Third-grade students from Georgia’s Tift and Cook counties will learn what it takes to get food from the farm to the table at the University of Georgia’s Agriculture and Environmental Awareness Day.

The event is set for Tuesday, May 9, from 9 a.m. to noon on the UGA Tifton campus. Nearly 700 visitors are expected to attend and see exhibits from 20 different presenters.

Students will learn about the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and other new technologies in agriculture, see farm animals and learn about pollination with butterflies. The spring event will focus on plants and fertilization.

“The kids that come here absolutely love it, and some of the presentations are part of the academic standards they’re learning at school right now, so the teachers love it too,” said Katie Wilson, event organizer and administrative associate in the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Department of Animal and Dairy Science. “They just don’t realize how much they’re impacted by the agricultural industry, even though they live in an agricultural community. Agriculture is a major part of everyone’s life, and it’s important for them to know how much work goes into the food they eat at every meal.”

Agriculture and Environmental Awareness Day started in 2001 with about 60 students from Omega Elementary School in Omega, Georgia. Those students were taught about planting in the spring, preparing fields and then harvesting in the fall.

Wilson said that technological advancements have since become more widely used in farming and that UGA-Tifton has updated its presentations accordingly.

“The kids have so much fun,” Wilson said. “It’s really great to watch their faces light up whenever they learn something new.”

In the midst of learning about agriculture and the environment, other educational opportunities arise as well.

“One year, we had a female presenter introduce herself as a scientist, and one of the students was shocked to find you didn’t have to be a boy to do that,” Wilson said. “So, we are teaching that there’s a wide variety of opportunities for everyone. We tell them, ‘Don’t limit yourself.’”

After the event, teachers will be given packets of information to further educate the students in the classroom.

(Julia Rodriguez is an intern on the UGA Tifton campus.)