THE SENTINEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM

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SART 2015 Planning Meeting

The seminar and workshop agenda for the 4th Florida SART Planning Meeting is being carefully crafted around the theme *SART – Turning Visions into Action*. Scheduled to begin at 1:00 pm on Monday, January 12, it will conclude by noon on Wednesday the 14th. The host hotel is the Embassy Suites, Lake Buena Vista South - 4955 Kyngs Heath Road, Kissimmee 34746.

One of the scheduled speakers for the 2015 SART Planning Meeting is FSU's David Merrick (see below). Another is John Williamson, Administrator, Bureau of Radiation control, Florida Dept. of Health, who will show some of the latest radiation monitors (photo at right) and also discuss "Radiological Training Opportunities."

John Williamson is stationed in Orlando where DOH operates a fully-equipped laboratory to conduct chemical and physical analyses of samples collected by the radiation control programs.

Merrick, David Merrick

Shaken, not stirred. FSU's David Merrick has been invited to present at the 2015 Florida SART Planning Meeting in January. Merrick (MS) is Director for the Center for Disaster Risk Policy (www.cdrp.net) and Deputy Director of the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program at FSU. His research and interest areas include social media and emergency management, disaster logistics, crisis mapping, terrorism and homeland security policy, and information technology and emergency management.

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Merrick developed, and now oversees, CDRP's Disaster Incident Research Team (DIRT), which deploys to the field and performs field research on disaster and emergency management *in situ*. This team consists of staff and students with research agendas.

David Merrick teaches in the Emergency Management & Homeland Security Program which is part of FSU's College of Social Sciences and Public Policy. Students in the EMHS Program may select classes covering a range of topics, from the core principles of Emergency Management to related areas in Public Health and Terrorism Studies. EMHS courses are also offered online.

Merrick currently teaches Foundations of Emergency Management, Disaster Systems and Emergency Management Planning and Policy, and routinely lectures on logistics, technology and cyber security in other EMHS courses. Check out his blog at http://em.fsu.edu/mura/index.cfm/about-us/faculty-staff/david-merrick/merricks-blog/.

Florida's Quiet Industry – Aquafarming

Aquaculture, simply defined as the cultivation of aquatic organisms, is Florida's most diverse agribusiness, says FDACS. Over 900 aqua-culturists produce the greatest variety of aquatic species of any state in the nation, including aquarium and food fish, mollusks, reptiles, crustaceans, corals and aquatic plants.

The USDA has reported U.S. aquaculture sales at $1.5 billion. With 530 Florida farms reporting $71 million in sales, Florida ranks 7th of the 47 states reporting. Current production, says the UF/IFAS Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory in Ruskin, includes more than 800 varieties of freshwater fish, 200 varieties of freshwater plants, and a growing number of marine fish, invertebrates, and live rock on about 200 certified farms.

Several trade associations support aquaculture in the Sunshine State. Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association (www.ftffa.com), now 50 years old with 172 regular and associate members, notes:

- In the Tampa Florida area, where the majority of Florida breeding farms are located, a farm can be from 5 to 100 acres, utilizing ground ponds due to their rich mineral content and artesian wells. In the winter the ponds are covered with plastic to retain heat.

- In the Miami Florida area, where there is the second largest concentration of fish farms in the state, a fish breeding farm is from 1 to 5 acres. Because of the coral rock ground base in the Miami area ground ponds are not feasible and breeding and growing out is done in above ground concrete vats.

With about 70 members, the Florida Aquaculture Association (www.flaa.org) was formed in 1983.

- Florida has a unique and diverse aquaculture industry which includes the culture of tropical ornamental fish, aquatic plants, clams, shrimp, alligators, tilapia, catfish, live rock and other assorted aquatic animals.
- In 2003, Florida aquaculture producers reported $95.5 million in farm-gate sales, of which 49.4 percent ($47.2 million) was the sale of tropical fish, 21.4 percent ($20.4 million) aquatic plants, and 13.6 percent ($13 million) clams and oysters (USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service 2004).

Florida's "Freeze line" runs roughly Southwest-Northeast across the central peninsula, from Tampa through Orlando to Daytona Beach.

