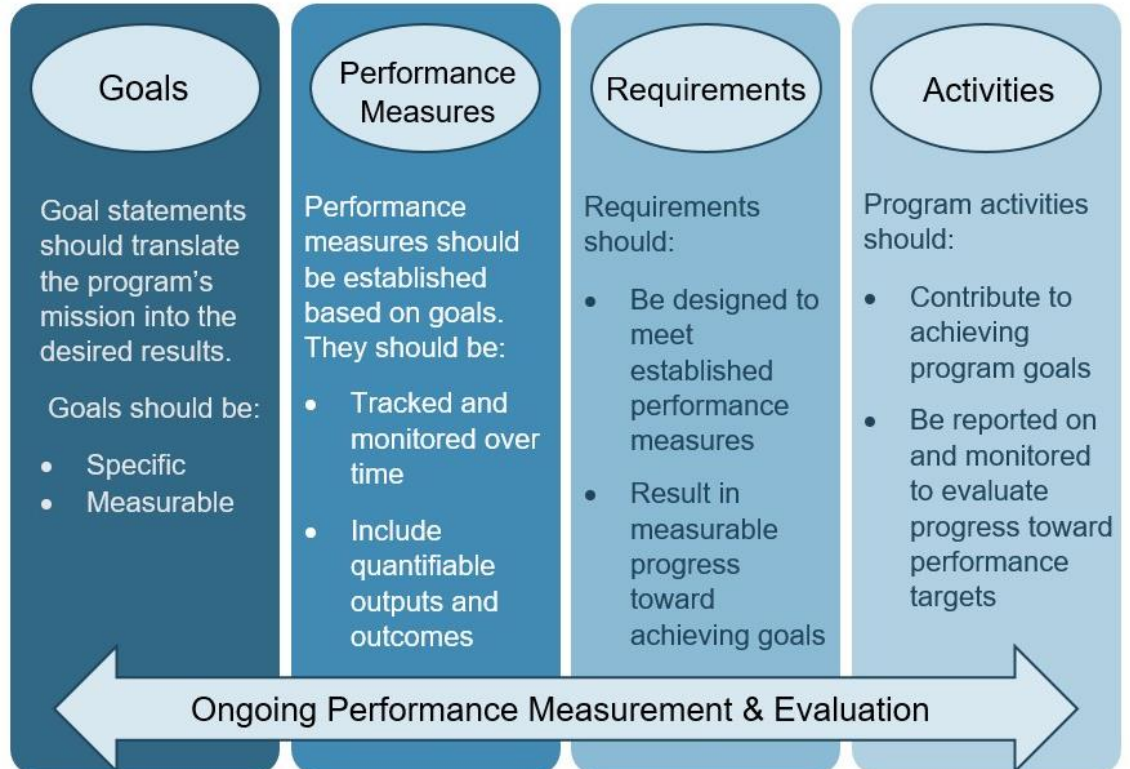
### Finding 1: The YF program is not designed to measure progress toward achieving program goals.

The YF program has established goals related to its mission, but most are not clearly defined or measurable. Additionally, program goals do not have associated performance measures that would allow administrators, educators, and legislators to determine whether program requirements and activities demonstrate progress toward achieving program goals.

Under best practices, government programs should be designed to ensure that goals, activities, and metrics are connected to achieve the program’s broader mission, as presented in **Exhibit 7**. For example, goals should translate the program’s mission into specific and measurable desired outcomes. Program staff should then establish performance measures that reflect the program’s goals and can be tracked over time. Once goals and performance measures are established, the program can monitor requirements, activities, and program reports on an ongoing basis to evaluate progress toward achieving program goals.

#### Exhibit 7

#### A Performance Measurement Framework Should Be Implemented To Track Progress Toward Achieving Program Goals



Source: DOAA analysis of best practice research

While GaDOE has established program goals and developed requirements to assess teachers' compliance, the program is not designed to measure progress toward achieving goals or evaluate program effectiveness. Limitations are described below.

Teachers are evaluated against their POW annually to ensure requirements are met. Based on data provided by GaDOE, an average of 96% of standards were met on YF annual POW evaluations from 2018-2022.

- **Program Goals** – Most YF program goals are broad, and none have associated performance measures or requirements that allow program management to assess program effectiveness. For example, two goals state the program aims “to provide an opportunity for farmers and agribusiness to expand the mental capacity of the agricultural industry” and “to provide an opportunity for individuals to increase the values for our society.” Without clear program goals, it is not possible to determine whether program activities are producing the desired outcomes.
- **Performance Measures** – According to program management, GaDOE does not use specific performance measures to track progress toward achieving YF program goals. GaDOE reports three performance measures for the YF program to the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) annually, but they are outputs that are not tied to program goals. For example, five YF program goals are focused on providing instruction in specific topic areas. However, the only related performance measure reported to OPB is the number of YF participants per instructor. The other two measures are the number of contact hours reported by YF teachers on their monthly report and the percentage of requirements met on their Program of Work (POW) evaluation.<sup>11</sup>
- **Program Requirements** – While YF teachers' POW can be used to measure compliance with program requirements, it cannot measure progress toward achieving goals or evaluate program effectiveness. The POW documents 51 standards for the teacher and the LEA to sustain a YF Program. However, most requirements are administrative (e.g., “The young farmer agribusiness teacher will maintain a property inventory of equipment that includes the storage location of assigned inventory.”), and only 20% (10) appear to be associated with activities described in the goals (e.g., “The organized instructional program will provide program constituents with no less than twenty approved classes as outlined in the course calendar.”)

Best practices indicate that organizations should regularly reevaluate program goals and requirements to ensure that they are still practical and responding to current needs. According to GaDOE leadership, program requirements were created in 1995, prior to establishing the nine YF goals in 1998. While GaDOE has

<sup>11</sup> According to GaDOE program management, GaDOE reports to OPB the percentage of YF teachers who received 100% of their funding. It is not the percentage of performance standards met on the POW evaluation, as requested by OPB. The funding allocation is not determined by the percentage of standards met on the POW evaluation, and there are YF teachers who do not meet all standards yet receive 100% of their funding.

periodically modified POW requirements, they have not been formally evaluated to determine whether fulfilling requirements ensures program goals are being met.

