



THE SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM



FACA Holds their 2015 Educational Conference with this image from their meeting program.

FACA Uncovers the Tools for Success

The Florida Animal Control Association (FACA) held their 2015 Educational Conference from February 27th through March 1st at the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort in Orlando.

Surrounding the conference theme of "Uncovering the Tools for Success," the weekend-long event held special breakout sessions that included dog fighting and dangerous dog investigations, shelter safety-net programs, proactive community animal control, and public/private partnerships to save lives.

Attendees were also able to hear about legislative updates and a special presentation on building community disaster resiliency through the presentation, *A Brief History of Animals in Disaster & How the Local Shelter Can Help*.

Florida SART Planner, **Leslie Stout**, attended the conference and staffed the booth for the Florida

State Agricultural Response Team. Ms. Stout said, "The conference went great, and there were a lot of interesting vendors who had their wares there for you to look at [in addition to there being] a lot of great information."

Ms. Stout said there were as many as 70 conference attendees that interacted with her about SART, nearly half already knowing about SART and its mission or had taken SART advertised classes. Other attendees "were interested and most had ideas of how we could help their county in the future," said Stout.

Additional information about the FACA conference may be found online at <http://floridaanimalcontrol.org> or on their Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Florida-Animal-Control-Association/553466908016966?ref=br_rs

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- *SART Spotlight: Dr. Kendra Stauffer shares her experiences from the country of Georgia*
- *Actor Kevin Bacon Teams with Egg Industry*

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—Leslie Stout
SART Planner, Florida
Department of Agriculture and
Consumer Services





Officials Respond to Avian Influenza

The largest U.S. outbreak of avian influenza has recently turned up in turkey flocks in Missouri, Arkansas, and Minnesota. The strain, H5N2, has resulted in fears of further spreading, and has led to a tightening of security procedures by poultry producers, and the selective halting of poultry imports from Minnesota to some 40 countries. (Minnesota is the nation's largest turkey producer, home to several hundred farmers who raise the birds.)

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the risk to people from these HPAI H5 infections in wild birds, backyard flocks and commercial poultry, to be low. Testing has been developed (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/severe-potential.htm>) and influenza antiviral prophylaxis (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/guidance-exposed-persons.htm>) guidance released for persons exposed to these birds. Until more is known about these viruses, the CDC is taking a cautious approach, and recommendations are largely consistent with guidance for influenza viruses associated with severe disease in humans. The CDC says that "Clinicians and public health workers should consider the possibility of infection with HPAI H5 viruses in patients with [Influenza-like illness] who have had recent contact with sick or dead birds, especially in areas where these viruses have been identified."

Read more at:

- <http://agri-pulse.com/Avian-influenza-spreads-to-Mississippi-flyway-03052015.asp>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6404a9.htm>
- <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/health/295356371.html>

SART Spotlight: Where in the World is Kendra Stauffer?

Dr. Kendra Stauffer, alumnus of the SART Steering Committee, and current One Health Program Lead for the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, talks with *The Sentinel* on her current work and whereabouts.

The Sentinel: Dr. Stauffer, you're currently in Tbilisi, Georgia (situated between southwestern Russia and northeastern Turkey). Can you tell us what you're up to? How did you end up there?

Dr. Stauffer: With my work in Georgia, I'm leveraging networks and resources to have a cross disciplinary approach and cross agency approach to any One Health issue. Most of these are zoonotic diseases, and because my funding for the position comes through the U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), most of my focus is on dangerous pathogens like Brucellosis, Anthrax and CCHF (Crimean congo hemorrhagic fever). Rabies is also a top priority disease here.

I wound up in Georgia due to opportunity and qualifications. I had been looking for an epidemiology field position where I could use my skills both as a veterinarian and an epidemiologist. When this position opened, they wanted not only a medical epidemiologist but also someone that had experience in emergency management and food safety and security, which—because of my previous experience with USDA APHIS—was perfect for me.

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Dr. Kendra Stauffer taking a quick break while exploring the mud volcanoes of Azerbaijan.

SART Spotlight: Dr. Stauffer (Continued)

The Sentinel: Tbilisi is a bit of a departure from Gainesville, Florida. What's it like to live so far away from the U.S.?

Dr. Stauffer: I love working in Georgia and I have met some truly wonderfully intelligent and motivated young scientists and medical professionals. The country is beautiful and it is situated in an area that allows easy travel to Europe and Asia. The challenges of the position are not speaking the language and the cultural differences.

Georgia is also heavily funded by outside donors (numerous countries have projects/programs here) which create short-term benefits, but long-term capacity building is a challenge with the donor-donee relationship. Integration and coordination with all of the different donors and contractors here is quite a challenge to building long term sustainability within the government of Georgia.

Below: Dr. Stauffer and some citizens of Mamekonnedu, Liberia while working the response to Ebola.



The Sentinel: Despite the challenges, what is the impact of the work you're doing?

Dr. Stauffer: The short term impact is increasing knowledge and teaching the human, animal, and environmental sides how to do joint outbreak investigations. The long term is building capacity in disease surveillance, reporting, and then translating that into Public Health initiatives either through education/communication, rule-making, or policy. And on the food safety side of things, if Georgia can meet European Union standards, then they can increase trade with the EU, which is hugely economically valuable for the Georgian people.

