



THE SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM



With the holidays fast approaching, the State Agricultural Response Team wishes you a safe and healthy season... and reminds you to play your part in keeping food safe to protect your family and friends from illness.

As Holidays Near, Food Safety Survey Shows Consumer Knowledge Up, Still Room to Grow

With the holidays fast approaching, consumer food safety remains an important topic. For nearly three decades the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service has conducted annual Food Safety Surveys to gauge and track the public's understanding of proper food safety handling techniques.

Between October 6, 2015 and January 17, 2016, the FDA surveyed 4,169 Americans ages 18 and older to learn more about consumers' attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge of food safety. Survey results help inform the FDA's efforts to improve consumer food safety behaviors through targeted education outreach.

The survey questions are designed to measure trends in consumer food safety practices, such as hand and cutting board washing; preparing and consuming potentially risky foods; and using food thermometers. In addition to informing the FDA's food safety education efforts, the results are used by the [Healthy People 2020 initiative](#) to track consumer food safety knowledge and actions.

Key findings:

- **Food thermometer ownership rates have remained constant but usage has slightly increased** – In 2016, 67% of respondents reported owning a food thermometer. Reported usage has increased for roasts,

(See *Food Safety Survey*, page 2)

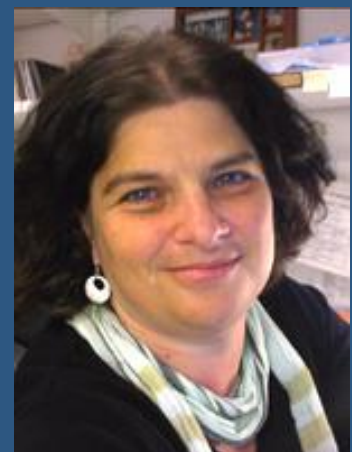
Special Features of this Issue:

- *UF Large Animal Hospital Offers Equine Extended Care Service*
- *FDA Research to Help Speed Development of Zika Virus Vaccines and Therapeutics*
- *USDA Awards \$4.3 Million to Ensure Access to Needed Veterinary Services in Rural Communities*

“There are many unanswered and essential questions about how the Zika virus works, including the long-term impact.”

— Daniela Verthelyi
FDA's Chief of the Laboratory of Immunology

(Story on page 5)



Food Safety Survey (continued)

chicken parts, and hamburgers between 2006 and 2016. In 2016, 38% report that they always use a meat thermometer for roasts, compared to 19% for chicken parts, and 10% for hamburgers.

- **After increasing between 2006 and 2010, handwashing rates have remained constant or decreased between 2010 and 2016** – We asked about hand washing at four specific times: before preparing food, after handling raw meat or poultry, after handling raw fish, and after cracking raw eggs. In all years consumers are more likely to report washing hands with soap after touching raw meat or raw fish, than before preparing food, or after cracking raw eggs. The percent who report washing with soap after touching raw meat or raw fish has remained constant since 2010 and at 85%.

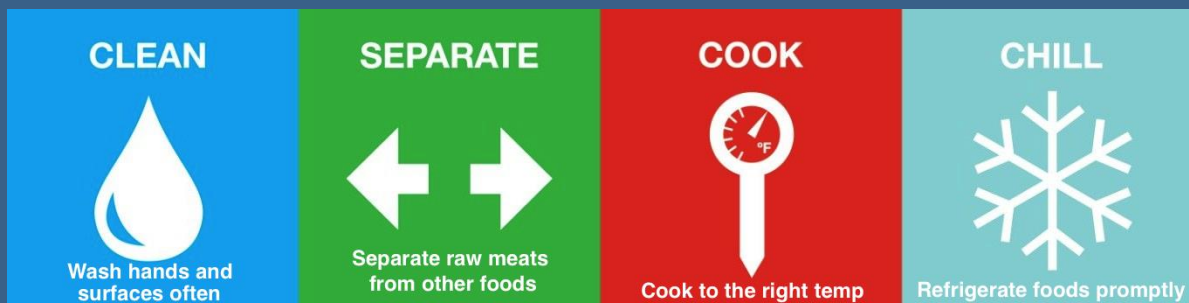
There was a slight decrease in the percent who report washing with soap all of the time before preparing food from 78% in 2010 to 75% in 2016. Similarly, there has been a decline in the percent who report washing with soap after cracking raw eggs from 48% in 2010 to 43% in 2016.



