



# THE SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM



## Special Features of this Issue:

- *The UF College of Veterinary Medicine hosts Alumni*
- *Keep Food Safe in an Emergency*
- *FDA Releases Groundbreaking Food Safety Rules for Produce Farms and Imported Food*

With the holidays in full-swing, the State Agricultural Response Team wishes you a safe and healthy season.

***"The FDA is working with partners across the government and industry to prevent foodborne outbreaks. The [new] rules will help better protect consumers from foodborne illness and strengthen their confidence that modern preventive practices are in place, no matter where in the world the food is produced."***

— Michael R. Taylor  
FDA Deputy Commissioner for  
Foods and Veterinary Medicine

## Florida Department of Health Encourages Proper Food Safety this Holiday Season

Food traditionally plays a large role in holiday festivities. With gatherings right around the corner, the Florida Department of Health is encouraging Floridians to keep safe food preparation and handling practices in mind.

"As you make plans to enjoy Thanksgiving with family and friends, be sure to focus on preparations for healthy eating," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "Safe food handling and Fresh from Florida fruits and vegetables are essential ingredients for a healthy holiday."

The Florida Department of Health recommends the following for reducing the chances of food contamination.

- **Clean.** Wash hands, utensils and surfaces before and after food preparation, especially

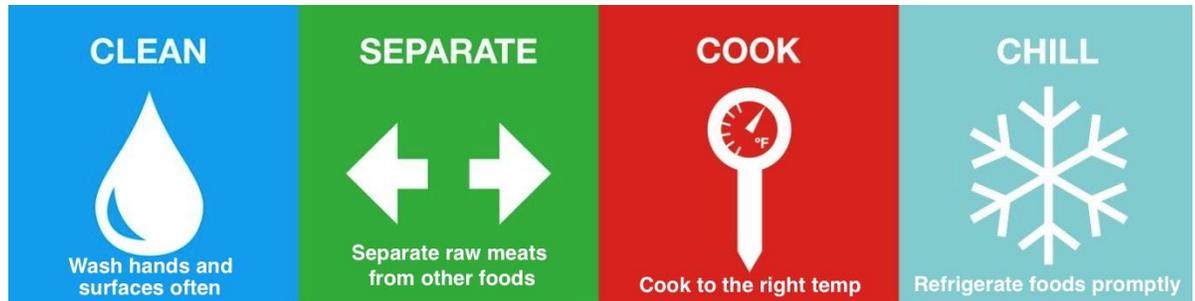
after preparing meat, poultry, eggs or seafood. Be sure to keep all countertops and work areas clean with hot, soapy water;

- **Cook** to Proper Temperature. Read the cooking directions on packaging before preparing. The safest thawing method is in the refrigerator at 40 degrees. Make sure the food is cooked at the proper internal temperature and check for doneness with a food thermometer;
- **Chill** – Refrigerate Properly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours. Make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer is set at 0 degrees; and

(See *Holiday Food Safety*, page 2.)



## Holiday Food Safety (continued)



**Separate** – Don't cross contaminate. Keep raw meats, poultry, eggs and seafood and their juices away from ready to eat food. It is recommended that leftovers be heated to 165 degrees.

For more information on how to keep your family safe from foodborne-illness this holiday season, visit <http://www.foodsafety.gov/>.

## Keep Food Safe in an Emergency

While the weather in Florida may not be frightful this holiday season, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has published information that may be beneficial any time of year. Find out how to keep food safe during and after an emergency, such as a flood, fire, national disaster, or the loss of power using the resources below:

[Emergency Preparedness](#) (USDA)

Provides materials, including videos and podcasts, on ensuring food safety during emergencies.  
[resources available in Spanish]

[Food and Water Safety During Hurricanes, Power Outages, and Floods](#) (FDA)

Proper safety precautions to keep food and water safe.  
[available in Spanish and French]

[Keep Food and Water Safe After a Disaster or Emergency](#) (CDC)

Includes tips for making water safe to drink and storing food.

[Food, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Information for Use Before and After a Disaster or Emergency](#) (CDC)

Chart: [Refrigerated Food:](#)

Is food in the refrigerator safe during a power outage?  
Use this chart to find out.

Chart: [Frozen Food:](#)

Is thawed or partially thawed food in the freezer safe to eat?

(See *Food Safety Before, During, and After a Power Outage* chart on page 3.)



# FOOD SAFETY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A POWER OUTAGE

Know how to keep food safe before during and after emergencies. Hurricanes, tornadoes, winter weather and other events may cause power outages. Follow these tips to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of foodborne illness.