When it comes to impacts for the United States, biosecurity protection for U.S. agriculture and security against dangerous pathogens is a mission of DTRA. We're working to control or eliminate zoonotic and infectious diseases before they make it to the States. We're also training a cadre of people in their native country to be able to prevent, detect, respond, and recover from a disease outbreak. This increase in the public health capacity of Georgia and other developing countries help protect and defend the U.S.

Moreover, by providing education and training for Georgians, they can help their own people to increase their social economic status and hopefully, every generation does better than the one before.

The Sentinel: I understand you were called to Liberia to help support the Ebola response. Can you tell us about that? How did the citizens treat you?

(Continued SART Spotlight: Dr. Stauffer, page 5.)



SART Spotlight: Dr. Stauffer (Continued)

Dr. Stauffer (continued): The locals were wonderful! They gave me my own Lofa County name – *Sonnie*, which I find just amazing since I had only known them for 2 months. If you love and treat people well, they will see that you truly care about them and show that in return. I had such a great working experience there and never felt any negativity or threat to me.

The Sentinel: Now that you're back in Georgia, what surprises you the most about living there?

Dr. Stauffer: It is startling to be in a country where there is so little wildlife—especially after living in Florida. I have been told that the wildlife was either killed or eaten (especially during the hard years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, or was killed because people saw wildlife as competition for their livestock). So, you have a country about the size of South Carolina and you can travel all over it and see very little wildlife, especially larger land mammals.

The good is that I see hope and motivation in the young people. The generations under 35 years of age are really wanting to build a better country for their people, and they have such hope and drive to make it happen.

The Sentinel: Florida certainly misses you. Any chance you'll make it back?

Dr. Stauffer: I would love to, but it's just about finding the right federal position to match my background and skillset. Florida has been home to me for 8 years of my life, and I love it there. We'll just have to see what the future holds.

The Sentinel: Any other cool stories you want to share with the Florida SART readership?

Dr. Stauffer: Oh, yes! Recently, I did a talk via Skype with the public health club at the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine. In retrospect, my work there turned out to be some of the greatest moments of my life; and it's an amazing feeling to serve as a mentor and help students find their ways on their own career paths.

Coming up, I have a talk on my experiences in Liberia for the CDC Ebola response. I'm also chairing sessions in Zagreb, Croatia at the CBRNe Science and Consequence Management (CSCM) Congress on the Global Health Security Agenda.

When I look back on my career, I just find it amazing that I was the first ever to graduate from college in my family—let alone attend a professional school—and now I am traveling the world as a disease outbreak investigator and hopefully helping countries to improve the lives of their people through better public health.

The Sentinel: Thanks, Kendra, for your time. It's remarkable to hear of the work that you're doing in support of the nation. Best of luck, and keep in touch!

Florida Combats Giant Snails, Finds Success

Scientists consider the giant African land snail (GALS) to be one of the most damaging snails in the world. The snails are known to consume at least 500 different types of plants, and can pose a serious health risk to humans; this according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

More than \$7 million of the 2014 Farm Bill has been allocated to the State of Florida to help fight certain plant and pest diseases, much of it to help combat the GALS. The USDA [announced the spending](#) on March 18th. The snails, originally from East Africa, can grow to 8 inches, and live as long as nine years.

According to FDACS, which plays a major role in attacking the snails, the creatures were spotted in Miami-Dade County in 2011, the first evidence of this current infestation. Since then, Florida officials have worked to capture and contain them, keeping a tally of kills. So far, more than 156,000 snails have been depopulated.



Read more at:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2015/03/23/260656/as-funding-to-combat-invasive.html>



Mexican Stray Animals Continue to Pose a Disease Threat along the Rio Grande

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has reported a Mexican stray donkey has tested positive for Glanders. Glanders is a highly contagious, bacterial disease of the equine family. The disease is characterized by the development of ulcerating growths that are most commonly found in the upper respiratory tract, lungs, and skin. Infections are usually fatal. Humans and other animals are also susceptible.

A USDA mounted quarantine enforcement inspector recently apprehended five Mexican stray donkeys along the Mexico-Texas border north of Presidio. The donkeys were transported to the USDA Presidio holding pens where they were isolated from contact with other animals. One of the five donkeys subsequently tested positive for the disease.

"It is imperative that we remain vigilant in protecting our borders from disease intrusions such as Glanders," stated Dr. Dee Ellis, State Veterinarian and TAHC Executive Director. "Mexican strays continue to pose a huge threat to Texas livestock and to our animal agriculture industry."

Read more at:

http://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/pr/2015/2015-03-27_GlandersNewsRelease.pdf

Egg Industry Orders a Side of Kevin Bacon

Actor Kevin Bacon is set to star in an upcoming egg industry campaign, this according to Candice Choi of the Associated Press (AP).

Launching both an online and print campaign, the American Egg Board says the advertisements will feature the "Footloose" actor and puns using his last name. The group says this is the first time they have used a Hollywood celebrity for work of this nature.

According to the AP, "The online spots feature a woman making eggs for breakfast, when Bacon appears lying suggestively on the counter behind her. At one point, she leans in to sniff the actor and says she loves the smell of bacon, when her husband walks in."

Once considered a symbol of cholesterol, new research and a growing protein craze have helped grow the industry in recent years.

Read more at: <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/kevin-bacon-eggs-actor-stars-egg-industry-campaign-29580810>



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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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