- **Most consumers do not wash their hands after using handheld phones or tablets in the kitchen** - About half of consumers use devices such as smartphones or tablets while preparing food, but only about a third of those report washing their hands with soap after touching the device while preparing food. This is a new finding and points to the need for additional research to better understand how technology is used in the kitchen. As Americans start preparing meals for the holiday season, the FDA and USDA offer several resources to help all consumers in ensuring that their special meals are prepared and enjoyed safely.

For additional information:

- [2016 Food Safety Survey Report and Presentation](#)
- [Food Safety Education Materials](#)
- [Consumer Behavior Research](#)
- [2010 Food Safety Survey: Key Findings and Topline Frequency Report](#)



Keep Food Safe! This year, one in six Americans will get sick from food poisoning. Following four simple steps – Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill – you can help protect your family from food poisoning at home.

For more information on how to keep your family safe from foodborne-illness this holiday season, visit <http://www.foodsafety.gov>.

Florida Forest Service Sends 99 Personnel to Help Manage Wildfires Throughout Southeastern States



Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam announced last month that the Florida Forest Service has sent 99 wildland firefighters and support personnel to several southeastern states to help manage their extreme wildfire activity. The Florida Forest Service currently has personnel deployed in Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Nevada and on federal lands in Florida.

"The national wildland firefighting and forestry community is like a family, dedicated to helping one another in their time of need," said Commissioner Putnam. "The Florida Forest Service is always prepared to answer the call to protect people, homes and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire."

In addition to deploying frontline wildland firefighting personnel and equipment, the Florida Forest Service has provided trained personnel to fill vital management and support positions such as incident command, safety, planning, resource, public information and more. Although heightened wildfire danger levels are currently present in Florida, the state has so far avoided the nearly unmanageable levels currently troubling its partner states and is able to provide assistance.

"The Florida Forest Service is closely monitoring Florida's wildfire activity and resource needs to ensure that enough resources remain in Florida to combat wildfires effectively and efficiently," said Jim Karels, Florida State Forester. "Just as Florida has helped our partners, we know that we can count on them to help us when the time comes."

Through the Southeastern Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact, the southeastern states have continued to honor their agreement to aid one another to combat wildfires. The compact has provided for the effective prevention and control of wildfires in the southeastern region since 1954, and includes the following states: Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

The Florida Forest Service, a division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, manages more than 1 million acres of public forest land while protecting homes, forest land and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire on more than 26 million acres.

For more information, please visit <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/News-Events/Press-Releases/2016-Press-Releases/Florida-Forest-Service-Sends-99-Personnel-to-Help-Manage-Wildfires-Throughout-Southeastern-States>

To learn more about the Florida Forest Service program, visit <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service>

Did You Know? UF Large Animal Hospital Offers Equine Extended Care Service

Earlier this year, the University of Florida's Large Animal Hospital announced an exciting new service exclusively for their clients. The Equine Extended Care Service provides medicine and experienced care for your horse. Here's everything you need to know...

When should I consider extended care services?

If you and your veterinarian decide that your horse is ready to leave the hospital, but may still need continued diligent and quality medical care, the UF Large Animal Hospital is here for you! Our Equine Extended Care Service is a cost-effective, long-term care option for your horse.

What services do you offer?

We create a customized plan to meet the special needs of your horse. For example, many patients of the UF Ophthalmology Service requiring frequent eye medications can benefit from our Equine Extended Care Service. We offer services for horses that require regular wound care, bandaging, monitoring of casts and splints, and administration of medications. We also provide services for horses that have undergone surgical procedures, horses that are recovering from orthopedic injuries, and much more.

Do I need a referral?

