THE SENTINEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM

Close-up of the head of Calliphora vicina

New World Screwworm Detected in the Florida Keys

In October, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the presence of New World screwworm in Key deer from National Key Deer Refuge in Big Pine Key, Florida. Since the initial detection, additional cases have been spotted in:

- Big Torch Key: adult screwworm flies detected.
- Middle Torch Key: adult screwworm flies detected.
- Little Torch Key: adult screwworm flies detected.
- Cudjoe: adult screwworm flies detected.
- Ramrod: adult screwworm flies detected.
- Summerland: adult screwworm flies detected and screwworm-infested Key deer observed.

USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, confirms this is a local infestation of New World screwworm (Cochliomyia hominivorax). This is the first local infestation in the United States in more than 30 years.

In response to this infestation, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam last month declared an agricultural state of emergency in Monroe County, Florida.

Additional deer from the same refuge and a few pets in the local area exhibited potentially similar infestations over the past two months, though no larvae were collected and tested in those cases.

(See *New World Screwworm,* page 2)

Special Features of this Issue:

- *New Technician Level Animal Technical Rescue Course Launches in Florida*
- *The American Veterinary Medical Association Announces Phase Out of VMAT*
- *New Miami-Dade Mosquitoes Test Positive for Zika*

"The AVMA remains committed to advocating for the protection of animal health and welfare and public health in disasters, but its role will be changing."

— Janet Donlin, DVM,
CEO, American Veterinary Medical Association

(Story on page 5)

New World Screwworm (continued)

Animal health and wildlife officials at the state and federal levels are working jointly to address these findings. Response efforts will include fly trapping to determine the extent of the infestation, release of sterile flies to prevent reproduction and disease surveillance to look for additional cases in animals. The initial goal will be to keep the infestation from spreading to new areas while eradicating the New World screwworm flies from the affected Keys.

Residents who have warm-blooded animals (pets, livestock, etc.) should watch their animals carefully and report any potential cases to 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352) or non-Florida residents should call (850) 410-3800]. Visitors to the area should ensure any pets that are with them are also checked, to prevent the spread of this infestation.

While human cases of New World screwworm are rare, they have occurred, and public health officials are involved in the response. Using fly repellents and keeping skin wounds clean and protected from flies can help prevent infection with screwworm in both people and animals. New World screwworms are fly larvae (maggots) that can infest livestock and other warm-blooded animals, including people.

They most often enter an animal through an open wound and feed on the animal's living flesh. While they can fly much farther under ideal conditions, adult flies generally do not travel more than a couple of miles if there are suitable host animals in the area. New World screwworm is more likely to spread long distances when infested animals move to new areas and carry the pest there.

In the 1950s, USDA developed a new method to help eradicate screwworm using a form of biological control, called the sterile insect technique, which releases infertile male flies in infested areas. When they mate with local females, no offspring result. With fewer fertile mates available in each succeeding generation, the fly, in essence, breeds itself out of existence. USDA used this technique to eradicate screwworm from the U.S. and worked with other countries in Central America and the Caribbean to eradicate it there as well. Today, USDA and its partners maintain a permanent sterile fly barrier at the Darien Gap between Panama and Colombia to prevent the establishment of any screwworm flies that enter from South America.

Read more at:
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/fs_new_world_screwworm.pdf.

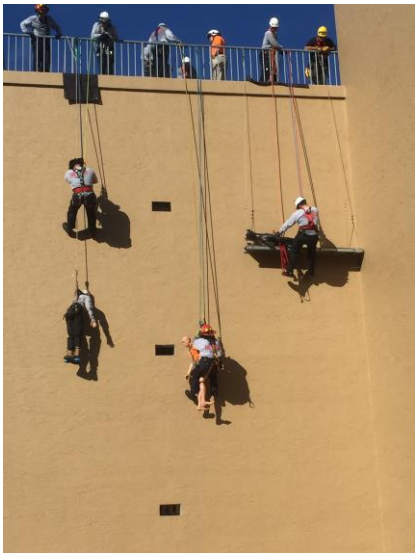
Below: Cochliomyia hominivorax, aka the New World screw-worm fly

Right: Cochliomyia hominivorax larva

New Technician Level Animal Technical Rescue Course Launches in Florida

Over the past several years, the UF VETS Disaster Response Team and Florida SART has been developing an Operations Level Animal Technical Rescue course. This course now meets the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and has been taught to over a dozen agencies.

