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“Operation Doggy Door”

By Bianca Blakley

Tallahassee, FL - While humans typically know what to do if a natural disaster strikes, what happens to animals during an emergency?



Melinda Springer with USDA's Veterinary Services trains FL-SARC volunteers on the use of MIM to track animals at a temporary shelter following the simulated tornado.

On Saturday, April 28, several animal welfare agencies conducted a full-scale evacuation and sheltering exercise to test their response plans and capabilities. The event was held at the Tallahassee-Leon Community Animal Service Center (ASC), 1125 Easterwood Drive. Participating agencies included the ASC, Leon County Animal Control and the Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team.

The event, known as “**Operation Doggy Door**,” was designed to provide response agencies the opportunity to evaluate their animal evacuation and sheltering plans in the event of a

natural disaster. In this case, a mock tornado impacted the Animal Service Center, activating response efforts by the various agencies.

“This was a successful learning experience for our staff, identifying several gaps that we will be working on in the future,” said Richard Zeigler, director of Leon County Animal Control.



Volunteer responders prepare to bring animals into a temporary shelter at Wakulla County Extension's Livestock Pavilion outside the town of Crawfordville in the Florida Panhandle.



A member of the UF VETS Team examines a dog brought into a temporary shelter during Operation Doggy Door in Leon and Wakulla Counties.

Throughout the exercise, agencies were evaluated based on current plans for proper notification, tagging, tracking, caring for and transporting animals during emergency events. When the mock tornado struck the ASC, Florida SART was requested to coordinate response equipment and responders (FL-SARC/Big Bend DART). The scenario included providing support to the animals and then transporting them to the Wakulla County Extension Center at 84 Cedar Avenue in Crawfordville. There, the animals received treatment from the University of Florida's VETS team and housing utilizing one of SART's Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) Units.

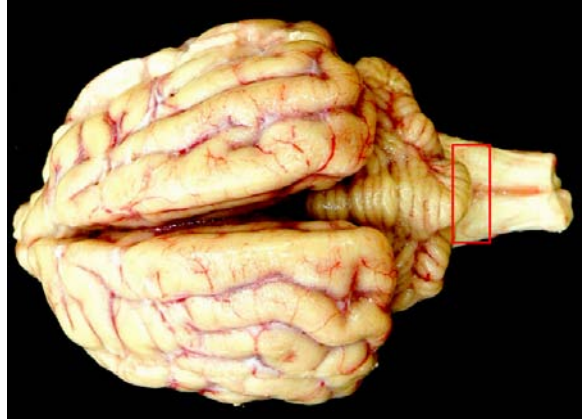
Amateur Radio Emergency Services representatives from Leon and Wakulla counties demonstrated their capabilities in hopes to improve communications during a response effort. USDA's Veterinary Services was also on hand to test the ongoing pilot program, Mobile Information Management System (MIMS), for check-in and tracking animals as they arrived at the shelter.

"It was a great exercise to see the Florida SART concept work, where we had three SART partners (UF's VETS team, FL-SARC, and UF/IFAS) working together to solve an emergency need," Joe Kight, FDACS-DAI ESF-17 Coordinator said. "Their expertise and leadership, along with SART's equipment (MARE unit), quickly addressed Leon County's need."

BSE Found in California Cow

On April 25th, Dr. Greg Christy, DVM, with FDACS-DAI forwarded a press release from USDA/APHIS regarding the nation's fourth case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in a dairy cow from central California. It is only the 4th case ever discovered in the U.S. Christy wrote, "Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad-cow disease, is a fatal neurodegenerative disease in cattle that causes a spongy degeneration in the brain and spinal cord. It has never been diagnosed in any Florida cattle." At this point, two California farms have been quarantined.

According to an April 25 news release from the American Feed Industry Association (www.afia.org) of which SART Partner Florida Feed Association is a member, "Dr. John Clifford, USDA's Chief Veterinary Officer, described the case as 'atypical,' meaning the animal did not contract BSE from contaminated feed or feed ingredients, but was rather was the result of a random mutation."



