



# THE SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM



## DON'T SMUGGLE ME... I COULD BE SICK

A Customs and Border (CBP) poster encourages readers to call 1-800-BE ALERT to report bird smuggling or undeclared bird products brought into the United States.

### USDA Avian Influenza Update

Since December 2014, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confirmed several cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 in the Pacific, Central, and Mississippi flyways (or migratory bird paths). The disease has been found in wild birds, as well as in a few backyard and commercial poultry flocks.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the risk to people from these HPAI H5 infections to be low. No human cases of these HPAI H5 viruses have been detected in the United States, Canada, or internationally.

USDA has both an international and a domestic role in controlling the spread of avian influenza (AI) and reducing its effects on both agriculture and

public health. USDA is aware of and prepared for the emergence of new types of AI virus. The nature of the influenza virus is such that mutations occur easily. Therefore, new strains can occur naturally at any time within avian hosts. The concern is whether the changes would impart the potential to cause severe disease or increase transmissibility between birds or mammals.

Regardless of these changes, the USDA plans that are currently in place, which include surveillance, reporting, biosecurity, movement control, vaccination and depopulation, can be adjusted and applied to effectively control any new virus outbreak.

(See *Avian Influenza*, page 2.)

### Special Features of this Issue:

- *NVRT Improves the Federal Veterinary Disaster Response*
- *"Fresh From Florida" Products in Record Numbers*
- *SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available in Florida*

***"When the Secretary of Agriculture issues a disaster declaration to help farmers recover from damages and losses to crops, the Small Business Administration issues a declaration to eligible entities affected by the same disaster."***

— Frank Skaggs,  
Director of SBA's Field Operations  
Center East



## Avian Influenza (continued)

Total U.S. poultry production is valued at nearly \$32 billion annually. A major outbreak of HPAI would be costly to the poultry industry, consumers, and taxpayers and could harm backyard flocks as well. To protect the U.S. poultry population, USDA quarantines and tests live birds imported into the United States to ensure that they do not have any foreign animal diseases such as HPAI. USDA also maintains trade restrictions on poultry and poultry products from countries and/or regions where HPAI has been detected in commercial or traditionally raised poultry.

Surveillance is another important part of USDA's efforts to protect the health of U.S. flocks. USDA monitors for illegally smuggled poultry and poultry products through an anti-smuggling program in coordination with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection.

In addition, USDA works with a nationwide network of Federal and State partners, university personnel, USDA accredited veterinarians, and industry members to monitor for HPAI in key areas of the country's bird population. These areas include live bird markets, commercial flocks, backyard flocks, and migratory birds.



## Six simple steps can help keep your birds—and those of your neighbors—free of disease.

**1. Keep your distance.** Restrict access to your property and your birds. If visitors have birds of their own, do not let them near your birds. Your birds should not have contact with wild birds and migratory waterfowl because they can carry germs and diseases.

**2. Keep it clean.** Wash your hands thoroughly before and after working with your birds. Wear clean clothes and scrub your shoes with disinfectant. Clean and disinfect equipment, including cages and tools, that comes in contact with your birds or their droppings. Remove manure before disinfecting equipment. Properly dispose of dead birds.

**3. Don't haul disease home.** Buy birds from reputable sources so you know you're getting healthy birds. Keep new birds separate from the rest of your flock for at least 30 days. If your birds have been to a fair or exhibition, keep them separated from your flock for 2 weeks after the event.

**4. Don't borrow disease from your neighbors.**

Do not share garden equipment or poultry supplies with your neighbors or other bird owners. If you do bring these items home, clean and disinfect them before they reach your property.

**5. Know the warning signs.** Early detection can help prevent the spread of disease. While it may be hard to tell if your bird has AI, when you check your birds frequently, you may be able to tell if something is wrong.

**6. Report sick birds.** Don't wait. If your birds are sick or dying, call your local cooperative extension office, your veterinarian, or the State Veterinarian or State animal/poultry diagnostic laboratory. Or call USDA toll free at 1-866-536-7593, and we'll put you in touch with a local contact who can help you

## Improving the Federal Veterinary Disaster Response for State, Local Partners

Becoming more nimble in emergency response and having a relationship with your customers ahead of the event: those were the goals of a recent restructuring of the National Veterinary Response Teams (NVRT) that provide medical care for working and companion animals when state and local resources are overwhelmed in disasters.