## BEFORE PLAN AHEAD (IF YOU CAN) ...



Put appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer.



Freeze containers of water and gel packs to help keep food cold if the power goes out.

Keep freezer **0°F** or below

Refrigerator **40°F** or below



Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you do not need immediately.

Group foods together in the freezer to help food stay colder longer.

If you think power will be out for an extended period of time, buy **dry or block ice** to keep the fridge or freezer cold.



Store nonperishable foods on higher shelves to avoid flood water.

## DURING WHILE THE POWER IS OUT ...



Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed to maintain cold temperature.



### IF DOORS STAY CLOSED ...

... a full freezer will hold its temperature for **48 HOURS** if half-full **24 HOURS**

... a fridge will keep food safe for **4 HOURS**

## AFTER ONCE THE POWER IS BACK ON ...

### WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!



Check the temperature inside of your refrigerator and freezer. If they're still at safe temperatures, your food should be fine.



Never taste food to determine its safety!

### WHAT CAN I KEEP?

The following foods are safe if held above 40°F for more than 2 hours:



### WHAT SHOULD I THROW OUT?



REFREEZE FOOD THAT STILL CONTAINS ICE CRYSTALS OR IS AT 40°F OR BELOW.

## AFTER A FLOOD

### FOLLOW THESE STEPS AFTER A FLOOD:

- DO NOT EAT any food that may have touched flood water.
- DISCARD FOOD not in waterproof containers; screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped tops are not waterproof.
- DISCARD cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned foods
- DISCARD any damaged cans that have swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening.



For more food safety tips, go to [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov)

## FDA Releases Groundbreaking Food Safety Rules for Produce Farms and Imported Food

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced last month major steps to prevent foodborne illness by finalizing rules implementing the bipartisan Food Safety Modernization Act that, for the first time, establish enforceable safety standards for produce farms and make importers accountable for verifying that imported food meets U.S. safety standards. The Agency also issued a rule establishing a program for the accreditation of third-party certification bodies, also known as auditors, to conduct food safety audits of foreign food facilities. These final rules will help produce farmers and food importers take steps to prevent problems before they occur.

An estimated 48 million people (1 in 6 Americans) get sick each year from foodborne diseases, according to recent data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Approximately 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die each year. Over the past few years, high-profile outbreaks related to various foods, from spinach to peanut products, have underscored the need to make continuous improvements in food safety.

The new rules released today – referred to as the Produce Safety rule, the Foreign Supplier Verification Programs rule, and the Accredited Third-Party Certification rule – are key elements of the comprehensive food safety overhaul envisioned in the 2011 bipartisan FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). FSMA directs the FDA and food producers to prevent problems across the entire food system, rather than waiting to act until illness occurs. The new rules formalize industry accountability and best practices for food importers and the produce community.

“The recent multistate outbreak of Salmonella in imported cucumbers that has killed four Americans, hospitalized 157 and sickened hundreds more, is exactly the kind of outbreak these rules can help prevent,” said Michael R. Taylor,

FDA deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine.

“The FDA is working with partners across the government and industry to prevent foodborne outbreaks. The rules will help better protect consumers from foodborne illness and strengthen their confidence that modern preventive practices are in place, no matter where in the world the food is produced.”



The [Produce Safety rule](#) establishes science-based standards for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding produce that are designed to work effectively for food safety across the wide diversity of produce farms. The standards in the final rule include requirements for water quality, employee health and hygiene, wild and domesticated animals, biological soil amendments of animal origin (such as compost and manure), and equipment, tools, and buildings. When followed, the standards are designed to help minimize the risk of serious illness or death from consumption of contaminated produce.

Public comments and input received during hundreds of farm visits, meetings and listening sessions have shaped the rule into one that will reduce the risk of harmful contamination while also allowing appropriate flexibility for farmers and producers.

(See *FDA Food Safety Rules*, page 7.)

## University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine Alumni Reception/North American Veterinary Conference Announced

The UF College of Veterinary Medicine is proud to announce their Alumni Reception on January 17, 2016, from 7pm – 8pm.

The college's annual alumni reception, held as part of the North American Veterinary Conference, will be held in Crystal Ballroom A at the Marriott World Center Hotel in Orlando.

For more information, visit the Alumni Events page on the Development and Alumni Affairs website.

The URL is:

<http://givingandalumni.vetmed.ufl.edu/events/>



## Secondary Pentobarbital Poisoning Poses a Treat to Protected Species and to Florida Veterinarians

As reported recently by the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, the US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission jointly sent a correspondence to Florida veterinarians which warned about the improper disposal of animal carcasses after euthanasia and its possible consequences.

