THE SENTINEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM

*Keep your family and friends safe during the big game. (Source, CDC)*

## Game Day Food Safety Tips

**Tackling a buffet at your Super Bowl gathering? Practice these game rules and keep the runs on the field.**

Super Bowl Sunday is an American tradition of football, friends, and food. It's the second largest food consumption day of the year, ranking only behind Thanksgiving.

Make sure your Super Bowl gathering is memorable for all the right reasons! Follow these six tips to avoid food poisoning:

**1. Keep it clean.**

- Wash your hands with soap and running water (warm or cold) for at least 20 seconds before preparing, eating, and handling food—especially after passing the TV's germy remote control! Also wash your hands after using the bathroom and touching pets.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Rinse produce under running water, including those with inedible skins and rinds. For firm-skin fruits and vegetables, rub by hand or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing.

(See *Game Day Food Safety,* page 3.)

### Special Features of this Issue:


- *University of Florida Receives $10M Collaborative Grant to Address Zika*
- *USDA Invests $13.6 Million in Citrus Greening Research*
- *Hillsborough County Disaster Volunteer "Evacuee" Registration*


***"Florida really is ground zero. We are the gateway for vector-borne diseases into the United States; but we have the research capability to stop them."***

— Rhoel Dinglasan
Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases, UF College of Veterinary Medicine
(Story on page 5)

## Key Deer Outfitted with New Tracking Collars

Thirty adult female Key deer have new collars. Over a three-day period that started January 16, specially trained Key deer researchers from Texas A&M University and veterinarians and biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service captured and placed electronic tracking collars on Key deer at Big Pine and No Name keys. These are small, lightweight flexible vinyl collars, specially made for Key deer.

These collars allow the officials to more easily find and monitor these Key deer does now and during the upcoming fawning season for possible New World screwworm infestation.

Fawning season, which usually starts in March or April each year, will be a critical timeframe because of how these parasites lay eggs in open wounds, which hatch and become flesh-eating maggots. Does and fawns are particularly vulnerable during the birthing process.

"We've got to be especially vigilant with fawning season coming," says Dan Clark, refuge manager at Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuges Complex. "Should fertile [New World] screwworm flies be detected or an infested animal confirmed, Key deer does and fawns will be at higher risk. If it happens, we'll be prepared to move swiftly with preventative treatments and/or other contingency operations already planned and established to protect the subspecies."

The presence of New World screwworm was confirmed on National Key Deer Refuge on September 30, 2016. Since then, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Monroe County, Florida, have worked together to eradicate this parasite and protect the endangered Key deer and other wildlife from infestation.

To read more, visit https://www.fws.gov/news/blog/index.cfm/2017/1/26/No-Poppin-these-Collars-Key-Deer

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Top: A Key deer scampers away after being fitted with a radio collar. Photo by Christine Ogura/USFWS*

*Right: Biological Technician Matt Grassi uses a handheld telemetry receiver and antenna to track Key deer on Big Pine Key. Photo By Noah Strong/USFWS*

## Game Day Food Safety (continued)

**2. Cook it well.**

- Use a food thermometer to test Super Bowl party favorites, like chicken wings and ground beef sliders, and any other meat or microwaved dishes on your menu.
    - Make sure chicken wings (and any other poultry dish) reach a minimum internal temperature of 165°F and ground beef sliders reach 160°F.
- Refer to the Safe Minimum Cooking Temperatures chart for the "rest time" of meats—the period after cooking when the temperature remains constant or continues to rise and destroys germs.
    - Good news for your super-hungry guests: chicken wings and ground beef sliders don't require rest times!

**3. Keep it safe.**

- Divide cooked food into shallow containers and store in a refrigerator or freezer until the party begins. This encourages rapid, even cooling…and discourages pre-party nibblers.
- Hold hot foods at 140°F or warmer. Use chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays to keep food hot on the buffet table.
- Maintain cold foods, like salsa and guacamole, at 40°F or colder. Use small service trays or nest serving dishes in bowls of ice, replacing ice often.

**4. Watch the time.**

- Follow recommended microwave cooking and standing times.
    - "Cold spots"—areas that are not completely cooked—can harbor germs.
    - Always follow directions for the "standing time," the extra minutes that food should stand in the microwave to complete the cooking process. Then check the internal temperature with a food thermometer.
- Track the time that food stays on the buffet.
    - Sideline any perishable foods that have been out at room temperature for two hours or more.

**5. Avoid mix-ups.**

- Separate raw meats from ready-to-eat foods like veggies when preparing, serving, or storing foods.
- Offer guests serving utensils and small plates to discourage them from eating directly from the bowls with dips and salsa.
- Throw a penalty flag at double-dippers (people who repeatedly eat or dip from a shared food dish)!

**6. Get it to-go.**

- Discard any perishable foods on the buffet after sitting for two or more hours.
- Divide leftovers into smaller portions or pieces, place in shallow containers, and refrigerate.
- Don't wait too long to enjoy your leftovers. Refrigerate them for three to four days at most. Freeze them if you won't be eating the leftovers sooner.