Our Equine Extended Care Service provides extended care to our existing patients and clients. New patients do require referral from your veterinarian. We will work closely with your veterinarian to determine your horse's specific needs.

How long can my horse stay?

Because each horse and horse-owner is different, our service is customized to meet each of your needs. A minimum period of one week of care is required, and there is no limit on how long your horse may receive care.

Will I be able to visit my horse?

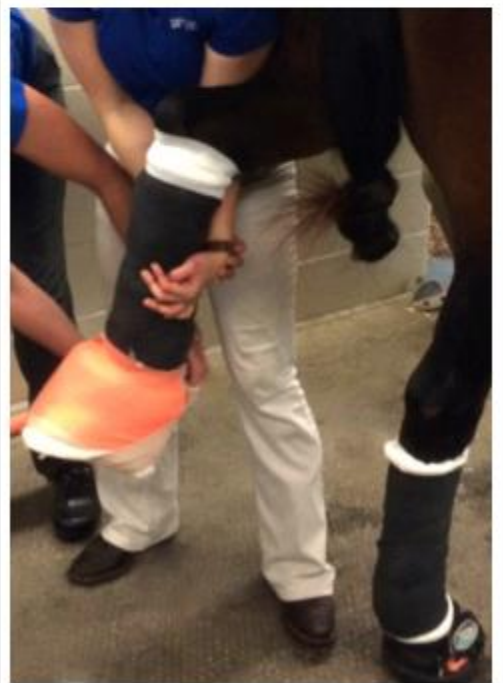
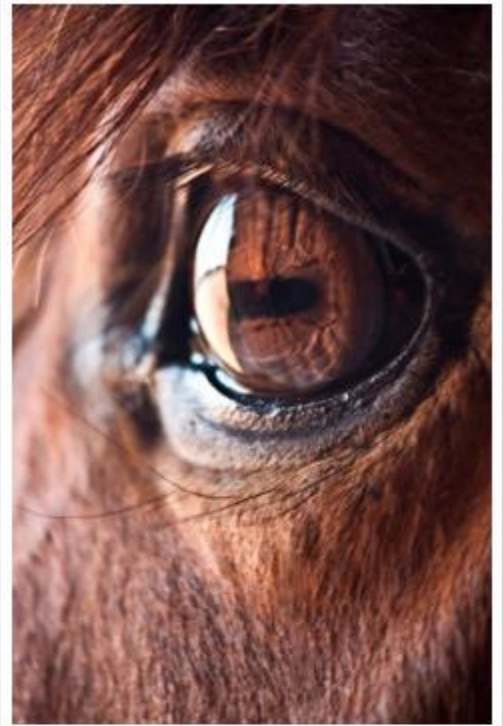
Absolutely! We have established visitation policies designed with the highest care standards in mind.

This sounds expensive. How much will it cost?

Extended care is much less expensive than traditional hospitalization. Typical services included in our Equine Extended Care Service are medical treatments, boarding, daily walks and grazing, and routine feeding. Fees are based on the amount and frequency of care required. Medications and medical supplies may be provided at an additional fee.

Who do I contact for more information?

Call their office at (352) 392-2229.





SAVE THE DATE

The 2017 SART Planning Meeting

March 28-30, 2017

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FDA Research to Help Speed Development of Zika Virus Vaccines and Therapeutics

A new mouse model developed by scientists at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration may help in exploring the potential activity of Zika virus vaccines and therapeutics. Published last month in [PLoS Pathogens](#), is the description of a neonatal mouse model that provides a platform for potentially improving and expediting studies to understand the causes and effects (pathology) of the Zika virus.

The recent spread of the Zika virus and its association with increased rates of neurological disorders and complex congenital syndromes, such as microcephaly in babies and Guillain-Barré Syndrome in adults, has created an urgent need for animal models to examine the virus' pathology. Better understanding the impact and long-term effects of the Zika virus infection in mice may be useful in efforts to find ways to combat it in a human population. While past research indicated that only mice with compromised immune systems are susceptible to Zika virus infection, this study shows that neonatal mice with otherwise healthy immune systems are also susceptible.