As teams become more experienced, there was a growing request to learn about more advanced rescues and techniques. With the NFPA standards being re-written with a winter 2016/2017 publication, John Haven (SART Co-Chair, and NFPA technical rescue committee co-chair for the animal technical rescue task groups) and his team began writing a Technician Level course. This course was approved by the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and has used state and federal funds for training. The two-day Operations Level course has also been revised to address new standard updates.



To date, Volusia County Fire Rescue, Lakeland City, and Polk County Fire Rescue Department have received the new Technician Level training. These teams had previously been trained to the Operations Level for Animal Technical Rescue.

The training meets all the criteria for the soon to be published National Fire Protection Association 2017 updated standards for Animal Technical Rescue for both NFPA 1006 and 1670. This two-day intensive course addresses several advanced topics, including helicopter rescue operations, extended lifting duration harnesses for livestock, highline operations including system modifications to support the weight of livestock safely, pick-off/rescues from elevated platforms, ice rescue, tender assistants, high angle/low point edge transitions, and others.

The training focuses on modifying human rescue techniques to adapt to the requirements of managing animal victims, was valuable, not just in learning the animal rescue skills, but it also provided a venue for the technical rescue teams to practice their human skills, learn new techniques that address both the human and animal rescue needs, and to work with state of the art equipment.

To schedule a course for your agency, contact John Haven, Executive Director, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida, havenj@ufl.edu.

Enrollment Open: Multiple Levels for Small Animal Emergency Sheltering

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

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

The Awareness Level course 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 course is certified by the Florida Department of Emergency Management and is required to respond in Florida to help companion animals and their owners during a disaster.

The Operations Level course gives 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 Setup, Daily Care and Feeding, Proper Cage Cleaning and Disinfection, Animal Behavior, Stress Management, Zoonotic Diseases, and Personal Safety.

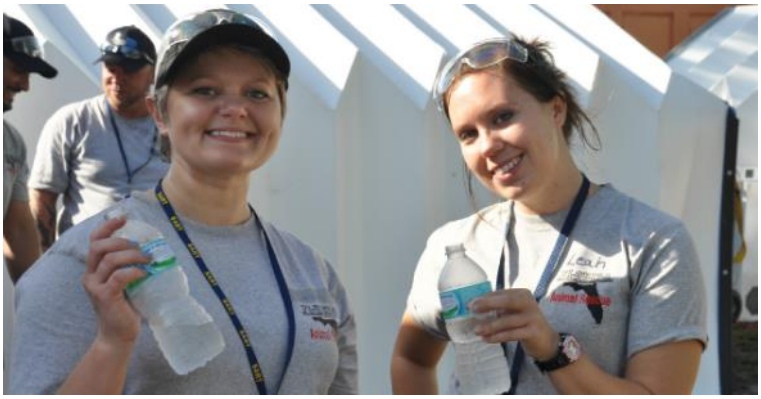
For more information about the courses, and to register, please visit: http://flsarc.org/Training.html

November 6 Course – Doral, FL (Awareness Level)

When: Sunday, November 6, 2016, from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM EDT
For more information, or to register: Email pamburnssarc@gmail.com

November 12-13 Course – Sarasota, FL (Operations Level)

When: Saturday & Sunday, November 12-13, 2016
For more information, or to register: Email pamburnssarc@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATE

The 2017 SART Planning Meeting

March 28-30, 2017

Stay up-to-date at www.FLSART.org!

The American Veterinary Medical Association Announces Phase Out of VMAT

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) announced recently that it will be phasing out its Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams (VMAT) program over the next 12 to 18 months. To optimize strategic use of the association's resources, the AVMA Board of Directors stated there were some very difficult decisions regarding AVMA programs and services. This decision was particularly difficult because they understand and highly value the contributions VMAT team members have made to the AVMA and to animal disaster and emergency response efforts.

VMAT members have played a vital role in shaping animal disaster planning and response since the teams' formation 23 years ago. AVMA's evaluation of the VMAT program included a thorough information gathering effort.

