THE SENTINEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM

The Oriental fruit fly, one of the world's most serious exotic fruit flies, is able to infest many different kinds of commodities, attacking over 430 different fruits, vegetables and nuts.

Agricultural Emergency Declared for Oriental Fruit Fly Infestation

On September 15th, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam declared a state of agricultural emergency due to the Oriental Fruit Fly infestation in Miami-Dade County.

The Oriental Fruit Fly is considered one of the most serious of the world's fruit fly pests due to its potential economic harm. It attacks more than 430 different fruits, vegetables and nuts, including: avocado, mango, mamey, loquat, lychee, longon, dragon fruit, guava, papaya, sapodilla, banana and annona. The fruit flies lay their eggs in host fruits and vegetables.

Since the first detection of the Oriental Fruit Fly on Aug. 26, 2015 in Miami-Dade County, a total of 158 flies have been detected, specifically in the Redland area (156), Kendall (1) and Miami (1).

"The Oriental Fruit Fly is one of the world's most destructive pests and poses a significant threat to Florida's $123 billion agriculture industry and the two million jobs it supports. Miami-Dade County's agriculture industry is a $1.6 billion industry, and we will use every weapon in our arsenal that's necessary to eradicate this pest and protect Florida agriculture and our economy," stated Commissioner Putnam.

(See Fruit Fly, page 2.)

Special Features of this Issue:

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- *USDA Offers Help to Fire-Affected Farmers and Ranchers*
- *NABC) is Helping FEMA Provide Animal Disease Response Training*

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— Adam Putnam
Commissioner
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Fruit Fly (continued)

The infestation threatens the area's ability to produce the fruit and vegetables the nation has grown to rely on during the winter months, the region's overall economic health and the thousands of jobs that rely on this industry. Miami-Dade County is the state's leader in the production of tropical vegetables, tropical fruit and ornamental nurseries, and overall agricultural production generates more than $1.6 billion in annual economic impact and supports more than 11,000 jobs.

The map above show the range of the Bactrocera dorsalis, aka Oriental Fruit Fly.

The department, along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has been aggressively working to eradicate this pest. Efforts include:

- Assisting industry with the requirements of their compliance agreements;
- Quarantining an 85-square-mile area around the core areas where detections have been made in order to prevent the spread of the fly;
- Treating a 1.5-square-mile area around each fly detection. This treatment, which is conducted by the department, consists of attracting male flies to bait which consists of an attractant, an insecticide, and a thickening agent. The flies are killed when they feed on the bait. The bait mixture is applied weekly to upper portions of telephone and utility poles. The application will continue for at least two life cycles of the fly after each find, which is approximately 60 days;
- Removal of fruit from host trees — while leaving the trees — within 200 meters of a larval or mature female fruit fly find; and
- Ground spraying with GF120, a pesticide certified for use in organic farming. Spinosad (GF-120 NF NaturalyteTM Fruit Fly Bait) is an insecticide that is extracted from the naturally occurring soil microbe, *Saccharopolyspora spinosa*. Spinosad is in common use by organic growers and was granted a "Green Chemistry" award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which classifies it as "reduced risk" because of its good environmental profile.

It is important to note that all appropriate protocols are in place and that the fruits and vegetables introduced into the marketplace from this area are certified for movement and safe for consumption by the public.

Additional information may be found at: http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Pests-Diseases/Exotic-Fruit-Flies/Oriental-Fruit-Fly-Information

USDA Offers Help to Fire-Affected Farmers and Ranchers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is spreading the word farmers and ranchers affected by the recent wildfires in Alaska, California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington State will have access to programs to assist with their recovery efforts.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist farmers and ranchers who lost livestock, grazing land, fences or eligible trees, bushes and vines as a result of a natural disaster. FSA administers a suite of safety-net programs to help producers recover from eligible losses, including the Livestock Indemnity Program, the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program, and the Tree Assistance Program.