The small red box indicates the region of the obex, the portion of the brain that must be obtained for the diagnosis of BSE and other spongiform encephalopathies such as scrapie and chronic wasting disease. (Photo; Dr. S. Sorden, Iowa State University, College of Veterinary Medicine)

Additional information on BSE is available at:

FDACS: www.freshfromflorida.com/ai/main/bse_main.shtml

USDA: www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/bse/index.shtml

Center for Food Security and Public Health:

www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/bovine_spongiform_encephalopathy.pdf

The United States has a longstanding system of three interlocking safeguards against BSE that protects public and animal health in the U.S.

1. The removal of specified risk materials or the parts of an animal that would contain BSE should an animal have the disease, from all animals presented for slaughter.
2. A strong feed ban that protects cattle from the disease.
3. The safeguard that led to this detection is an ongoing BSE surveillance program that allows USDA to detect the disease if it exists at very low levels in the U.S. cattle population.

www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2012/05/bse_update_050212.shtml

Responders and Mass Hysteria, Mass Panic

There seem to be plenty of reasons to hyperventilate today: rising gas prices, climate change, saving the rain forest or the whales, new disease threats, political or economic chaos. As responders, we need to be alert to the possibilities that on occasion a hysterical public reaction might be worse than or might aggravate a localized emergency.

In an article titled “Crowd Control: How We Avoid Mass Panic” published in the November 23, 2010 issue of Scientific American, authors John Drury and Stephen D. Reicher write:

“In the Twin Towers of New York City’s World Trade Center, intense fires are burning in and above the impact zones struck by hijacked airliners. People evacuating from the 110-story towers realize they are in danger, but they are not in a blind panic. They are not screaming and trampling one another. As they descend the densely packed stairwells, they are waiting in line, taking turns and assisting those who need help. A few office workers hold doors open and direct traffic. Thanks to the orderly evacuation and unofficial rescue efforts, the vast majority of people below the impact zones get out of the buildings alive.



In a recent issue of *Scientific American*, Drury and Reicher note that “when researchers look closely at almost any major disaster, they find little to support the assumption that ordinary people lose their heads in these extraordinary situations. Instead they find that individuals not only behave sensibly in emergencies but also display a solidarity that can be a valuable asset.”

“Not everyone was an angel on 9/11. But accounts of the Twin Towers evacuation show that there was none of the “mass panic” that many emergency planners expect to see in a disaster. In fact, when researchers



look closely at almost any major disaster, they find little to support the assumption that ordinary people lose their heads in these extraordinary situations. Instead they find that individuals not only behave sensibly in emergencies but also display a solidarity that can be a valuable asset.”

Drury and Reicher make three points that responders should keep in mind:

1. In disasters, people are more likely to be killed by compassion than competition. They often tarry to help friends or family members

[or pets].

2. When a crisis hits in a crowded place, people often undergo a shift, identifying themselves more as group members than individuals.
3. Emergency planners can help ordinary people act as “first responders” by giving them practical information as the situation unfolds.

Their article can in part be found at

www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=crowd-control.

“Our priorities include creating energy independence, helping agricultural and natural resource industries become more diverse and efficient; protecting and conserving water supplies; developing new high-value agricultural crops and defending the state from emerging pests and diseases.”

Jack Payne

Senior VP, Agriculture & Natural Resources
IFAS, University of Florida

News About “The Flu”



Experimental adaptation of an influenza H5 HA confers respiratory droplet transmission to a reassortant H5 HA/H1N1 virus in ferrets. Why you should care.

The scientific journal Nature recently published a study that many people thought should never see the light of day. The research document suggests that just a few genetic changes could

potentially make an avian or bird flu virus capable of becoming contagious in humans, and causing a dangerous pandemic.



Since it was leaked to the press, a fierce debate has raged over this study ... and there is a companion volume to come. The scientific, political and perhaps moral question was “should the details be kept secret?” Many have expressed fears that the research findings could provide a laboratory recipe for turning bird flu into a bio-weapon.

Details of this study are now available (the second experiment will be made public soon), but the controversy over lab-altered bird flu continues. To read the study go to <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nature10831.html>.



So, how is Florida preparing for Avian Flu?