Without clearly defined program goals and associated performance measures, GaDOE cannot determine whether the program is achieving its goals or demonstrate it is efficiently and effectively utilizing state resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GaDOE should establish clear, measurable goals for the YF program that are reevaluated regularly to assess their reasonableness and relevance.
2. GaDOE should establish performance measures that are tied to program goals. The performance measures should include outcome, as well as output, measures. Once performance measures are established, GaDOE should determine whether program requirements and activities demonstrate progress toward achieving goals.
3. GaDOE should evaluate the programmatic (non-administrative) POW requirements and modify those that are identified as irrelevant to the program's goals.

### ***Agency Response:***

***Recommendation 1.1:*** GaDOE partially agreed with the recommendation. GaDOE stated that it has historically assessed program needs and provided information and fiscal requests based on that information. In addition, GA DOE stated, “The YF POW are the minimum standards for each teacher to reach each year to ensure operation of the program.”

GaDOE indicated it “will seek guidance from the General Assembly on specific, measurable goals for the program and will work to provide supports and clarity to allow for the goals to help each program to tailor curriculum content to local needs.”

***Recommendation 1.2:*** GaDOE partially agreed with the recommendation. GaDOE stated that “current performance measures in the Young Farmer POW have outcomes based on meeting the needs of the local community. Program delivery is monitored using training and information provided in the course calendar and to constituents through training in individual or small group instructional methods.”

GaDOE indicated it “will work with legislators and the community to identify program goals, and will then establish performance measures tied to those goals.”

***Recommendation 1.3:*** GaDOE partially agreed with the recommendation. GaDOE stated that “the current POW is reviewed monthly, mid-year and

*annually.” It further stated the “POW instrument measures the teacher’s accomplishments during the year, and most standards relate to the goals of the program.”*

*GaDOE indicated it “will review the programmatic and administrative components of the Young Farmer POW and make modifications to irrelevant requirements.”*

**Finding 2: While GaDOE assesses YF teachers’ compliance with reporting requirements and collects information on YF activities, it does not evaluate overall program performance.**

YF teacher requirements are outlined in teachers’ Program of Work (POW), and GaDOE annually assesses whether these requirements are met. YF teachers must also submit monthly activity reports to GaDOE. However, GaDOE does not review the information at the state level to identify trends or evaluate program performance. In addition, the data in monthly activity reports does not appear to capture complete and consistent information needed to measure program effectiveness.

Ongoing performance measurement and evaluation is critical to an effective performance-based program design. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), management should use quality information<sup>12</sup> to monitor and evaluate program results. This includes evaluating performance and progress toward achieving program goals. Policies should document the process for ongoing monitoring and consequences for failing to meet program requirements.

As the state entity overseeing the local school systems participating in the YF program, GaDOE performs some oversight of YF activities. This primarily consists of obtaining information submitted by YF teachers—including monthly activity reports as well as long-range plans, course calendars, and other materials submitted annually. According to program management, GaDOE staff also conduct a mid-year check-in with YF teachers to assess their progress toward fulfilling program requirements.

While GaDOE maintains the information submitted by teachers, it is not used to evaluate program performance on a statewide level. This could include reviewing for errors, determining the number of classes taught for a particular competency, or determining the most common services and activities. GaDOE relies on area teachers and region coordinators to review YF teachers’ monthly reports; however, the depth of review varies due to the lack of a policy and limited resource capacity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> According to GAO, “quality information is appropriate, current, complete, accurate, accessible, and provided on a timely basis.”

<sup>13</sup> Each of the three Agricultural Education regions has four area teachers who are responsible for all Agricultural Education teachers in the region (565 total in the state).



When information is not systematically reviewed, potential errors or poor performance can be overlooked. For example, our review of submitted materials found course calendars listing less than the required 20 classes and cases where identical adult enrollment forms were submitted for multiple years. Additionally, we found YF teachers reporting fewer hours than expected on monthly reports. YF teachers' reported total hours varied from approximately 550 to 3,000 hours in school year 2021-2022, with approximately half reporting fewer than the 2,000 expected hours and 16% reporting less than 1,000 hours. Such discrepancies would be identified and investigated under a more comprehensive monitoring program.

GaDOE has acknowledged the need for additional monitoring. According to staff, conversations have already occurred about the need for consistency and a more systematic format for evaluating program performance trends at the state level. GaDOE staff stated these evaluative assessment duties could shift to the YF executive secretary, which was recently reestablished as a full-time position.<sup>14</sup>

However, even if GaDOE begins dedicating additional resources to monitoring the program, data limitations prevent meaningful analysis. For example, program information—as contained in enrollment forms and course calendars—is collected in various formats (e.g., Word, Excel, PDF), which does not facilitate reviewing aggregated data to evaluate program performance on a statewide level. Additionally, while the information in the monthly reports is included in a data system, we found several limitations, as described below.

- **Inconsistent Categorization of Activities** – YF teachers use different reporting categories for the same activities, creating challenges for data reporting and analysis. For example, YF teachers who responded to our survey used six different activity categories to document “visiting a farm or garden” (e.g., 26 teachers used adult support assistance, 14 teachers used Georgia Young Farmers Association, and 7 teachers used adult technical assistance). Similarly, six different activity categories (e.g., adult technical assistance and adult classes) were used to document “providing instruction to five to 15 participants.”
- **Large Number of Categories** – Monthly Activity reports include 189 activities that YF teachers can use to document their work. Many activities are similar and could be consolidated into a broader category. For example, there are different activity categories for GYFA advisory committee, chapter meetings, chapter president, correspondence, regional caucus, which could be grouped into a GYFA category. Activities could be grouped and tied to future performance measures to make this data more useful for evaluating program performance. For example, post-secondary instruction and adult education could be grouped together to

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<sup>14</sup> The executive secretary position was part-time from February 2017-June 2019 after the prior full-time secretary's retirement. The position was reestablished as a full-time position exclusively focused on the YF program beginning in 2019. However, the executive secretary is not currently involved in monitoring teachers.

make evaluating adult instruction more useful.

- **Broad Categories** – While some categories are overly specific (as described above), two of the most frequently used activity categories (adult technical assistance and adult support assistance, which comprise 16% of YF teacher time) represent a wide variety of activities. According to program management and YF teachers, these categories could capture activities such as helping to build a barn, calibrating a seed spreader, repairing a tractor engine, assisting with plans to obtain business loans, and helping farmers harvest their crops. More specific categories would provide GaDOE more meaningful information on YF activity. For example, there could be 8 to 12 activities identified under adult technical and support services based on which activities are important to track progress on for program goals.
- **Insufficient Documentation of Service Utilization** – Each activity in the monthly reports has a section for documenting the individuals who received YF assistance or instruction. However, approximately 30% of community assistance activities lack this information, while others have listed contacts as “farmers” or “class attendees.”