The AVMA's VMAT was designed to serve as first responders providing high-quality care of animals during disasters and emergencies. When requested by a state, VMATs provide operational assistance in emergency response, and organize and provide training on animal emergency preparedness and response to animal health authorities, veterinary medical associations, and other relevant organizations.

The dedicated volunteers who make up the AVMA VMAT program help ensure that pets, livestock, zoo animals and wildlife all receive the care they need during times of crisis. The plan for phasing out the program is still being developed by the AVMA.

In an announcement to the VMAT team, Janet Donlin, DVM, CEO of AVMA wrote, "You still have great contributions to make, and we sincerely hope you will continue your involvement in disaster and emergency response efforts and programs. We hope you'll be willing to continue serving as subject matter experts for the AVMA, provide a boots-on-the-ground network to keep us informed during response efforts, and continue your tremendous contributions to the development of effective regional and state programs and teams."

National Food Safety Education Conference 2017 – Registration Now Open

Early bird registration is now open for the sixth National Consumer Food Safety Education Conference held on January 25-27, 2017, in Washington, D.C. at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. This conference is designed to bring together food safety educators from academia, government, industry, professional organizations, and consumer advocacy and assistance groups, to focus on Behavior Change — how to effectively help consumers avoid foodborne illnesses by changing unsafe food handling habits to safer behaviors.

The 2017 National Consumer Food Safety Education Conference is sponsored by the Partnership for Food Safety Education, a non-profit organization that includes members from academia, consumer advocacy groups, professional organizations, and the food industry, as well as the cosponsors of the conference, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For more information, visit: http://cfsec2017.fightbac.org/home/program/conference-agenda/?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

New Miami-Dade Mosquitoes Test Positive for Zika

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) announced in late October that it has detected Zika in one mosquito sample from the same small area in Miami Beach, where seven other samples had previously tested positive for Zika. All samples have consisted of Aedes aeqypti mosquitoes and are from an area where increased trapping and intensified mosquito control measures have already been underway since the Florida Department of Health determined local transmission had occurred.

FDACS has tested more than 5,400 mosquito samples, consisting of more than 70,000 mosquitoes, since May, and these eight samples are the only ones to test positive.

The positive mosquito pool announced recently was collected in Miami Beach within the current zone that has been treated for local transmission.

A summary of the total positive mosquito samples to date is as follows:

- Oct. 18, 2016: One mosquito sample from a small area in Miami Beach tested positive for Zika.
- Oct. 4, 2016: One mosquito sample, consisting of only one mosquito, from a small area in Miami Beach tested positive for Zika.
- Oct. 1, 2016: One mosquito sample from a small area in Miami Beach tested positive for Zika.
- Sept. 16, 2016: One mosquito sample from a small area in Miami Beach tested positive for Zika.
- Sept. 9, 2016: One mosquito sample from a small area in Miami Beach tested positive for Zika.
- Sept. 1, 2016: Three mosquito samples from a small area in Miami Beach tested positive for Zika.

Florida's proactive efforts include: eliminating larval habitats by emptying standing water, treating water-holding containers with long-lasting larvicide, providing outdoor residual and spatial insecticide treatments to reduce adult vectors, and conducting adult mosquito surveillance to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments.

For more information, visit:

http://www.freshfromflorida.com/News-Events/Press-Releases/2016-Press-Releases/Miami-Dade-Mosquitoes-Test-Positive-for-Zika6

UF VETS Team Helps Rescue a Horse in Marion County

Last month, Marion County Fire Rescue requested mutual aid from the UF VETS Technical Rescue Team. A 1,500-pound horse had fallen into a water drain pond, and was unable to escape. The rescue was performed using a "basic forward assist" technique, per SART's John Haven. Also onsite was Eddie Leedy, Captain of the Marion County Sheriff's Volunteer Mounted Unit, and noted equestrian trainer himself.

The rescue took place on the Sunnyhill Water Management Restoration area near Umatilla, Florida. Though the horse had been in the water for over an hour before team arrived, the rescue took only minutes to complete.

Please log in and update your membership information online at:

www.FLSART.org

About the *SART Sentinel*

The *SART Sentinel* is an email newsletter prepared monthly by the members of the **Florida State Agricultural Response Team**. Past issues of the *Sentinel* are archived on the Florida SART website, 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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