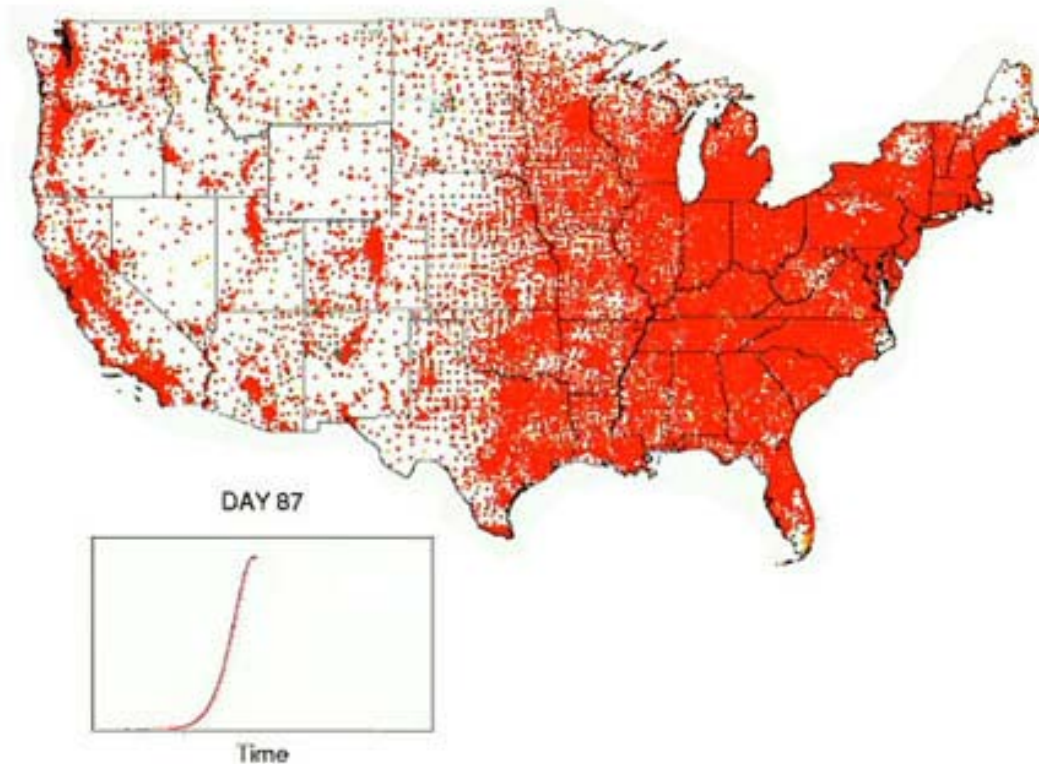
Florida has a very strong and robust surveillance system in place that is on alert to the potential for bird flu, says the Florida Dept. of Health (FDOH) at

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/rw_Bulletins/panfluplanindex.html.

"Sentinel physicians" report any unusual occurrences to FDOH and the CDC. FDOH laboratory facilities and staff have been increased, allowing for more timely diagnosis of avian flu should a case occur. FDOH also provides continuing education to EMS, hospital staff and private physicians, emphasizing the need to be alert for possible symptoms of bird flu coupled with overseas travel.

Full-time CDC personnel are assigned to FDOH Headquarters to ensure rapid and clear communications between organizations. CDC also increased personnel at the Miami Quarantine Station to provide services to the international ports of entry in Florida. FDACS and FWCC provide bird surveillance services, and FDOH works closely with state and federal agricultural authorities who are responsible for monitoring and response to avian influenza outbreaks in domestic poultry.

A flu pandemic would very negatively affect the way agriculture “does business” and the ability of animal shelters to handle increasing numbers of homeless pets.



Due to our extensive response to and recovery from hurricanes, and our rigorous overall training schedules for all natural and manmade event, we are experienced in receiving supplies from the Federal Strategic National Stockpile under emergency situations. While there is currently no vaccine for bird flu, our ability to provide mass inoculations to our population during a crisis has been successfully tested.



Is a pandemic influenza action plan in place?