Contact names may also be captured in the adult enrollment forms, which are intended to collect information on everyone who receives formal or informal instruction. However, documenting these individuals on the enrollment forms and in the Monthly Reporting system increases the risk for incorrect data entry and—according to YF teachers we interviewed—creates duplication that increases administrative time. Information on those receiving services could be captured consistently in one system. For adult education, this would include types of classes offered, number of attendees, and hours spent—all tied back to benchmarks set to achieve program goals.

- **Absence of Necessary Data** – Data necessary for tracking progress toward achieving program goals is not currently captured in monthly reports. For example, two current program goals are providing instruction on cutting-edge technology and managerial skills. However, data necessary to determine progress related to these goals—such as type of classes offered or relevant YF teacher hours—is not being captured. Similarly, no class-level data is collected to determine the extent to which the program meets its goal “to provide instruction for skill development to meet the needs of the agricultural industry.”

YF teachers we surveyed stated improvements to the monthly report are necessary to ensure it sufficiently captures their work. Some teachers also stated they needed additional training to ensure they report their hours correctly. As GaDOE modifies the monthly report, YF teachers should be consulted to ensure that categories sufficiently reflect their work. Additionally, GaDOE should ensure YF are properly trained so reports are filled out consistently and accurately.

Finally, GaDOE has not developed a policy for how the YF program should be monitored. In particular, the roles and responsibilities of state staff and the role of the local school system (if any) should be clearly outlined and delineated. This includes ensuring monthly reports and any other data collected are accurate. Additionally, GaDOE should formally establish a policy and procedure regarding the consequences for a teacher's failure to meet POW requirements. YF teachers may have their funding cut for a habitual failure to meet POW requirements, but teachers interviewed stated they were unsure how GaDOE determined these funding cuts. A formal policy would also ensure consequences are applied uniformly for all teachers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GaDOE should establish a policy regarding ongoing monitoring of YF teachers. The policy should clearly assign responsibility for ongoing monitoring activities. The policy should also document the consequences for failing to comply with program requirements and include a procedure for determining funding cuts that result from non-compliance.
2. GaDOE should evaluate program performance at a statewide level. This could include setting benchmarks to compare to monthly report data.
3. GaDOE should work with YF teachers, local school system CTAE directors, and program management to redesign the monthly reports to track more meaningful information such as which service types are most commonly provided and to whom. For information currently collected but not used, GaDOE should decide whether this information is needed.
4. GaDOE should ensure YF teachers are trained and provided sufficient guidance to ensure activity data is consistently reported.
5. GaDOE should consolidate the adult enrollment forms and the monthly reports to ease the administrative burden on YF teachers and increase the accuracy of reporting.

### ***Agency Response:***

***Recommendation 2.1:*** GaDOE partially agreed with the recommendation. GaDOE stated that “the Georgia Agricultural Education staff have a rubric that is used to determine funding cuts for non-compliance.”

GaDOE indicated “staff can provide written guidelines and procedures for monitoring Georgia Young Farmer programs that also establish a rubric to measure possible deficiencies.”

**Recommendation 2.2:** GaDOE partially agreed with the recommendation. It stated that “the Georgia Agricultural Education staff reviews information at the state level to identify trends or evaluate program performance.” In addition, “Region Coordinators, Area Teachers, and the Adult Education Director work collaboratively to support compliance and improvement with the Young Farmer instructional program. GaDOE then individually supports programs with deficiencies in their Program of Work Evaluations by setting plans for improvement with the teacher and administration.”

GaDOE indicated it “will consider convening a committee to periodically review state-wide level data.”

**Auditor’s Response:** GaDOE’s monitoring is focused on individual YF teacher compliance with program requirements. Data limitations noted in the finding limit GaDOE’s ability of to identify trends and evaluate program performance at the state or even individual teacher level.

**Recommendation 2.3:** GaDOE agreed with the recommendation, stating it “will work with stakeholders to review the monthly reports to increase the accuracy of and relevance of information collected and reduce the collection of unnecessary data. We will provide clarification to teachers as to how information should be entered into the monthly report system.”

**Recommendation 2.4:** GaDOE agreed with the recommendation. GaDOE stated it “will provide trainings for Young Farmer teachers concerning monthly activity reports to increase the potential of capturing complete and consistent information to measure program effectiveness and continue to support recent efforts to provide direction for more consistency.”

**Recommendation 2.5:** GaDOE agreed with the recommendation, stating “staff will work to achieve improvements in the monthly reporting system and the adult enrollment system through our web developer.”

**Finding 3: YF services vary across the state and are based on community requests for assistance.**

On average YF teachers spend approximately half of their time on YF duties, which include serving the community and teaching adult education classes. Approximately 13,300 individuals and businesses received instruction from YF teachers in the past two years. The type of community services and instruction provided is dependent upon each YF teacher’s expertise and their individual assessment of community needs. Due to data limitations, we cannot determine the most common services delivered or utilized.