In addition, the FSA Emergency Conservation Program provides funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Producers located in counties that received a primary or contiguous disaster designation are eligible for low-interest emergency loans to help them recover from production and physical losses. Compensation is also available to producers who purchased coverage through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, which protects non-insurable crops against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses or prevented planting.

"Wildfires have caused devastating losses for many farmers and ranchers," said FSA Administrator Val Dolcini. "Over the past several years, wildfires have increased in severity, intensity and cost as the fire season has grown longer, and drought and increased temperatures contribute to dangerous conditions. Natural disasters such as wildfires are unavoidable, but USDA has strong safety-net programs to help producers get back on their feet."

"After natural disasters such as wildfires, it is critical that farmers, ranchers and forestland owners have financial and technical resources available to protect their natural resources and operations," said NRCS Chief Jason Weller. "Conservation practices protect the land and aid recovery, but can build the natural resource base and may help mitigate loss in future events."

When wildfires destroy or severely damage residential property, Rural Development (RD) can assist with providing priority hardship application processing for single family housing. Under a disaster designation, RD can issue a priority letter for next available multi-family housing units. RD also provides low-interest loans to community facilities, water environmental programs, businesses and cooperatives and to rural utilities.

For the first time in its 110-year history, the Forest Service, part of USDA, is spending more than 50 percent of its budget to suppress the nation's wildfires.

Today, fire seasons are 78 days longer than in the 1970s. Since 2000, at least 10 states have had their largest fires on record. This year, there have been more than 46,000 fires. Increasing development near forest boundaries also drives up costs, as more than 46 million homes and more than 70,000 communities are at risk from wildfire in the United States.

For more information, please visit: http://tinyurl.com/ns8ctnm

Enrollment Open: Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Class

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition has upcoming opportunities for their *Awareness Level Small Animal Sheltering class.*

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

This Awareness Level class gives students the knowledge necessary to work in an emergency animal shelter. This class provides 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 and is required to respond in Florida to help companion animals during a disaster.

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 Diseases, and Personal Safety.

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

October 25th Course - Sarasota

When: Sunday October 25, 2015 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Where: Humane Society of Sarasota County Education Center, 2331 15th Street, Sarasota, FL 34237

November 8th Course - Tampa

When: Sunday November 8, 2015 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Where: Hillsborough County Emergency Operations Center, 2711 E Hanna Avenue, Tampa, FL 33610

November 14th Course – Panama City

When: Saturday November 14, 2015 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM CST
Where: Bay County Emergency Operations Center, 700 Highway 2300, Panama City, FL 32409

Fresh from Florida products Sell More Than $4.1 Billion Globally

The Palm Beach Post reports that more than $4.1 billion worth of Florida agricultural exports annually are sold across 159 countries and territories.

Canada was the top destination for Florida agricultural exports with $917 million in sales last year. Other leading export markets were the Bahamas, $200 million; the Netherlands, $194 million; the Dominican Republic, $187 million and Mexico, $185 million.

The "Fresh from Florida" program partners with retailers in 27 countries. But a lot of complex logistics go into making sure shipments arrive in good shape.

Dan Sleep, chief of the Florida Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Strategic Development, said that the secrets of success, are in giving shoppers a chance to sample produce, and advertising in the retailers' circulars. "We'll see a 50 to 300 percent lift when a product goes into an ad," Sleep said.

Read more at:
http://www.mypalmbeachpost.com/news/business/fresh-from-florida-products-sell-globally-41-billi/nnnHk/

National Agricultural Biosecurity Center (NABC) is Helping FEMA Provide Animal Disease Response Training

NABC's Animal Disease Response Training course curriculum for awareness-level training of agricultural emergency first responders has been approved for inclusion in FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate, National Training and Education Division course catalog. This catalog provides high-quality training to equip first responders to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from both manmade and natural catastrophic events.