An influenza (flu) pandemic occurs when a new and highly contagious strain of the virus emerges, potentially affecting populations worldwide. Historically, pandemics have occurred every 11 to 39 years; it has been more than 30 years since the last one. Many experts believe a flu pandemic is inevitable, but no one can know when it may occur.

In the event of a pandemic, preventive and therapeutic measures such as vaccines and antiviral agents, and antibiotics for treating secondary infections, could be in short supply. Medical facilities could be overburdened. A higher risk of exposure and illness of first responders might affect care of victims. Communications could be overwhelmed.

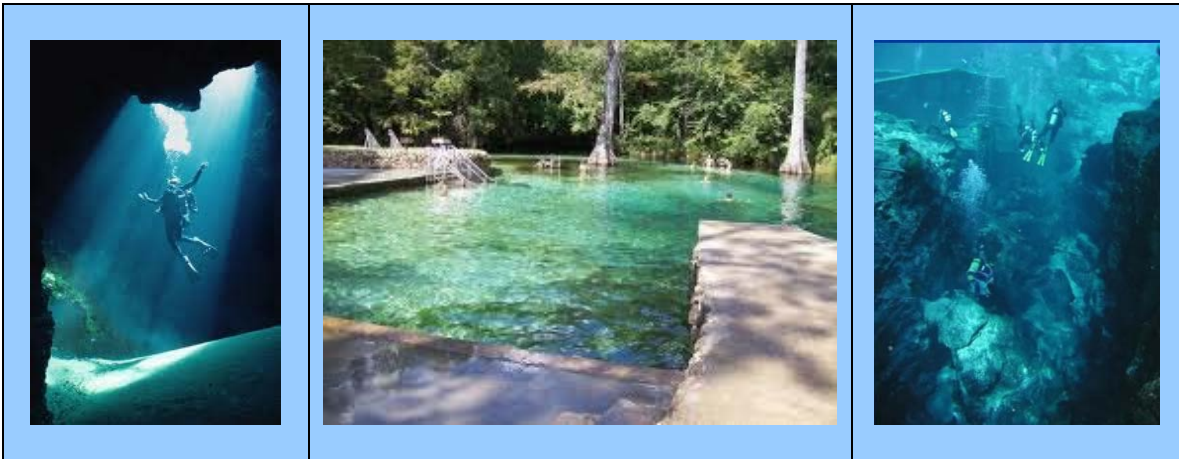
Partnering with other states and guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Florida has developed a pandemic preparedness plan that addresses disease surveillance, emergency management, vaccine delivery, laboratory and communications activities and multi-agency response.

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/htopics/flu/panflu.htm.

SRWMD Urges Water Conservation Mandatory Water Restrictions Loom

In April, in response to the ongoing drought, the Suwannee River Water Management District urged water users to curb unnecessary uses of water and is evaluating mandatory water use restrictions.

The 12 months ending in March were the driest since 1932. Groundwater gauges in the area, including natural springs, were at their lowest indications since their installation. Megan Wetherington, district engineer, said, “The lowest flow on record was recorded at Poe Springs, and Levy Blue Spring currently is no longer flowing. Manatee and Fanning springs are also low.”



There is little chance of coming out of the drought in the next several months, said Wetherington short of a tropical weather system. The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center predicts the drought in the southeast to persist or intensify.

“There is a need for everyone to reduce water use,” said SRWMD Acting Executive Director Charlie Houser. “We will ... declare a water shortage order [limiting some water use] if conditions do not improve quickly.” For now, a water shortage advisory is in effect, which urges all users to eliminate unnecessary uses of water.

The complete and unedited SRWMD is available at the Florida Farm Bureau site:

<http://www.floridafarmbureau.org/node/2202>.

How Water Problems Impact the Tourism Industry

By Rick Sapp

Forty miles west of Gainesville, Fanning Springs has nitrogen levels 100 times greater than prior to nearby development. The causes are agricultural fertilizers, wastewater and septic systems. The result is thick green algae and lower oxygen levels. Plus, spring flow is dropping. Ten years ago it was a 1st Magnitude Spring (flow exceeding 100 cu-ft per second); now, it's fallen to 2nd Magnitude.