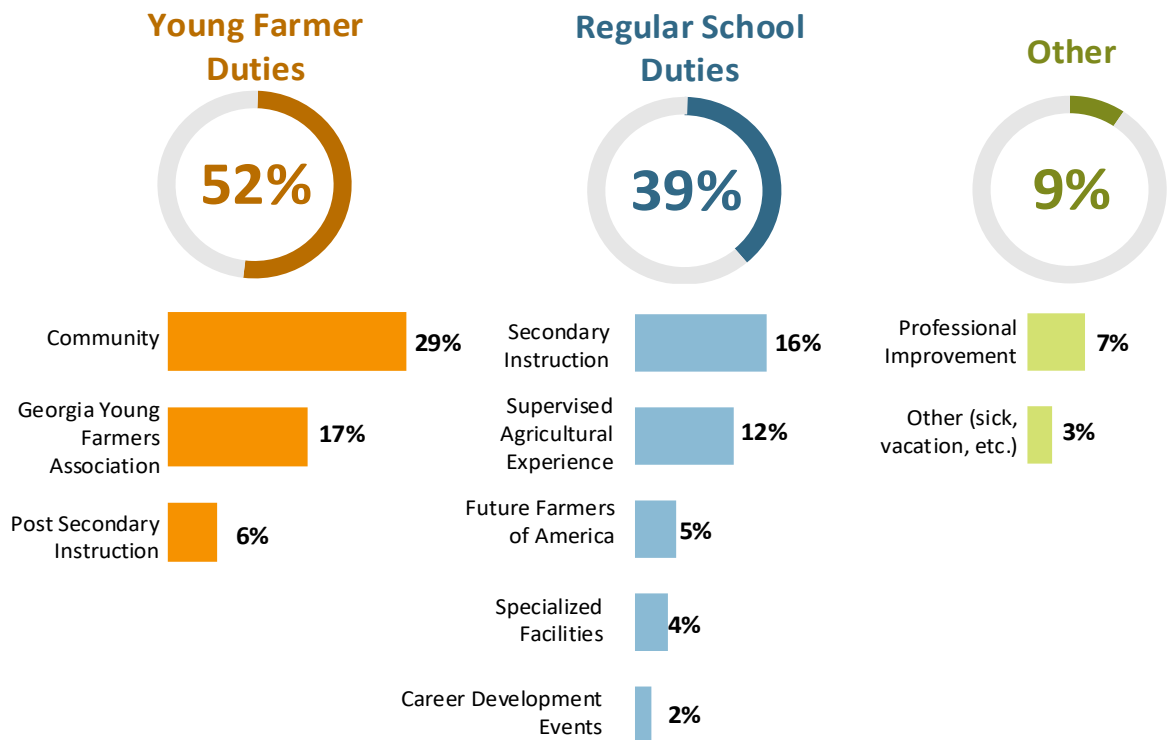
As previously discussed, monthly activity reports contain information on how YF teachers spend their time, including activities both in and outside the classroom. We attempted to use these reports to determine the types of services most commonly delivered by YF teachers. However, due to limitations such as inconsistent use of reporting categories, we could not use the data to assess the



services delivered beyond the broad categories of adult technical and support services. Additionally, customer data is not captured in a manner that allows for a comprehensive review of those who utilize YF services. Data limitations are discussed in further detail in Finding 2 on page 13.

As shown in **Exhibit 8**, on average YF teachers spend approximately half of their time on YF duties and approximately 40% of their time on regular school duties.<sup>15</sup> Regular school duties include traditional secondary instruction, as well as Future Farmers of America and Supervised Agricultural Experience oversight. Prominent YF duties are discussed following the exhibit.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Community Services Account for the Largest Percentage of YF Teacher Time**



Source: DOAA analysis of GaDOE Monthly Report Data

- **Community Services** – Community Services accounts for approximately 29% of total YF teacher time. Primary duties include adult technical and support assistance, which comprise approximately half of Community Services time. Examples include assisting with elementary school education programs,<sup>16</sup> working in community gardens (both at

<sup>15</sup> The time spent on YF duties varies significantly—ranging from 27% to 79% per teacher. However, most YF teachers (54%) spent between 45% and 61% of their time on YF duties.

<sup>16</sup> Assisting with elementary and other non-high school projects are not considered regular school duties. Those are limited to the high school classes and associated duties assigned to YF teachers.

schools and other locations), assisting farmers in the field, and providing instruction on-site (on topics such as equipment, planting, pests, and disease). In addition, 28 counties have canning plants that are part of the Georgia Agricultural Education program. YF teachers on average spend nearly 15% of their Community Services time assisting with the canning plants, but the amount of time and role vary.<sup>17</sup> Finally, approximately 19% of Community Services time is spent on industry contacts.

According to YF teachers and GaDOE program management, YF teachers have the discretion to provide any service based on their expertise and local needs. For example, the Fulton County programs focus on urban agriculture and backyard gardening, while the Telfair County program emphasizes forestry.

- **Georgia Young Farmers Association (GYFA)** – GYFA is composed of 61<sup>18</sup> county associations, each led by a YF teacher. From 2017 to 2022, YF teachers spent approximately 17% of their time organizing, coordinating, and advising on GYFA activities; however, the percentage of time varied significantly. Examples of GYFA activities include chapter meetings, leadership activities, fundraisers, and YF program planning.
- **Post-Secondary Education** – GaDOE requires all YF teachers to provide a minimum of 20 organized classes with at least 10 students, with no more than 30% of classes derived from a single instructional area. During school year 2021-2022, YF teachers spent approximately 6% of their time providing this instruction, delivering a total of approximately 780 organized adult education classes.

GaDOE does not provides guidance on what classes to offer but does require YF teachers to survey the community to determine what classes the community desires. As such, classes vary based on the agricultural education needs of each community. A sample of classes from the 2021-2022 school year can be found in [Appendix D](#); common examples range from crop production and farm business to holiday arts and crafts.

Data limitations in the monthly activity reports prevent us from determining who uses adult technical and support services and what those specific services are. However, YF teachers indicated in interviews that users include full-time row crop farmers, part-time and hobby farmers, and individuals who are generally interested in agriculture and have large produce gardens.

More detailed data is captured on those who received instruction from YF teachers. Through the formal adult education classes, as well as individual and

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<sup>17</sup> Some YF teachers are responsible for running the plant, while others have little involvement beyond occasional assistance. Monthly report data indicates YF teachers with canning plants spent 75 to 459 hours last school year (2021-2022) on canning plant activities.

<sup>18</sup> Fulton County has two county associations, one for North Fulton and one for South Fulton.

small group instruction, YF teachers provided instruction to approximately 13,300 unique individuals and businesses over the past two school years. Among those who received instruction:

- 23% are part-time farmers, 21% are full-time farmers, 18% are in agribusiness/agriculture service, 10% are farm laborers, and 28% list their occupation as “other.”
- 63% are over the age of 40, and 39% are over the age of 50.
- The number served by YF program varied significantly across the state, from approximately 80 to 1,300.

### Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension was founded in 1914 as part of a federal effort to “expand the vocational, agricultural, and home demonstration programs in rural America.” Cooperative Extension is funded with federal, state, and local funds. Based out of Athens, GA, Cooperative Extension has personnel in all 159 Georgia counties.

According to interviews of Cooperative Extension and GaDOE staff, Cooperative Extension and YF Teachers share a similar customer base and have a similar purpose. The amount of coordination varies by county. Specifically, half (30) of the 60 surveyed YF teachers reported working with University of Georgia (UGA) Extension in the past. Among them, 17 reported holding joint classes with Cooperative Extension, including pesticide, canning, and row crop production meetings.