Citrus Repository Opens in LaCrosse

A state-of-the-art FDACS facility to improve the health of Florida's endangered citrus industry, the Florida Citrus Repository, has opened in LaCrosse.

The Repository will expand the Citrus Germplasm Introduction Program, which provides a way to safely introduce healthy new citrus varieties. New varieties increase the strength of Florida's endangered citrus industry and allow Florida citrus to better compete in domestic and international markets.

"More than half of Florida's groves are infected with citrus greening, and citrus production is at a 30-year low," said Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam. "This new facility will help growers replant lost trees and support a comeback of our signature crop."

The 20,000 sq/ft Repository expects to introduce more than 20 new varieties each year. New varieties will match growers' and consumers' preferences for disease-tolerant, easy-to-peel and seedless citrus, following an approval process that includes testing for pests and diseases. New plants are raised under quarantine until they are safe to release. With the spread of citrus canker and citrus greening statewide, finding new varieties is imperative to maintaining Florida's $9 billion citrus industry, which directly supports 75,000 jobs.

The LaCrosse facility is opening four months after expansion of the state's Dundee Biological Control Laboratory, which is integral to Florida's fight against citrus greening. The Laboratory rears a beneficial insect, *Tamarixia radiata*, which attacks the Asian citrus psyllid – the vector of citrus greening – for release in Florida citrus groves.

New SART Planner is on the job

Following SART Planner Stephen Barineau's departure, ESF-17 ECO Joe Kight of FDACS, DPI searched for a replacement. Joe is pleased to announce that Leslie Stout has been hired in that position and is now on the job. She is available for questions about the scheduled 2015 Planning Meeting, the Fall SART Advisory Board Meeting (Tuesday, September 16) and other issues pertaining to SART and effective animal and agricultural response in Florida. Leslie is working on her MA in Urban & Regional Planning at FSU and hopes, one day in the future, to own a small farm. *Welcome Leslie*!

Under the Radar

Vet College Opens Equine Sports Performance Complex

The College of Veterinary Medicine at UF recently opened an equine sports performance complex to examine horses with subtle injuries. The primary goal of the complex is to treat horses before their injuries become irreversible. Adjacent to the Vet School's Large Animal Hospital on Southwest 16th Avenue, the arena has two functions: serve student learning needs and as a resource for horse owners who are seeking medical attention for their animals.

A special feature of the $600,000 performance complex is its two flooring surfaces: part asphalt and part a mixture of crumb-rubber and clay-sand developed especially for horses. The two surfaces are needed to evaluate a potentially injured horse.

Florida SARC Schedules Courses

Small Animal Emergency Sheltering – Awareness Level
The Florida State Animal Response Coalition is teaching this course to promote effective response for animals during disasters. Registration is required, but due to grants from Florida Division of Emergency Management and U.S. Department of Homeland Security, no fee is charged for attendance. This course is certified by FDEM as course code FL-003-RESP.

- Date & Time: Sunday, August 10, 8:00 am – 6:00 pm
- Location: American Red Cross Capital Area Chapter
- 1115 Easterwood Drive, Tallahassee

Florida SARC *Train the Trainer* Workshop
If you have been an assistant trainer or administrative support person at a SARC class or if you have taken the SARC Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering course and thought, "I would love to help teach this course," here is your opportunity, says Florida SARC Director of Training Consie von Gontard.
SARC will hold a *Train the Trainer* class for those who would like to learn to be a Lead Instructor or to assist in teaching this class. Instructors and trained responders are needed in every region of Florida. [Illustrating the interest in such a class, registration has filled rapidly. SARC is accepting registration for a standby list.]

- Date & Time: Saturday, August 9 (9:00 am to 5:00 pm) to Sunday,
- August 10 (9:00 am to 3:00 pm)
- Location: Cat Depot, 2542 17th Street, Sarasota

For information and registration go to http://www.flsarc.org/Training.html or contact Melissa Forberg training@flsarc.org (352) 658-1224, Pam Burns pamburnssarc@gmail.com, Andy Bass training@flsarc.org or Consie Von Gontard training@flsarc.org.

