THE SENTINEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM

New World Screwworm disease is an infestation of livestock, or other mammals, with fly larvae (maggots) of the New World screwworm fly. (Photo source, USDA APHIS)

With No Screwworms Found in Months, Animal Health Checkpoint in Monroe County to Close

After more than five months of aggressive response efforts and no new screwworm infestations, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services last month began winding down its response to the New World screwworm infestation in Monroe County. No new cases have been found since January 10th.

Following established protocols, the animal quarantine for Monroe County was lifted, and the Animal Health Check Point in Key Largo was closed on March 18th.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service confirmed the presence of New World screwworm in Key deer from a wildlife refuge in Big Pine Key, Florida, in late September 2016. This was the first local infestation in the United States in more than 30 years.

According to the USDA, during the past century the presence of New World screwworm cost the U.S. livestock industry an average of $20 million annually.

The adult screwworm fly is about the size of a common housefly (or slightly larger), with orange eyes, metallic blue or green body, and three dark stripes along the back. The term screwworm refers to the screw-like shape of the larvae that feed on the host animal.

(See *Screwworm Update,* page 2.)

Special Features of this Issue:

- *FDA, Federal Partners Issue New Food Safety Analytics Strategic Plan*
- *UF/IFAS Shares in $2.45 Million to Research Tickborne Disease Risk*
- *NIH Begins Study of Vaccine to Protect Against Mosquito-Borne Diseases*

"A single vaccine capable of protecting against the scourge of mosquito-borne diseases is a novel concept that, if proven successful, would be a monumental public health advance"

— Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.
Director, The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
(Story on page 6)

Screwworm Update (continued)

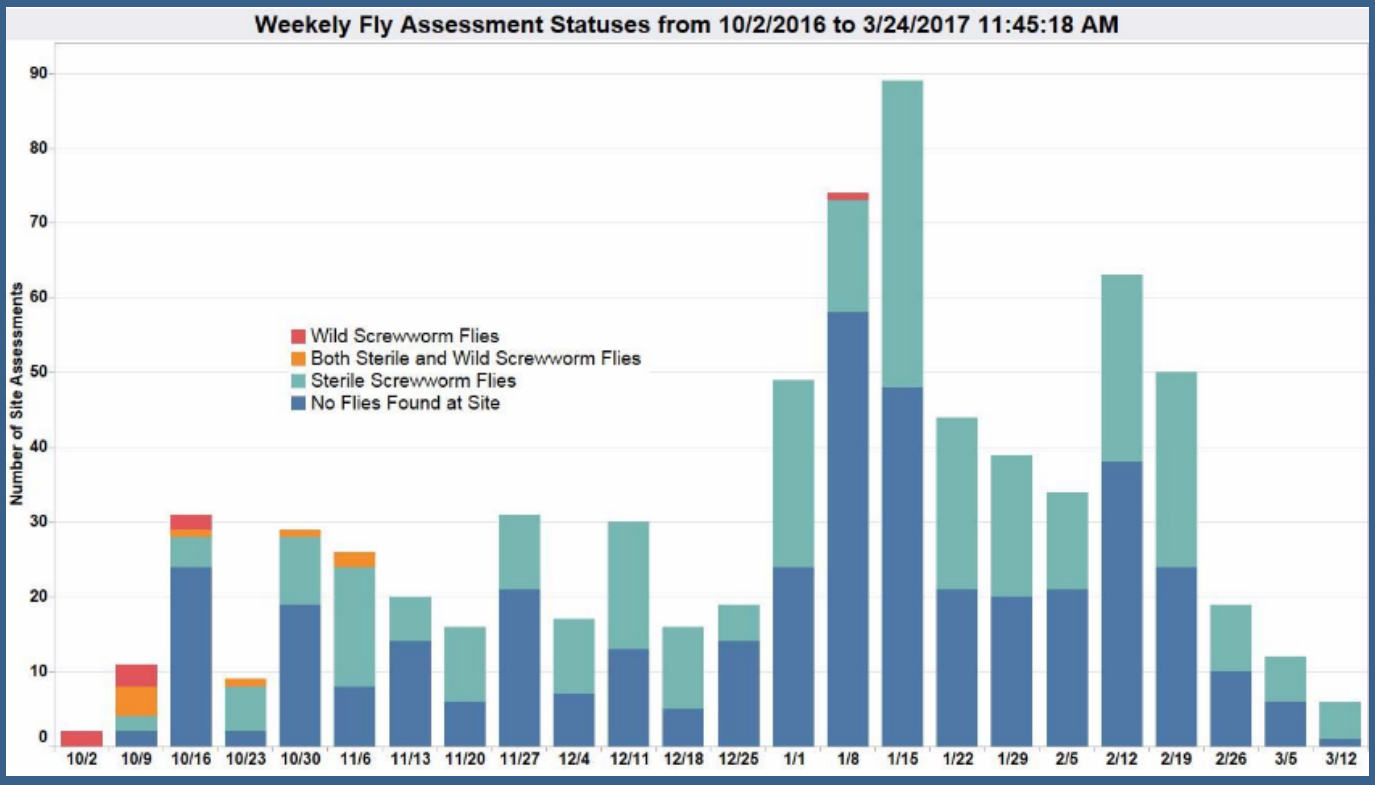
In response to this infestation, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam declared an agricultural state of emergency in Monroe County, Florida. In addition, the department established an Animal Health Check Zone from mile marker 91 south. Animals traveling north were given health checks at an interdiction station located at mile marker 106 to ensure that they do not have screwworm.