White Sulphur Springs, at the bathhouse in White Springs? Dry.

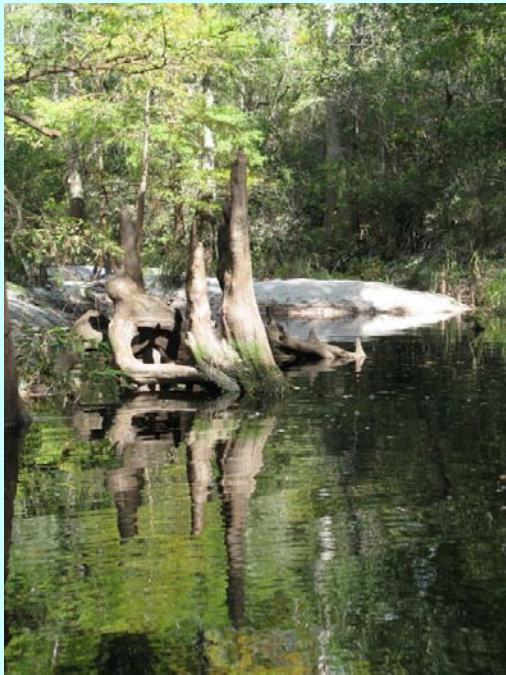
Big Shoals on the Suwannee where you drug the canoe for fear of tipping over the shelf?

Your agency or company could picnic on the ledge.

Silver Springs ... a bare shell of its former self, some blaming chemical pollution and others the dam on the Ocklawaha. To stay in business, the Springs turned to country western events.

This clearly has an impact on tourism.

With 85 million visitors a year, Florida is the top travel destination in the world. The state's tourism industry has an economic impact of \$65 billion and employs a million people. It can't afford a drought. Dropping fresh water levels, especially in a time when climatologists believe sea levels will rise, could threaten ... everything.



The University of Florida's Dr. Stephen Holland says hard numbers on fresh water-based tourism and commerce are not available. "Lower water levels will certainly affect the outdoor recreation business though," he says, "everything from boat sales and rentals to water skiing, diving, fishing and camping." As a result, room nights and restaurant sales will suffer.

Jim Wood, owner of Santa Fe Canoe Outpost on U.S. 41 at the Santa Fe River, says water flow in springs that feed the river is way down and that hurts business.

"At times, water at our dock has been so low we couldn't launch and people have had to drag canoes three to four times on the run down to U.S. 27," he says. "When they have to get out once, that's OK; more than that is a disaster for us. Hauling people and canoes or kayaks longer distances to avoid the shallow and dry spots costs gas, time and money. People go elsewhere."

The effect of low water levels and changing chemical content of the water due to human activity can have a highly targeted effect on business as well as recreation.

"I think this really affects business," Bob Knight of Wetland Solutions, a wetland and aquatic ecosystem consulting firm, says. "Look at Silver Springs. Florida's first tourist attraction was why Ocala developed. It generates \$60 million a year but water flow is down 30 percent and nitrate levels – from fertilizers and human and animal waste – are 20 times higher. Look how the town of Silver Springs and that area of Ocala have declined!"

Caught on Radar



Florida SARC Training Opportunity

First Coast “No More Homeless Pets” at 6817 Norwood Ave., Education Center, 2nd Floor, Jacksonville, FL 32208 is hosting the Florida SARC Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Class on Saturday, June 16 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The course is Free, due to a generous grant from the FDACS and FDEM. Iams Pet

Foods is sponsoring a light breakfast, coffee, drinks, snacks and a full lunch during class hours.

Course topics include: Personal Preparedness, Overview of the Incident Command System, Deployment Preparedness, Assisting in Shelter Set Up, Daily Care and Feeding, Proper Cage Cleaning and Disinfection, Animal Behavior, Stress Management, Zoonotic Disease, Personal Safety, and more.

Florida SARC team members must also complete the following FEMA courses before they are eligible to deploy, but they do not have to be completed before class. These courses are self-study online courses and are free of charge:

[IS-100.b Introduction to Incident Command System](#)

[IS-200.b ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents](#)

[IS-700.a NIMS an Introduction](#)

(If you complete the above courses before attending the Awareness Level class, bring the completion certificates to class to receive a Free Florida SARC uniform t-shirt.)