NCFPD Creates Training Framework

Dr. Kendra Stauffer, DVM, now on station as a Veterinary Medical Officer with the U.S. CDC in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia, recently forwarded a pdf from the U.S. National Center for Food Protection and Defense of DHS. Not longer than one page, it begins "The United States food and agriculture systems are vulnerable." It adds, the Center "is creating a comprehensive training framework for animal agriculture emergency responders." The pdf is linked here. [Thank you Dr. Stauffer. Be safe.]

FWC: Thoughts on Invasive Species

We've often discussed Florida's over-abundance of non-native pests – more than 500 at latest FWC count – although one would be too many. The Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) says non-natives can spread rapidly. The Cuban tree frog, for instance, was introduced in 1931 via packing materials. It invaded Florida's natural areas to prey on native tree frogs and, by the '70s, was common throughout most of the state.

On the other hand, it might take years for factors to fall into place to allow a species to expand its range and cause ecological problems. For example, green iguanas have resided in Florida since the '60s, only becoming a problem after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Although green iguanas have not had ecological impacts, this Latin Lizard damages landscape plants in Miami-Dade and Broward. On the west coast, black spinytail iguanas are now an abundant nuisance.

The Green Iguana in Florida – invasive but non-threatening?

Invasive's do not cause problems equally in all areas. The nutria, a large South American rodent, lives in warm, marshy areas. It's abundant in the lowlands of Louisiana and Mississippi, but Florida populations have not been very successful even though Florida has similar habitats to other Gulf Coast states. *On the other hand, notes the Sentinel editor, Florida is home to millions of hungry alligators!* (http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats)

South Florida Bee College

	The on-going crisis affecting honey bees – a complex of problems lumped under the term "colony collapse disorder" – world-wide has promoted research and education into the pollinator that 7 billion humans cannot live without. UF's IFAS has set Friday and Saturday, August 15-16 for its 2nd annual South Florida Bee College. The event will take place at UF's Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center, 3205 College Ave., Davie, FL 33314. Registration (attendees must register online) is now open at http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/honeybee/extension/SFbee_college.shtml.
The Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab at UF writes, "the two-day event offers classes for beekeepers of all ages and experience levels, gardeners, naturalists, county agents and anyone else interested in honey bees. You do not have to keep bees to attend; the only prerequisite is your interest in the subject! Even if you have attended the UF Bee College before, we are sure that you will find that the SFBC will be just as fulfilling. The course lineup has topics to suit your practical needs as well as satisfy your growing curiosity on a diversity of honey bee related subjects. We have a suggested beginner track lineup for novices, though students at the SFBC may attend any course regardless of expertise." Lunch and snacks are included as is a catered banquet no Friday evening.	

Agriculture Emergencies: A Primer for First Responders

The article "Agriculture Emergencies: A Primer for First Responders" is available online at http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2995339/.

Prepared by Johnnie Gilpen, Hélène Carabin, James Regens and Ray Burden it covers much of the ground that Florida SART responders already understand, but puts the knowledge in a wider context (at least as of June 2009). They write, "In order to properly respond to future agriculture emergencies, emergency response professionals need to understand the nature and implications of the event as well as their roles and responsibilities, but the availability of educational and training opportunities is limited.

"The results of our review are consistent with the hypothesis that more resources, education, and training opportunities should be available to responders as well as to producers, importers and shippers, international

travelers, and the general public. Increased education and training will raise awareness among these groups of the relationship between animal and human health."

Wine from Florida – A Sunshine State Agricultural Highlight

Did you know there are currently 24 independently owned Certified Farm Wineries (and 15 additional non-certified wineries) registered with FDACS in the state of Florida? In 2012, Florida produced nearly 2 million gallons of wine – a significant amount, but tiny compared to California's output of 668 million gallons.

Many Sunshine State wineries rely on indigenous muscadine vines, hybrid bunch grapes or exotic and citrus fruit varieties to produce table, sparkling and dessert wines, from dry white and red to sweet and fruity. Most Florida wineries offer wine tasting, interesting winery tours and special events, often with live music to enhance a local day trip or weekend visit. http://www.tryfloridawine.com/ The Florida Grape Growers Association http://www.fgga.org/ was established in 1923.

Unlike many farms and dairies, Florida wineries generally encourage visitors:

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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