The agencies revealed that in recent months, there had been an increase in reported secondary pentobarbital poisoning of federally protected wildlife, in particular, bald eagles and migratory birds at landfills in Florida.

Secondary poisoning occurs when an animal that was euthanized by pentobarbital injection is consumed by other animals. The drug is rapidly distributed throughout the euthanized animal's body, and it poses a threat to scavenging animals, as these animals, in ingesting the carcass, are ingesting the toxin and thereby suffering from its effects.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) provide for substantial fines and the possibility of imprisonment. Criminal penalties may run as high as \$250,000 per individual or \$500,000 per organization and up to five years in jail. Civil penalties can be as much as \$25,000 per violation under the ESA and up to \$5,000 per violation under the BGEPA.

A veterinarian or the owner of an animal can be held liable for secondary pentobarbital poisoning. The MBTA is a "strict liability" criminal statute, which means that a finding of intent is not required for criminal conviction.

The agencies warn that someone that "causes a bird to be harmed, even if that was not their specific intent, can be criminally liable under the MBTA."

Further, the "ESA and EPA apply a "strict liability" standard for civil cases and a "knowingly" or with "wanton disregard" for the consequences of actions to assign criminal liability under those statutes."

Read more at <https://fvma.org/secondary-pentobarbital-poisoning-poses-a-treat-to-protected-species-as-well-as-florida-veterinarians/>

## About the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM)

As seen on the center's logo, the mission statement for FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) reads: "Protecting Human and Animal Health." To achieve this broad mission, CVM:

- Makes sure an animal drug is safe and effective before approving it. The center approves animal drugs for companion (pet) animals, such as dogs, cats, and horses; and for food-producing animals, such as cattle, pigs, and chickens. If the drug is for a food-producing animal, before approving it, the center also makes sure that food products made from treated animals—meat, milk, and eggs—are safe for people to eat;
- Monitors the safety and effectiveness of animal drugs on the market;
- Makes sure food for animals—which includes animal feed, pet food, and pet treats—is safe, made under sanitary conditions, and properly labeled;
- Makes sure a food additive for use in food for animals is safe and effective before approving it;



- Conducts research that helps FDA ensure the safety of animal drugs, food for animals, and food products made from animals; and
- Helps make more animal drugs legally available for minor species, such as fish, hamsters, and parrots; and for minor (infrequent and limited) uses in a major species, such as cattle, turkeys, and dogs.

For more information, visit

<http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/CentersOffices/OfficeofFoods/CVM/default.htm>

### What CVM Regulates

- [Animal Drugs](#)
- [Animal Feed \(which includes pet food\)](#)
- [Veterinary Devices](#)

### What CVM Does Not Regulate (Common Misconceptions)

- CVM does not regulate the practice of veterinary medicine nor do we provide veterinary medical advice. For concerns regarding the health of your pet, please consult a veterinarian.
- CVM does not regulate vaccines for animals. Animal vaccines are regulated by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).
- FDA regulates some flea and tick products for animals while the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) regulates others. If a product is regulated by EPA, it will have an EPA Registration Number (sometimes written as "EPA Reg. No.") on the label. If a product is regulated by FDA, it will typically have the statement "Approved by FDA" followed by a six-digit New Animal Drug Application (NADA) or Abbreviated New Animal Drug Application (ANADA) number on the label. Please see [Safe Use of Flea and Tick Products in Pets](#).

## FDA Food Safety Rules (continued)

The FDA has also finalized a rule on [Accredited Third-Party Certification](#), which is part of FSMA's new food import safety system. This rule establishes a program for the accreditation of third-party certification bodies (auditors) to conduct food safety audits and to certify that foreign food facilities and food produced by such facilities meet applicable FDA food safety requirements.

To prevent potentially harmful food from reaching U.S. consumers, the FDA can require in specific circumstances that a food offered for import be accompanied by a certification from an accredited third-party certification body.

"The ultimate success of FSMA depends on full funding of the President's FY 2016 budget request," Taylor said. "This will help us train FDA and state food safety staff on the new system, fund our state partners to work with farmers on produce safety, provide technical assistance to small farms and food businesses, and successfully implement the new import system that U.S. consumers deserve and Congress envisioned."

The FDA has finalized five of the seven major rules that implement the core of FSMA. Today's historic rules build on the preventive controls rules the FDA finalized in September 2015, which mandate modern preventive practices in food processing and storage facilities. These rules work together to systematically strengthen the food safety system and better protect public health.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm472426.htm>

Please login and  
update your  
membership  
information online at:  
<http://flsart.org>

## 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](http://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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