The services that YF teachers provide have been described by YF teachers and Cooperative Extension leadership as more “hands on” than those provided by Cooperative Extension. For example, YF teachers will come to farmers’ land and fulfill any request—from assisting in the field to repairing a tractor engine. By contrast, Cooperative Extension staff handle soil samples, answer pest and infestation questions, and utilize research and technical experts at UGA. Both may get calls about similar issues or cover similar topics, such as pesticides.

We conducted a performance audit of the YF teachers program in 1994. At that time, we recommended that GaDOE should initiate cooperative efforts with the Cooperative Extension Service, as well as any other providers of agriculture information and education, to identify and eliminate any areas of overlapping service delivery.

YF teachers do not track requests for services, so it was not possible to determine the demand for services in the community. However, YF teachers we interviewed stated they have enough capacity to meet all the requests for services and instruction, though it was common for YF teachers to report working beyond the hours for which they are compensated.

***Agency Response:*** GaDOE indicated its agreement with the finding, noting that “the Young Farmer Program aims to tailor its delivery to meet

*the specific needs of each community, utilizing information on local agricultural needs and interest to develop programs and instruction for each.”*

**Finding 4: It is unclear whether FFA camps should be considered units of the state, which creates financial and liability risks.**

FFA camps are operated on state-owned properties and are supported by state funds but lack any defined relationship with GaDOE. This creates uncertainty as to whether these are state-run camps and whether state-funded personnel at these camps are state employees, which increases financial and liability risks.

Best practices for camp programs indicate the need for policies, procedures, and practices aimed at ensuring the health and safety of campers and staff, as well as managing risks. This includes, but is not limited to, emergency response procedures, employee screening practices and hiring policies, site safety procedures, and liability and property insurance coverage. In addition to the protections provided, these policies and procedures ensure consistency in camp operations, which is particularly important given the common use of temporary or seasonal camp staff.

We reviewed two camp programs similar<sup>19</sup> to FFA camps that are considered units of state entities. Specifically, 4-H camps and the Charlie Elliott Wilderness Camp are camp programs that occur at state-owned facilities managed by staff of the University of Georgia (UGA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), respectively. According to UGA and DNR staff, camp operations—such as human resources, accounting, purchasing, and other administrative functions—are managed centrally. For example, all hiring associated with 4-H camps is managed by UGA Extension Office staff in accordance with policies governing all University System of Georgia institutions. A similar practice occurs for the DNR camp. In addition, all DNR camp employees, including seasonal staff, are subject to state training requirements.

While O.C.G.A. § 20-2-307 gives the State Board of Education authority to “provide for the operation of youth camps”<sup>20</sup> (i.e., FFA camps), FFA camps are not currently managed centrally by GaDOE. Rather, they are managed by a Camp Administrative Committee<sup>21</sup> composed of GaDOE personnel as well as representatives from non-state entities including local school systems, a post-

The 4-H camp programs occur at five different centers around the state. The Charlie Elliott Wilderness camp is one of several camp programs offered through DNR’s Wildlife Resources Division.

<sup>19</sup> Like FFA camps, 4-H camps and the Charlie Elliott Wilderness Camp operate in state-owned buildings on state land (i.e., property owned and held in the name of the state or by state entities, as defined by the State Properties Commission), employ staff, assess registration fees, and deliver educational programs.

<sup>20</sup> Statute states this includes determining the amount of funds needed to provide youth camps and annually requesting the necessary appropriations.

<sup>21</sup> As stated in the Policies and Procedures Manual for State FFA-FCCLA Centers, committee duties include setting general camping policies such as the selection of camp personnel, reviewing and approving the camp budget, and determining fees. The committee is also responsible for setting priorities for camp improvements and making decisions regarding the summer camping program.

secondary institution, and the agribusiness industry. Previously, GaDOE had a lease agreement<sup>22</sup> with the FFA Association (a private, non-profit entity) that established the FFA Association's responsibility for operating the camps. However, neither GaDOE staff nor FFA camp management were aware of the lease or any other formal agreement currently related to FFA camp operations.<sup>23</sup>

Because 4-H camps and the Charlie Elliott Wilderness Camp have been defined as units of state entities, employees are classified as state employees and the camps must operate under the same statutes, rules, and policies as their respective state entities. By contrast, FFA camps do not currently operate under the same requirements or protections, which can create financial and liability risks even with some controls in place (as discussed below). While we limited our review to these two subjects due to the questions we received from the requestor of this review, other areas (e.g., human resources) may be applicable as well.

### Financial Risks

Currently, GaDOE is not defined as the state entity responsible for overseeing the financial management and operations of FFA camps (this role is given to UGA and DNR for the other two camps). Rather, financial management and oversight are currently performed primarily by the Camp Administrative Committee,<sup>24</sup> which approves budgets and reviews camp financials on a quarterly basis.

Additionally, because they are not defined as state entities, FFA camps are not required to operate under the numerous state requirements related to financial management, which provide safeguards against fraud, waste, and abuse of state resources. Examples of these requirements are described below.

- **Use of credit cards** – The state has established a statewide purchasing card policy to set the rules for who and how state purchasing cards (i.e., credit cards) can be utilized. Numerous controls have been incorporated into the requirements, including background checks, prohibiting split purchases and personal purchases, and transaction audits. Though staff have stated its credit card transactions are reviewed, FFA camps are not subject to the state requirements. Additionally, while FFA camps have written guidance related to purchasing as part of the camp policies and procedures manual, it does not mention use of credit cards (the policy was last updated in 2009).
- **Cash Management** – The State has established policies for cash management. For example, agencies are responsible for selecting the

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<sup>22</sup> A lease agreement between a state agency and a private entity is not unique. Prior to 2018, an agreement between the State of Georgia (through the former Department of Human Resources) and the Georgia Easter Seals Society, Inc., allowed the nonprofit to construct and operate camping facilities for children and young adults with moderate to severe physical and developmental disabilities at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation. The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency terminated the agreement in 2018.

<sup>23</sup> The lease agreement—which was cited in a 1994 Department of Audits and Accounts audit on the GaDOE Youth Camps Program—predates any current FFA and GaDOE employees.