Animal Disease Response Training focuses on the best practices and safety issues associated with an agriculture emergency, including quarantine, biosecurity, euthanasia and disposal, use of personal protective equipment, and cleaning and disinfection. The course also helps increase coordination of responders across jurisdictions, lines of authority, and disciplines by examining the integration of response efforts.

Marvin Meinders, chief of the Food, Agriculture, and Veterinary Defense Division of the Department of Homeland Security, sponsored NABC's training for FEMA inclusion. He said that this year's highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in the U.S. brought more attention to agricultural emergency preparedness and the necessity of coordinating responders.

"Animal Disease Response Training brings the whole community together," Meinders. "The response isn't just one specialty — you normally need to have a lot of resources that come together. If you're enforcing quarantine, you need law enforcement. You may need the Environmental Protection Agency for disposal or burial. It takes a community, and a lot of courses don't do that."

Targeting local responders rather than national and state authorities is also key. "Our local people are our first level of defense and will be our first responders in a disease outbreak," Meinders said.

Learn more at: http://nabc.ksu.edu

UPDATE: Giant African Land Snails (GALS)

Last month, the Florida Depart of Agriculture has announced that more than 159,000 giant African land snails (GALS) have been eliminated in Florida since the giant disease-carrying, stucco-eating invasive mollusk was found in Florida four years ago. In addition to consuming more than 500 varieties of plants, giant African land snails are capable of destroying structures by consuming plaster and stucco and have been known to carry a parasite that can cause serious diseases in humans such as meningitis

"Giant African land snails threaten the crops, structures and residents of Florida, and we've gone to great lengths to find and eradicate them," said Commissioner Adam H. Putnam. "We've eliminated more than 159,000 of these invasive pests, but only with the continued help of the residents of South Florida can we completely rid Florida of the giant African land snail."

The eradication program has been very effective, shown by the fact that the number of snails collected weekly has dropped from several thousand at one point into the single digits. In addition, the mortality rate of discovered snails is close to 100 percent. Of the 29 core areas where the snail has been found, the department has not found a live snail in 21 of the core areas in the past year.

Two detector dog teams and dedicated staff routinely survey the core areas to detect and destroy snails. The department has also removed more than 1 million pounds of plant debris from the core areas in Miami-Dade County where the GALS typically live.

Program officials continue to refine eradication techniques, including researching alternative bait treatments, inspecting lawn maintenance companies and solid waste facilities, continuing public outreach and education activities, and developing experimental trap designs.

Originally from East Africa, the GALS, *Achatina fulica*, is one of the largest land snails in the world, growing up to 8 inches in length. Each snail can live as long as 9 years. GALS are difficult to eradicate because they have no natural predator and they reproduce exponentially, up to 1,200 more snails per year.

Ninety-six percent of cases have been identified due to calls to the helpline. To report a giant African land snail, call the department's toll-free helpline at 1-888-397-1517. To preserve a snail sample, with gloved hands put the snail in a zip-top bag, seal it, and put in a bucket or plastic container. Do not touch the snails or release them in a different location.

Left: Sierra, a specially-trained Labrador Retriever with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, alerts FDACS handler Omar Garcia of a Giant Africa Land Snail.

UK Woman Sickened by Norovirus From Oysters Despite Not Eating Them

As reported on *Food Safety News*, a British woman was recently sickened with norovirus from oysters, although she hadn't eaten any. It turns out that she got the infection from a friend who got it from eating the oysters.

Natalie Dye, 49, of reportedly dined at a restaurant with friends after a seaside vacation and consciously avoided eating any oysters.

"I am careful with anything raw or undercooked because I hate being ill, so I didn't have one," she said.

When her friend who had eaten the oysters became ill within 24 hours with vomiting and diarrhea, Dye felt sorry for him but was glad she hadn't had any. However, she became ill two days later with the same symptoms as her friend.

Read more at: http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2015/09/uk-woman-sickened-by-norovirus-from-oysters-despite-not-eating-them/#.VhHeaPlViko

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.

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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