# Enrollment Open: Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Course

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

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.

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

## *February 25 Course – Ocala, FL*

**When:** Saturday, February 25, 2017, from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
**Where:** Animis Foundation and Grounds, 8251 SW 27th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34476

## *February 26 Course – Ocala, FL*

**When:** Sunday, February 26, 2017, from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
**Where:** Animis Foundation and Grounds, 8251 SW 27th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34476

## *April 8 Course – Sarasota, FL*

**When:** Saturday, April 8, 2017, from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
**Where:** Cat Depot Education Resource Center, 2542 17th Street, Sarasota, FL 34234

## REGISTER NOW!

## The 2017 SART Planning Meeting

## March 28-30, 2017 Dayton Beach, FL

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

# University of Florida Receives $10M Collaborative Grant to Address Zika

With a $10 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the University of Florida will lead a highly collaborative research program focused on stopping diseases such as Zika before they spread farther into the United States.

The grant is part of nearly $184 million in funding the CDC announced Thursday to states, territories, local jurisdictions, and universities to support efforts to protect Americans from Zika virus infection and associated adverse health outcomes, including microcephaly and other serious birth defects. These awards are part of the $350 million in funding provided to CDC under the Zika Response and Preparedness Appropriations Act of 2016.

"Zika continues to be a threat to pregnant women," said CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden. "States, territories, and communities need this CDC funding to fight Zika and protect the next generation of Americans."

The Southeast Regional Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Disease: The Gateway Program will be led by principal investigator Rhoel Dinglasan, a faculty member in the College of Veterinary Medicine's department of infectious diseases and pathology associated with UF's Emerging Pathogens Institute. Dinglasan has enlisted the University of Miami, Florida International University and the University of South Florida to collaborate on research to address the statewide and regional challenge of Zika and other diseases.

"While everyone is imagining the introduction of diseases like Zika into their states, we don't need to imagine it," Dinglasan said. "We have seen Zika, dengue and chikungunya, and it is our responsibility as scientists to do our part to stop them."

Florida provides a unique environment to examine the biocomplexity of vector-borne diseases in real time. Miami-Dade is often an entry point for such diseases, adding to the urgency of the research and providing a real-world lab. Solutions that work in the densely populated urban environment of South Florida should work in other locations as well, Dinglasan said.

"Florida really is ground zero. We are the gateway for vector-borne diseases into the United States," Dinglasan said. "But we have the research capability to stop them."

## USDA Invests $13.6 Million in Citrus Greening Research

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced four grants totaling more than $13.6 million to combat a scourge on the nation's citrus industry, citrus greening disease, aka Huanglongbing. The funding is made possible through NIFA's Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program, authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

"The economic impact of citrus greening disease is measured in the billions," said NIFA Director Sonny Ramaswamy. "NIFA investments in research are critical measures to help the citrus industry survive and thrive and to encourage growers to replant with confidence."

To learn more, visit https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/usda-invests-136-million-citrus-greening-research

## Statement by Commissioner Adam Putnam on Florida's Updated Citrus Crop Forecast

In January, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services Adam Putnam provided an update on Florida's citrus crop forecast. This follows a similar statement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Commissioner Putnam stated, "Because of citrus greening, production of our state's signature crop is down 70 percent from 20 years ago. The future of Florida citrus, and the tens of thousands of jobs it supports, depends on a long-term solution in the fight against greening. Our brightest minds are working to find a solution, but until then, we must support our growers and provide them every tool available to combat this devastating disease."

The USDA's forecast of 71 million boxes of oranges for the 2016-2017 season is down more than 12 percent from the 81.5 million boxes harvested last season. Further, the forecast represents a decline of more than 70 percent since the peak of citrus production at 244 million boxes during the 1997-98 season.

In support of Florida's growers and industry groups seeking approval from the Environmental Protection Agency for the use of certain antimicrobial treatments to combat greening, Commissioner Putnam issued a crisis declaration in 2016 regarding their Section 18 application to the EPA, which allowed the immediate use of these treatments.

Commissioner Putnam has requested more than $17 million in state funding to continue critical research and support Florida's citrus industry.

***"Because of citrus greening, production of our state's signature crop is down 70 percent from 20 years ago."***

**-Commissioner Adam Putnam**

## Hillsborough County Disaster Volunteer "Evacuee" Registration

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) is seeking volunteers to play disaster "victims" for an upcoming mock disaster workshop in Hillsborough County. This is your chance to help Florida SARC become better prepared to help animals and their families during disasters.

The exercise will be held on Sunday, February 19, 2017 from 7:00 AM until 3:00 PM at the Greater Hillsborough County Fair Grounds. The fairgrounds are located at 215 Sydney Washer Road, Dover, FL 33527.

The ability to handle dogs on leashes is great, but not required. The only requirement is the desire to help the State of Florida be better prepared to help animals during disasters.

Florida SARC is hopeful to get 100 volunteers to help conduct this event. For more information, or to register, please visit http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07edm0rw5gebff3eee&llr=cmn8hziab.

*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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