<sup>24</sup> The policies and procedures manual also assigns financial management duties to each camp manager and the camp director, including the responsibility to properly record and deposit income and maintain records and accounting practices.



best collection and payment mechanisms as well as adopting appropriate oversight and reviewing guidelines, policies and procedures. FFA camp leadership stated that all financial transactions (including cash transactions) go through four individuals. However, there are no written policies for how cash is to be handled.

It should be noted that in addition to the controls listed above, FFA camps hire an external auditor to perform an annual review and have a process in place to receive reimbursements from their fiscal agents (local school systems).

### **Liability Risks**

Because they are defined state entities, 4-H camps and the Charlie Elliott Wilderness Camp are covered under the professional liability insurance offered by the state. As such, the state and employees—and in some cases camp volunteers—are financially protected if an incident occurs at one of the camps.

Currently, FFA camps do not pay into the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) risk pool for liability insurance, which protects state government and its employees from claims brought against them while performing official duties. Additionally, camp personnel report being unable to obtain private coverage because “they appear to work for a state entity.” FFA camp leadership expressed concern that if an incident occurs at a camp, a camp employee could be held personally liable.<sup>25</sup>

It should be noted that in 2019 a lawsuit was brought regarding an incident that occurred at one of the camps. Because of the ambiguity surrounding camp employees’ status, it was unclear as to who was considered a state employee for the purpose of representation by the state’s Office of the Attorney General (OAG). In this instance, the OAG determined that some camp employees would be considered state employees because FFA is partly state-funded. However, GaDOE’s attorney stated that because the OAG determination was specific to the facts of the case presented, GaDOE could not use that determination to make broader statements regarding FFA camp status.

### **FFA camps have not obtained the required licensure from the state**

According to state rules, “[a]ll programs providing group care for children must obtain a license, permit, or a commission for an early care and education program or an exemption from the [Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)], as applicable.” FFA camps are currently not licensed, nor have they filed to seek an exemption for this requirement. For state-operated camps, DECAL requires registration to receive and maintain their exemptions. For privately-operated camps, DECAL requires various licenses and policies (including first aid/CPR and meals) depending on the services provided.

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<sup>25</sup> According to FFA camp management personnel, some of their permanent, year-round employees have been paying into a supplemental professional liability insurance program offered by the local school systems. However, these employees may be paying for supplemental coverage without cause, given the absence of an underlying policy.

FFA camps have incorporated risk mitigation activities that are consistent with best practices and activities occurring at the 4-H and Charlie Elliott Wilderness camps. FFA camps have acquired property insurance and receive annual DOAS inspections because they operate on state land. FFA camps also implement policies recommended by the American Camp Association, which serves as a mechanism to identify and control for potential liability risks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GaDOE, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, should clarify the status of the FFA camps as state or non-state entities.
  - a. If FFA camps are determined to be state entities, GaDOE should centrally manage the camps to ensure they comply with state laws, rules, and policies governing state entities.
  - b. If FFA camps are determined to be non-state entities, GaDOE (in consultation with the State Properties Commission) should re-establish an agreement with the Georgia Future Farmers of America, Inc., Georgia Association of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, inc., or other relevant party. The agreement should outline the roles and responsibilities of each for camp operations.
2. The FFA camps should update their policies and procedures manual (last updated in 2009) to ensure they are current and accurately reflect all financial policies and controls in place.

### ***Agency Response:***

***Recommendation 4.1:*** GaDOE agreed with the recommendation, stating it “will consult with the Office of the Attorney General. We reserve comment on sub-findings a. and b. pending clarification from that consultation.”

***Recommendation 4.2:*** GaDOE agreed with the recommendation.

## Appendix A: Table of Findings and Recommendations

	Agree, Partial Agree, Disagree	Implementation Date
<b>Finding 1: The YF Program is not designed to measure progress toward achieving program goals. (p. 9)</b>	<b>Partial Agree</b>	<b>NA</b>
1.1 GaDOE should establish clear, measurable goals for the YF program that are re-evaluated regularly to assess their reasonableness and relevance.	Partial Agree	July 2023
1.2 GaDOE should establish performance measures that are tied to program goals. The performance measures should include outcome, as well as output, measures. Once performance measures are established, GaDOE should determine whether program requirements and activities demonstrate progress toward achieving goals.	Partial Agree	December 2023
1.3 GaDOE should evaluate the programmatic (non-administrative) POW requirements and modify those that are identified as irrelevant to the program’s goals.	Partial Agree	December 2023
<b>Finding 2: While GaDOE assesses YF teachers’ compliance with reporting requirements and collects information on YF activities, it does not evaluate overall program performance. (p. 12)</b>	<b>Partial Agree</b>	<b>NA</b>
2.1 GaDOE should establish a policy regarding ongoing monitoring of YF teachers. The policy should clearly assign responsibility for ongoing monitoring activities. The policy should also document the consequences for failing to comply with program requirements and include a procedure for determining funding cuts that result from non-compliance.	Partial Agree	December 2023
2.2 GaDOE should evaluate program performance at a statewide level. This could include setting benchmarks to compare to monthly report data.	Partial Agree	December 2023
2.3 GaDOE should work with YF teachers, local school system CTAE directors, and program management to redesign the Monthly Reports to track more meaningful information such as which service types are most commonly provided and to whom. For information currently collected but not used, GaDOE should decide whether this information is needed.	Agree	December 2023
2.4 GaDOE should ensure YF teachers are trained and provided sufficient guidance to ensure activity data is consistently reported.	Agree	August 2023
2.5 GaDOE should consolidate the adult enrollment forms and the monthly reports to ease the administrative burden on YF teachers and increase the accuracy of reporting.	Agree	July 2023

<p><b>Finding 3: YF services vary across the state and are based on community requests for assistance. (p. 16)</b></p>	<p><b>Agree</b></p>	<p><b>NA</b></p>
<p>No recommendations included</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Finding 4: It is unclear whether FFA camps should be considered units of the state, which creates financial and liability risks. (p. 20)</b></p>	<p><b>Agree</b></p>	<p><b>NA</b></p>
<p>4.1 GaDOE, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, should clarify the status of the FFA camps as state or non-state entities.</p> <p>4.1.1 If FFA camps are determined to be state entities, GaDOE should centrally manage the camps to ensure they comply with state laws, rules, and policies governing state entities.</p> <p>4.1.2 If FFA camps are determined to be non-state entities, GaDOE (in consultation with the State Properties Commission) should re-establish an agreement with the Georgia Future Farmers of America, Inc., Georgia Association of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, inc., or other relevant party. The agreement should outline the roles and responsibilities of each for camp operations.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>4.2 The FFA camps should update their policies and procedures manual (last updated in 2009) to ensure they are current and accurately reflect all financial policies and controls in place.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>TBD</p>

## Appendix B: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

### Objectives

This report examines the Young Farmer (YF) and Future Farmers of American (FFA) Camp programs under the Agricultural Education Program within the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). Specifically, our examination set out to determine the following:

1. To what extent does the YF program have a reasonable approach to accomplish its purpose?
2. To what extent does the current structure of FFA camps contribute to financial and liability risks?