For information contact the Florida State Animal Response Coalition at training@fhsarc.org or (352) 658-1224. To register visit www.fhsarc.org/Training.html and follow instructions there or click directly on the following link – <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e5tos18pe8f8a3be&llr=cmn8hziab>.

IFAS Economic Report - Florida \$126.7 Billion in Direct output, 1.94 Million Jobs

In 2009, agriculture and natural resource industries collectively generated over 1.94 million jobs in the state, \$126.7 billion in direct output (revenues), \$107 billion in value added contributions, and \$11.8 billion in business taxes to state, local and federal governments. These industries span the market chain, including commodity production, supporting services and food distribution to consumers.

Due to Florida’s subtropical climate, the specialized nature of

FIGURE 1. Economic benefits of Agriculture and Natural Resource Industries



its agriculture, and access to international ports, exports from Florida to domestic and international markets account for almost \$50 billion in revenues. As globalization continues to increase the level of market competition, as well as the influx of invasive pests and diseases, greater demands will be made on the research and extension system to maintain the gains made in agricultural productivity and to develop new technologies that can further increase competitiveness.

More information can be found at www.ifas.ufl.edu/economicimpacts.html.



2012 Florida Statewide Hurricane Exercise

Is the official start of hurricane season for Florida is June 1st or is it actually the date of the annual hurricane exercise ... or perhaps the date of the formation of the first tropical wave off the coast of Africa? Even though the expert meteorologists and their computer models at Colorado State University's Tropical Meteorology Project <http://typhoon.atmos.colostate.edu/> predict a below-average 2012 Atlantic hurricane season, now is the time to gear-up, double check the family evacuation plan, the pet records, the business relocation plan, and the available resources for farm and grove needs.

Florida holds its annual Hurricane Exercise at the state EOC, 2575 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee from Monday, May 21st to Thursday the 24th. The point of contact is Necole Holton (850) 413-0261 necole.holton@em.myflorida.com.



USDA Designates Three Florida Counties As Primary Natural Disaster Areas

On April 20, USDA designated Hendry, Nassau and Palm Beach counties in Florida as primary natural disaster areas due to damage and losses caused by frost and freezing temperatures that occurred January 3-16. Farmers and ranchers in contiguous counties in Florida and Georgia also qualify for natural disaster assistance.

Qualified farm operators in the designated areas are potentially eligible for low interest emergency loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency, and have eight months from April 20 to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. Farmers should contact local USDA service centers or go to <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> for more information.

Quick Notes



Florida Agriculture & Climate Change

A story "Climate change: What's the potential impact on Florida agriculture?" by David Bennett appears in the May 3 issue of Southeast Farm Press and is online at:

<http://southeastfarmpress.com/vegetables/climate-change-what-s-potential-impact-florida-agriculture>. An associated map says, "Compared to other states, Florida ranks poorly [especially in water-readiness issues] and should do more to prepare for climate change."



Poo Forensics

CSI or Crime Scene Investigation is a real science (just ask Sherlock Holmes) and Hector Cruz-Lopez, formerly of the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission, is a Forensic Biologist who frequently speaks on animal CSI topics. Several years ago Cruz-Lopez helped solve a very real human crime in Florida: “A few weeks later we got the call. Through microscopy, Hector determined that the poo on the shoe (not the Dr. Seuss book) came from the pile at the apartment complex. That poo puts the shooter at the scene...right on the trail of spent casings. As I contemplate this killer telling his fellow lifers that stepping in dog poo got him caught, I break a little smile. The pun-filled replies are easy to guess.”

<http://csiwork.com/?p=493>

About the *SART Sentinel*

The SART Sentinel is an e-mail newsletter prepared monthly by the members of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team. Past issues of the *Sentinel* are archived on the Florida SART Web Site www.flsart.org.

If you have a story or photo that you would like to have considered for publication in the *SART Sentinel*, please contact the editors.

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