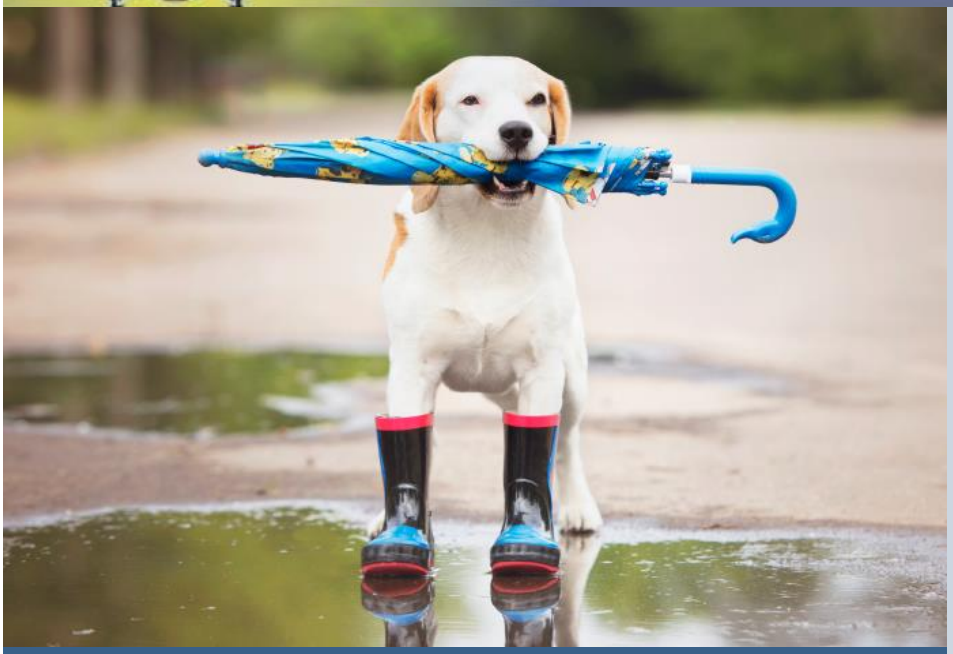
THE SENTINEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM



Hurricane Season kicks off on June 1. Are you and your pets prepared?

Agriculture Commissioner Offers Tips to Prepare for Approaching 2016 Hurricane Season

During National Hurricane Preparedness Week, Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam urges families across Florida to prepare for the 2016 hurricane season that begins June 1.

"With hurricane season fast approaching, the best defense you have is to plan early," said Commissioner Putnam. "Although Florida has not experienced a hurricane hit in more than 10 years, it's critical to prepare your families and your homes in the case of a disaster."

- **Have a Plan:** Know what you and your family will do in an emergency. Have supplies ready to go and have locations and directions mapped out. Make sure everyone in your house knows the plan.
- **Prepare a Kit:** Keep a kit ready to go with emergency supplies. This should include a three-day supply of water and food for each family member, blankets and sleeping bags, first-aid kid, battery powered radio, changes of clothing, emergency tools, flashlights and extra batteries, credit cards and spare cash, prescription and other medications, pet necessities, a list of important phone numbers, chargers for electronic devices if there is power available, and special items for infants, elderly or disabled household members.

(See *Hurricane Season,* page 2)

Special Features of this Issue:

- *USDA Announces $130 Million Available for Foundational Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension*
- *Letter to the Editor: Florida SARC Helps Neighbors to the North*
- *FDA Finalizes New Food Safety Rule to Prevent Adulteration of the Food Supply*

"Investing in agricultural research ensures that our farmers and ranchers have innovative, safe and sustainable management practices to meet the food needs of the rising world population."

— Tom Vilsack
Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture

Hurricane Season (continued)

- **Stay Informed:** Keep up-to-date on the latest weather information. Watch local news and weather, listen to a weather radio or keep updated on your computer or smartphone.

- **Find Shelter:** Research the location of hurricane shelters before the season starts. Know if you can take a pet or not. Ensure any livestock or other animals have at least a three-day supply of food and water.