"Whenever our state and local partners need assistance, we want to ensure we can provide the appropriate response for their needs in the most efficient and flexible manner," said Dr. Ty Vannieuwenhoven, Chief Veterinary Officer for HHS' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), Office of Emergency Management in which the National Disaster Medical System and its NVRT are housed. "We also want the NVRT's customers to know them personally before they are needed."

"To serve our state and local customers' needs and our veterinary providers better, we wanted a re-envisioned approach to the federal veterinary response whether we're providing support after disasters or during high-profile public events," he explained.

The new approach streamlines the team structure and could put providers in place faster after disasters. Before the restructuring, the nation had five 30-member teams dispersed across the country.

The new structure features a national team consisting of smaller teams of veterinarians and veterinary technicians aligned to the 10 geographic national emergency management regions. The national NVRT is led by Dr. Robin Brennen Stupack.

The structure includes an NVRT veterinarian who supports the ASPR regional coordination staff by representing the NVRT program for veterinary medical assessment, planning, and response with its jurisdictions within that region. "This effort aligns the NVRT members' skills into units that can address specific pre-identified areas of requirement in disasters," Vannieuwenhoven said.

(See *NVRT*, page 5.)

## SART Advisory Board Meeting, September 16, 2015



Mark your calendars! The next SART Advisory Board meeting is set for September 16, 2015 in the Ocala, Florida area.

As the meeting approaches, additional details will be posted online at [www.flsart.org](http://www.flsart.org).

## Coming Soon – Operations Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Course

Submitted by Consie von Gontard

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) is proud to announce that the Operations Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering course received approval from The Florida Division of Emergency Management this past spring. The team will be presenting the first course to Florida SARC Trainers on August 22nd - 23rd in preparation to roll out the course throughout Florida.

This course expands on the Awareness Level by instructing our volunteers in areas like biosecurity in an emergency shelter, emergency Shelter design, duties/management of key emergency shelter sections such as Animal Intake, Kennel/Pod Section, Reunification Section, Volunteer Resource Section, Isolation Kennel Section and more. Team Leadership/Management, Team building are also key components to this course.

The instructors will focus on the key positions, sections, and responsibilities for mid-level management responsible for the day to day management of operations in an emergency animal shelter.

Students must complete SARC's Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering course before continuing on to the Operations Level. The team encourages anyone wishing to host our courses to contact Andy Bass, [andyb@fhsarc.org](mailto:andyb@fhsarc.org).

For more information about the courses, and to register, please visit: <http://fhsarc.org/Training.html>



## MIAMI Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Class

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition and Miami-Dade Emergency Management would like to offer you an opportunity to take our Awareness Level Small Animal Sheltering class!

When disaster strikes, our team of trained volunteer responders will be there to shelter and protect Florida's companion animals.

This Awareness Level class will give you the knowledge you need to work in an emergency animal shelter. This class will give you the expertise and practical experience required to become a professional disaster animal responder. The Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering class is certified by the Florida Department of Emergency Management (course code FL-003-RESP) and is a requirement to respond in Florida to help companion animals during a disaster.

**Saturday September 26, 2015 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM EDT**

**Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Training and Safety Division**

**9300 NW 41 Street**

**Doral, FL 33178**

For more information or to register, please visit <http://flsarc.org/Training.html>

## NVRT (continued)

The NVRT has numerous response capabilities in its toolkit. The teams can assess veterinary medical needs of the community following disasters; provide treatment for injured or ill small and large animals after disasters, supply veterinary care for sheltered, working or research animals and conduct veterinary health screening at airports or other points of embarkation and debarkation.

The importance of providing quality veterinary care during disasters has been long understood. What is today known as the NVRT began following Hurricane Andrew in 1992 with a vision shared by professionals in the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Veterinary Medical Foundation and was incorporated into the federal emergency response the following year.

Today, although several federal agencies support animals affected by disasters, under the federal Emergency Support Function 8, NVRT is the primary federal resource for treating ill or injured pets, service animals, working animals, laboratory animals, and livestock impacted by disasters.