"There are many unanswered and essential questions about how the Zika virus works, including the long-term impact," said Daniela Verthelyi, the FDA's Chief of the Laboratory of Immunology, who led the agency's development of the new animal model. "This mouse model gives researchers a new tool to study and understand how the Zika virus replicates and spreads in the body, which we hope will provide these critical answers."

The FDA's scientists found that neonatal mice of this strain are susceptible to the Zika virus and develop neurological symptoms 12 days post infection. These mice eventually recover from disease and thus the model provides an opportunity to study the virus' long-term effects as well as an additional means for early exploration of experimental Zika virus vaccines and therapeutics.

This advancement is just one of many research projects the FDA has undertaken as part of the agency's comprehensive effort to fight the Zika virus. For example, the FDA has invested in initiatives to understand the effectiveness of technologies that reduce pathogens in blood, evaluate the impact of red blood cell storage on virus infection, expand the agency's database of virus-infected samples essential to the development of diagnostic devices, and explore how long the Zika virus persists in body tissues, among other projects.

"The FDA considers the public health response to the Zika virus epidemic to be a top priority. We stand ready to use our expertise and authorities to the fullest extent to help facilitate the development and availability of products that may help mitigate emerging infectious disease threats, such as the Zika virus. Read more at:

http://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm529740.htm?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Sabra Issues Voluntary Recall of Certain Hummus Products

Sabra Dipping Company is voluntarily recalling certain hummus products made prior to November 8, 2016 due to concerns over *Listeria monocytogenes*, which was identified at the manufacturing facility but not in tested finished product. The recall includes numerous products that were distributed to retail outlets, including food service accounts and supermarkets, in the U.S. and Canada.

Listeria monocytogenes is an organism, which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy individuals may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headaches, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

For more information, visit

http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm529967.htm?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery



USDA Awards \$4.3 Million to Ensure Access to Needed Veterinary Services in Rural Communities



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) last month awarded more than \$4.3 million to 48 American veterinarians to help repay a portion of their veterinary school loans in return for serving in areas lacking sufficient veterinary resources critical to America's food safety, food security, and to the health and well-being of animals and humans. The awards, made through NIFA's Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP), will fill shortage needs in 27 states.

"Veterinarians play a critical role in keeping our nation's food supply safe and animals healthy," said NIFA director Sonny Ramaswamy. "The need for veterinarians in designated shortage areas is urgent. This loan repayment assistance program provides incentives for students to take up rural veterinary practices and help take care of American livestock."

Studies indicate there are significant shortages of food animal veterinarians in certain areas of the nation and in high-priority specialty sectors that require advanced training, such as food safety, epidemiology, diagnostic medicine and public health. A leading cause for this shortage is the high cost of professional veterinary medical training that leaves current graduates of veterinary colleges with, on average, student loan debt of more than \$135,000.

New award recipients commit to practice at least three years in a designated veterinary shortage area. Loan repayment benefits are limited to payments of the principal and interest on government and commercial educational loans received for attendance at an American Veterinary Medical Association-accredited college of veterinary medicine resulting in a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree or the equivalent.

This is the fourth year NIFA has made renewal awards through VMLRP. Previous awardees that still owe at least \$15,000 in educational loans are eligible to apply again, though renewal is not automatic and applications are subject to the same competitive review process as new applications.

For more information, please visit

<https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/usda-awards-43-million-ensure-access-needed-veterinary-services-rural-communities>

Baby Monkey Befriends Herd of Goats in China



All together now... Aaawww!

As reported on [the news site UPI](#), a baby monkey formed an unexpected bond with a herd of goats in China. In a video from CCTV 13 posted on [YouTube](#), the young monkey is seen riding the backs of goats as they forage for food.

The farmer who oversees the goats said that the monkey has been with the herd for about five days, and sleeps with the goats at night.

Despite the monkey's strong bond with the goats, the county wildlife protection station plans to transfer it to nearby Yichun Zoo.

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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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