In addition to these tips, keeping your food and water supply safe is one of the most important things you can do during a disaster.

- Keep an appliance thermometer in your fridge and freezer so you can get an accurate temperature reading even if the power is off. A freezer should be at or below 0°F and the fridge at 40°F.

- Store food on shelves high enough so they will not be contaminated in case of flood.

- Have coolers on hand to keep food cold if the power is out more than four hours. Keep the fridge and freezer doors closed as much as possible.

- Discard perishables, such as meat, fish, cheese, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items, if the power is out more than four hours.

- Use bottled water if you are concerned about your water supply. If you don't have bottled water, boil water and let it cool before storing to drink.

During an emergency, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is responsible for providing necessary food and water supplies and supporting protection of animals and pets. In addition, the department's Florida Forest Service, made up of a vast network of personnel and equipment, assists emergency responders in ensuring Floridians are safe and that they receive the necessary supplies during an emergency.

For more information and tips on hurricane preparedness, visit the National Weather Service's website.

USDA Announces $2.4 Million in Available Funding to Relieve Veterinary Shortages

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently announced $2.4 million in available funding to relieve veterinarian shortage situations through education, extension and training as well as support for veterinary practices in designated shortage areas. vThis funding is was authorized by the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) in the 2014 Farm Bill.

"These funds support activities for veterinarians and veterinary technicians, helping them gain the specialized skills to address shortages in parts of the country," said NIFA Director Sonny Ramaswamy. "Funds are also available for establishing or expanding veterinary practices in underserved rural areas."

Compete information may be found at https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/usda-announces-24-million-available-funding-relieve-veterinary-

USDA Announces $130 Million Available for Foundational Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) last month announced that $130 million in funding is available for research, education, and extension projects to support sustainable, productive and economically viable plant and animal production systems, including certified organic production.

This funding is available through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Foundational Program, authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and administered by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

"Investing in agricultural research ensures that our farmers and ranchers have innovative, safe and sustainable management practices to meet the food needs of the rising world population," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "In addition, studies have shown that every dollar invested in agricultural research now returns over $20 to our economy."

Established by the 2008 Farm Bill and re-authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, AFRI is the nation's premier competitive, peer-reviewed grants program for fundamental and applied agricultural sciences. In the seven years since AFRI was established, the program has led to true innovations and ground-breaking discoveries in agriculture to combat childhood obesity, improve and sustain rural economic growth, address water availability issues, increase food production, find new sources of energy, mitigate the impacts of climate variability and enhance resiliency of our food systems, and ensure food safety.

This request for application (RFA) also includes research topics proposed to be funded equally by eligible national and state commodity boards and NIFA, as authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. Commodity board priority topics include those proposed for the plant breeding for agricultural production program area, improving the food safety program area, as well as $3 million for the Critical Agriculture Research and Extension (CARE) program area.

Also, $2 million in funding is available for the Exploratory Research Program (ERP) to address critical and emerging issues. NIFA is offering the Educational Literacy Initiative through the AFRI program to support education, training and workforce development through the pre- and postdoctoral fellowships program, research and extension experiences program for undergraduate students, and professional development for secondary school teachers and educational professionals.

Finally, the AFRI Foundational program is piloting a "Distributed Peer Review" process, a modified peer-review approach intended to improve peer review efficiencies for three select program area priorities while maintaining the quality and integrity of the review process. Additional information on the distributed peer review process is available on the NIFA website.

Application submission deadlines vary by program. To view the RFA, visit the NIFA website.

For more information, please visit https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/agriculture-secretary-vilsack-announces-130-million-available-foundational

Enrollment Open: Multiple Levels for Small Animal Emergency Sheltering

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

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.

The Operations Level course will give you many new job options, in addition to leadership skills and team lead opportunities. This course expands upon information covered in FL-003-RESP and ICS-100 courses. These earlier courses are prerequisites for FL-607-RESP.