### Scope

This special examination generally covered activity related to the YF and FFA Camp programs that occurred in fiscal years 2017 to 2022, with consideration of earlier or later periods when relevant.

Information used in this report was obtained by reviewing relevant laws, rules, and regulations; interviewing agency officials and staff from GaDOE and local school systems, including teachers and grants management personnel; reviewing agency documents and analyzing data and reports; interviewing staff from other camp programs; reviewing best practice documents; conducting site visits to FFA camps and YF program locations; and surveying local school system Career Technical and Agricultural Education directors and YF teachers.

We obtained YF program activity data from the Agricultural Education program database and staff. We determined the data to be sufficiently reliable for our analyses.

Government auditing standards require that we also report the scope of our work on internal control that is significant within the context of the audit objectives. All of our objectives address aspects of the YF and FFA Camp programs' internal control structure. Specific information related to the scope of our internal control work is described by objective in the methodology section below.

### Methodology

**To determine the extent to which the YF program has a reasonable approach to accomplish its purpose,** we reviewed YF program policies and procedures and other program documents to identify program purposes and goals and to define YF teacher requirements. We interviewed GaDOE staff to understand the intent of the goals and objectives and how progress toward goal achievement is tracked. In addition, we interviewed GaDOE staff and YF teachers to understand program requirements and monitoring processes.

We analyzed activity data to determine the types of adult education and assistance services YF teachers are delivering; the amount of time they spend on delivering these and other services; and who receives services. We determined the data to be sufficiently reliable for our analyses, because reporting was limited to descriptive purposes and to provide examples of data limitations/discrepancies contained in the monthly reporting system.



We surveyed YF teachers to understand how they report their activities and whether improvements to the reporting system were needed. We administered the survey to all 61 YF teachers and received responses from 60 (98% response rate).

We also surveyed all school system Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) directors to understand the extent of their involvement in YF teacher programming and monitoring. We administered the survey to 180 school system CTAE directors and received responses from 142 directors, 53 of whom indicated their district had a YF program (79% overall response rate, 88% response rate of directors in school systems with a YF program).

**To determine the extent to which the current structure of FFA camps contribute to financial and liability risks**, we interviewed GaDOE and camp staff and reviewed camp policies and procedures to understand the operating structure, oversight procedures, and control activities (specifically, financial and liability controls). We interviewed staff representing other camp programs operating on state land to understand their operating structure and requirements. We reviewed accreditation standards developed by the American Camp Association to identify best practices related to camp operations. We researched state laws, rules and regulations, and relevant policies on the topics of financial and risk management to understand requirements of state entities.

We conducted this special examination in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

## Appendix C: Young Farmer Program of Work Requirements

1.	<p>The Teacher does not have any after school duties and responsibilities that would conflict with the FFA and SAE activities.</p> <p>*The Agricultural Education Program has three components. The classroom, FFA, and SAE combine to make the complete and balanced program. Students must be trained for Career Development Events and supervised at these activities. The students must have an SAE that requires home and worksite visits by the Agriculture Teacher. These activities occur throughout the school year and during the summer. As a result, the Agricultural Education Teacher should not have any after school duties and responsibilities that would conflict with the FFA and SAE activities for which they receive extended day and extended year. This would include athletic events.</p>
2.	The teacher will be actively involved in the professional teacher organization, Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association (GVATA), which is dedicated specifically to agricultural educators in the state.
3.	The teacher will attend all area meetings for agricultural education teachers (summer, fall, winter, spring) or the approved make-up activity with prior written approval of the Agricultural Education Region Director.
4.	The teacher will attend the GVATA Summer Leadership Staff Development Conference.
5.	The teacher will attend the GVATA Mid-Winter Leadership Staff Development Conference.
6.	Program will maintain constituent files of 75 or more potential enrollees including names, addresses, and other pertinent data.
7.	Program participants input shall be obtained annually by the young farmer agribusiness teacher with a state-approved evaluation instrument.
8.	The young farmer agribusiness program will operate in a school system with a full-time secondary agriculture program.
9.	Local system will provide adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies for the Young Farmer program.
10.	An annual budget for the young farmer agribusiness instructional program developed by the young farmer agribusiness instructional teacher and approved by his/her immediate supervisor will be on file by the due date on the state calendar.
11.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will maintain a property inventory of equipment that includes the storage location of assigned inventory.
12.	The local system will insure the accessibility of the young farmer agribusiness teacher to the program constituents, system administration, and the state young farmer agribusiness coordinator during regular duty hours of each workday.
13.	The local system will allow for scheduled absences from secondary class instruction and other secondary responsibilities by the young farmer agribusiness teacher to facilitate the goals and objectives of the program.
14.	A state-approved long-range plan, based on a state-approved model, for program improvement in accountability and instructional effectiveness will be on file by due date on state calendar.
15.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will maintain a local chapter of the Georgia Young Farmer Association (GYFA) and serve as local Advisor.
16.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will provide a copy of his/her Program of Work evaluation (previous fiscal year) to his/her immediate supervisor; the teacher and supervisor will review to make program improvements.
17.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will not be assigned regularly scheduled extra secondary responsibilities that lessen the maximum focus on educational activities with the adult constituents of the program.
18.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher currently holds a valid teaching certificate in agricultural education.