It aligns this support with the non-governmental organizations that provide many of the other needed services for animals post-disaster most of which are organized under the National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition (NARSC).

Most recently, the veterinary teams were part of the federal response to Hurricane Sandy in 2012, providing care in the damaged areas of Long Island and to the animals in the large disaster shelter in Brooklyn. NVRT members also provide care and treatment for working animals at special events, including the Fourth of July celebration and other events in Washington, D.C and the political conventions in 2012.

States and local jurisdictions can learn more on requesting NVRT assistance by contacting ASPR Regional Emergency Coordinators located in each region. Their contact information is available online at:

<http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/responders/rec/Pages/contacts.aspx>

To learn more about the National Disaster Medical System's National Veterinary Response Team, visit:

<http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/responders/ndms/teams/Pages/nvrt.aspx>

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## SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available in Florida Following Secretary of Agriculture Disaster Declaration

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced last month that federal economic injury disaster loans are available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of all sizes located in Florida as a result of the drought beginning July 7, 2015 and continuing.

The disaster declaration includes the following counties: Broward, Collier, Hendry, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach in Florida.

"When the Secretary of Agriculture issues a disaster declaration to help farmers recover from damages and losses to crops, the Small Business Administration issues a declaration to eligible entities affected by the same disaster," said Frank Skaggs, director of SBA's Field Operations Center East in Atlanta.

Under this declaration, the SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program is available to eligible farm-related and nonfarm-related entities that suffered financial losses as a direct result of this disaster. With the exception of aquaculture enterprises, SBA cannot provide disaster loans to agricultural producers, farmers or ranchers. However, nurseries are eligible to apply for economic injury disaster loans for losses caused by drought conditions.

The loan amount can be up to \$2 million with interest rates of 2.625 percent for private non-profit organizations of all sizes and 4 percent for small businesses, with terms up to 30 years. The SBA determines eligibility based on the size of the applicant, type of activity and its financial resources. Loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition. These working capital loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other bills that could have been paid had the disaster not occurred. The loans are not intended to replace lost sales or profits.

For more information, visit the SBA's website at: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>



## SART Time Machine – Hurricane Katrina, 2005

Ten years ago this month, Hurricane Katrina became the eleventh named storm and fifth hurricane of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. It was the costliest natural disaster, as well as one of the five deadliest hurricanes, in the history of the United States. The storm is currently ranked as the third most intense United States landfalling tropical cyclone, behind only the 1935 Labor Day hurricane and Hurricane Camille in 1969. Overall, at least 1,833 people died in the hurricane and subsequent floods, making it the deadliest United States hurricane since the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane.

Florida SART team members played a significant role in the recovery efforts, including work in Mississippi. You may view the full photo gallery at <http://flsart.org/photogallery/katrina/index.jsp>



## "Fresh From Florida" Products in Record Number of Stores Worldwide

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam announced last month that the "Fresh From Florida" retail program, which markets Florida agricultural products, has reached a new record of 12,357 retail stores in 26 countries carrying "Fresh From Florida" products. More than 4,000 of the participating retailers are outside of the United States. In 2014, Florida agricultural exports totaled \$4.2 billion.

"Florida's hardworking farmers, growers, ranchers and fishermen produce some of the highest quality products in the world," Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam said. "Today those products are being promoted through the 'Fresh From Florida' brand in 12,357 retail locations in 26 countries around the world."

Top international partners by store count:

- Canada – 1,824 stores
- Scandinavia – 724 stores
- South Korea – 507 stores
- United Kingdom – 320 Stores
- Japan – 276 stores

The 12,357 retail locations promote more than 40 different types of fresh fruits, vegetables, citrus and other products. From blueberries in Japan to grapefruit in Denmark and dozens of commodities in Canada and the U.S., the program strives to help Florida's more than 47,000 farmers sell their products. Over the lifetime of the program, now finishing its sixteenth year, this is the highest number of store outlets ever included.

The retail campaign includes three major promotional areas: Florida and the Southeastern U.S., the Northeastern and Midwestern states, and all other areas outside of the continental U.S.

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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