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

June 5 Course – Clearwater, FL (Awareness Level)

When: Sunday June 5, 2016 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM EDT
Where: Metzler Veterinary Hospital, 2720 Summerdale Drive, Clearwater, FL 33761

June 25 Course – Naples, FL (Awareness Level)

When: Saturday June 25, 2016 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM EDT
Where: Collier County Domestic Animal Services, 7610 Davis Blvd., Naples, FL 34104

August 6,7 Course – Naples, FL (Operations Level)

Details: For information, email pamburnssarc@gmail.com

Stay up-to-date of all Florida State Agricultural Response Team news and information at www.FLSART.org!

FDA Finalizes New Food Safety Rule to Prevent Adulteration of the Food Supply

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has finalized a new food safety rule under the landmark, bipartisan FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) that will help to prevent wide-scale public health harm by requiring companies in the United States and abroad to take steps to prevent intentional adulteration of the food supply.

While such acts are unlikely to occur, the new rule advances mitigation strategies to further protect the food supply.

Under the new rule, both domestic and foreign food facilities, for the first time, are required to complete and maintain a written food defense plan that assesses their potential vulnerabilities to deliberate contamination where the intent is to cause wide-scale public health harm.

Facilities now have to identify and implement mitigation strategies to address these vulnerabilities, establish food defense monitoring procedures and corrective actions, verify that the system is working, ensure that personnel assigned to the vulnerable areas receive appropriate training and maintain certain records.

A webinar is planned for June 21, 2016 to present key pieces of the final rule.

For More Information

- Intentional Adulteration Final Rule Fact Sheet
- Federal Register Notice
- Food Safety Modernization Act

Letter to the Editor: Florida SARC Helps Neighbors to the North

Hello, Michael:

Our team at SARC has a story to share about the recent classes we did in Savanah, GA (Chatham County), and also about upcoming classes we are doing in South Carolina in June. These states want to build their own companion animal response teams and will be using the SARC training to accomplish those goals.

Needless to say, we are very excited to have our neighbors to north on the same program because we can't do this alone. It will make aiding each other in emergencies very consistent and seamless.

The story below is from the Chatham County newsletter. It is written by Meredith Ley, the Public Information Officer with Chatham Emergency Management Agency.

Sincerely,
Consie von Gontard

Chatham County, Georgia Seeks Pet Evacuation Training Assistance from Florida SARC

By Meredith Ley

When an evacuation order is issued for Chatham County, the Evacuation Assembly Area (EAA) will be activated to assist members of the public and their pets who do not have reliable transportation out of town.

Appropriate staffing at the pet evacuation area has always been a major concern in regards to pet check in procedures, registration, vaccination and loading. Animal Control and the Humane Society both are responsible for evacuating their own shelters and simply will not have enough staff to assist with pet evacuations of the general public at the EAA. This year, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency decided to do something about it.

We are proud to announce the First graduating class of the Chatham Animal Response Team. Together, team members have completed approximately 1,000 hours of training to become the first deployable volunteer team in the state of Georgia. This victory would not be possible without the help of the Florida State Animal Response Coalition.

As the first and only animal response group to have plans approved by FEMA, the Florida SARC members are truly leading subject matter experts.

They traveled to Savannah for three weekend sessions to train Chatham County citizens on all-hazard disaster preparation, planning, training, response, recovery and sheltering during animal emergencies.

The training consists of three levels: Introduction, Advanced and Train the Trainer. Of the original group, 30 are approved to deploy, 18 advanced to incident managers and 12 are approved for training future volunteers. To help CART members gain experience, they are encouraged to volunteer with area shelters and rescue organizations.

(See *SARC Partnership,* page 7)

SARC Partnership (continued)

Now, when a hurricane, fire, tornado or other disaster threatens our area, the Chatham Animal Response Team (CART) will be there to assist the animals that rely on us. CART is organized under Chatham Emergency Management and utilizes the principles of The Incident Command System (ICS). Thanks to Florida SARC, our volunteers are now able to not only exercise pet emergency response, some have become certified trainers and have the ability to train other teams throughout Georgia.

The Florida SARC is an invaluable resource for Chatham County and we are so proud to have them as emergency response partners.

Meredith Ley, Public Information Officer
Chatham Emergency Management Agency
Savannah, Georgia

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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