19.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher has a minimum of three years teaching experience in agricultural education or agricultural industry experience.
20.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will participate in all staff development that is provided by the state young farmer coordinators office. (A waiver of participation will be at the discretion of the state young farmer’s coordinators office.)
21.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will complete and document no less than twenty hours of applicable technical update training beyond that scheduled by the state young farmer agribusiness coordinator.
22.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will obtain/maintain a Private or Commercial Pesticide License.
23.	The teacher will comply with the Agricultural Education Teachers Creed.
24.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will participate in the planning, development, and implementation of departmental activities for the local agricultural education program. All agriculture teachers in the local department will participate cooperatively in the planning of all phases of the local program of agricultural education. (Young Farmer Agribusiness instruction, secondary instruction, middle school instruction, short-term adult instruction, food processing, FFA activities, supervised agriculture experience projects (SAEs), maintenance and organization of departmental facilities, etc.)
25.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will keep his/her immediate supervisor informed of Young Farmer Agribusiness Program activities by posting a weekly itinerary according to local protocol.
26.	The organized instructional program will provide program constituents with no less than twenty approved classes as outlined in the course calendar.
27.	All organized classes will have a minimum enrollment of ten qualified constituents.
28.	All organized classes will have a minimum instruction time of two hours.
29.	No more than two classes will be counted per day.
30.	No more than 30% of the organized classes provided will be derived from a single instructional area as identified in the Young Farmer Agribusiness Curriculum guide.
31.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will provide individual instruction or small group instruction to program constituents on a daily basis as documented in the monthly report.
32.	A qualified constituent base of no less than 75 individuals will be maintained and reported on the adult enrollment summary submitted by the state deadline.
33.	The young farmer agribusiness teachers’ secondary instructional activities will be completed by 10 a.m. each day that school is convened.
34.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will ensure that a minimum of 60 percent of students have in place an approved Supervised Agriculture Experience Program.
35.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will provide students with a state approved SAEP record book appropriate for their Supervised Agricultural Experience Program. The AET is an approved record keeping system option.
36.	The young farmer agribusiness teacher will provide project supervision for each student with an approved Supervised Agricultural Experience Program.
37.	Each teacher will comply with the FFA Affiliation standards by including each student enrolled in their agricultural education classes on their FFA roster and pay their chapter’s Affiliation fee by the due date on the state calendar.
38.	The young farmer agribusiness teachers will organize/maintain a local chapter of the Georgia Young Farmers Association with a membership of no less than 50 active members.
39.	The local GYFA chapter will hold a minimum of five chapter meetings during the year. Official minutes should be recorded for each meeting.
40.	A chapter roster in a state-approved format will be submitted along with membership dues by due date on state calendar, to the state young farmer agribusiness coordinator.
41.	A GYFA chapter Program of Activities will be developed and submitted by the young farmer agribusiness teacher and the chapter officers by due date of October 1st.
42.	Chapter will have at least 2 delegates and advisor attend the Region Caucus.

43.	Chapter will have at least 2 delegates and advisor attend the GYFA Convention.
44.	Chapter will have at least 1 member and advisor attend the GYFA State Legislative Conference.
45.	Chapter will plan and conduct an Ag Awareness Activity (preferably elementary).
46.	Chapter will conduct a local GYFA awards banquet.
47.	Chapter will have at least 1 member attend the GYFA Summer Tour.
48.	Chapter will participate in no fewer than 10 of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Chapter President Contest</li> <li>b. Chapter Display Board</li> <li>c. Chapter will attend the National Young Farmer Education Association (NYFEA) Institute</li> <li>d. Farm Management Contest and GYFA state convention (Advisor)</li> <li>e. Farm Management Contest at GYFA State convention (at least one member)</li> <li>f. GYFA Cattle &amp; Goat Show</li> <li>g. GYFA State Officer candidate or currently serving GYFA State Officer</li> <li>h. GYFA Young Ag Leader Award</li> <li>i. GYFA Young Ag Producer Award</li> <li>j. Outstanding Chapter Contest</li> <li>k. Outstanding Farm Family Contest</li> <li>l. Outstanding Member Award</li> <li>m. Photography Contest at the GYFA State Convention</li> <li>n. Spokesperson for Agriculture Contest</li> <li>o. Submit at least one article to GYFA magazine</li> <li>p. Sunbelt Q-Fest</li> <li>q. Terrell Weeks Memorial Scholarship</li> <li>r. YF Teacher will submit one American FFA Degree application</li> <li>s. Young Farmer Teacher will participate in local FFA CDE training</li> <li>t. Special Projects or activities (Chapters allowed to count up to three locally sponsored projects or activities.)</li> </ul>
49.	The teacher will conduct at least two advisory committee meetings. Membership of the advisory committee will include agricultural industry and community leaders (minimum of seven). The teacher will keep proper advisory committee minutes.
50.	A locally approved course calendar that conforms to the state guidelines will be submitted to the state young farmer agribusiness coordinator by the due date of October 1st.
51.	A locally approved activity (monthly report) report, travel report, and young farmer agribusiness class summary report will be on file in the local teacher files, and a copy of the Young Farmer monthly activity report will be electronically submitted to the state young farmer agribusiness coordinator by the 10th day of each month following the month that the activities occurred.

Source: Georgia Department of Education

## Appendix D: Selection of YF Adult Education Classes

County/Chapter Name	Class Name
Bacon	Pricing Strategies and Outlook
Berrien	Corn Meeting: Pioneer corn varieties
Brooks	Manure Cost: when to hire a custom applicator for liquid or solid manure
Brooks	JD Hay Baler 460R Maintenance and Operation
Crisp	Winter Feeding
Decatur	Decatur County Young Farmer Banquet
Dooly	Worker Protection Standards Meeting
Early	Dow Crop Sciences: Available Products
Emanuel	Using antibiotics wisely
Emanuel	Pine seedling selection
Grady	NexGen Representative on Cotton Production and Varieties
Irwin	Cotton production meeting
Irwin	Phytogen cotton seed meeting
Johnson	Row crop update
Madison	Farm Service Agency Risk Management: Approved Instruction on Risk Management Strategies for Family Enterprises
Pataula Charter Academy	Winter grazing for cattle
Polk	Selecting beef heifers
Polk	Building fences
South Fulton	Growing Blueberries 101
Stephens	Specialty animals: bee production
Stephens	Forage Crops: Selecting Varieties
Tattnall	Home food delivery
Tattnall	GPS/ENR Class: Use of GPS Units
Tift	Grain Production
Tift	Production Meeting: Pesticides
Toombs	Agriculture Finance
Turner	Purchasing transplants
Walker	Catoosa Soil and Water Meeting
Wilkes	Beef Herd Management
Wilkes	Painting on Canvas

Source: Georgia Department of Education



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