Since the Animal Health Check Point was established at the onset of the investigation, inspectors have checked more than 16,000 animals with no detections of screwworm.

Residents who have warm-blooded animals (pets, livestock, etc.) should continue to watch their animals carefully and report any potential cases to 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352).

For more information on the response by FDACS, please visit the Screwworm site at http://FreshFromFlorida.com/screwworm.

An FDACS Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement officer conducts a pet health check.



Source: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/screwworm-mapping

FDA, Federal Partners Issue New Food Safety Analytics Strategic Plan

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) have issued a new Strategic Plan for 2017-2021 as part of the Inter-agency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC).

IFSAC was created in 2011 to improve coordination of federal food safety analytic efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use. Its projects and studies aim to identify foods that are important sources of human illness. IFSAC focuses analytic efforts on four priority pathogens: *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7, *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*), and *Campylobacter*. CDC estimates these four pathogens combined cause 1.9 million cases of foodborne illness in the United States each year.

Under the new strategic plan, IFSAC will focus on continuing to improve estimates of the sources of foodborne illnesses and developing methods to estimate how these sources change over time. The three goals of the new strategic plan are to improve the use and quality of new and existing data sources; improve analytic methods and models; and enhance communication about IFSAC progress.

The strategic plan outlines key objectives to achieve those goals, including:

- Enhance the collection and quality of relevant source data;
- Enhance the use of existing regulatory and foodborne illness surveillance data;
- Incorporate genomic data and other novel data sources;
- Explore ways to address key gaps in data quality, methods and models;
- Develop new analytic approaches and models to maximize use of existing data;
- Expand the availability of technical and scientific expertise through collaboration with internal and external partners;
- Enhance relationships and engagement with internal and external groups; and
- Improve the synthesis, interpretation and dissemination of analytical findings for multiple audiences.

The plan also highlights accomplishments from IFSAC's first five years and the group's intent to continue engaging with stakeholders on future work. For more information on IFSAC, please visit the collaboration's website.

Enrollment Open: Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Course

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

When disaster strikes, a 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

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

The Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics Offers 2017 Veterinary Biologics Training Program

The Veterinary Biologics Training Program has been offered every year since 1996. More than 2500 individuals, including 748 international attendees from 93 countries, have attended the program. The course gives participants an overview of the scientific principles of vaccines and vaccination and of the USDA regulatory process for assuring the purity, safety, potency and efficacy of veterinary biologics.

This course is sponsored by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB) and the Iowa State University (ISU) College of Veterinary Medicine.

The next course is scheduled for May 15-19, 2017 in Ames, Iowa.

For more information, or to register, visit
http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/IICAB/meetings/may2017.php

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UF/IFAS Shares in $2.45 Million to Research Tickborne Disease Risk

Plant ecologist Luke Flory. Photo by Amy Stuart

To protect personnel on Southeastern military installations from tickborne diseases, a federal program has awarded a five-year, $2.45 million grant to a team of researchers with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and other institutions. The grant was provided by the federal Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program, an initiative supported by the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The scientists will determine how tick populations are affected by invasive plants, fire, and the availability of host animals in specific locations; this information will help the team assess tickborne disease risk under future climate conditions.

Portions of the project based at UF/IFAS will receive more than $700,000 in funding, said Jack Payne, UF senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "This project requires an interdisciplinary approach to account for all of the relevant ecological factors that influence the risk of people being exposed to tickborne diseases," Payne said. "An ideal team of subject-matter experts has come together here, and I'm proud that UF/IFAS is involved."

Participating faculty represent UF/IFAS, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Boston University, Payne said. Field studies will take place on more than a dozen U.S. Department of Defense properties where the lone star tick is found, including sites in six states where the tick co-exists with an invasive plant known as cogongrass — Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina.

For more information, visit https://news.ifas.ufl.edu/2017/03/ufifas-shares-in-2-45-million-to-research-tickborne-disease-risk/#more-11382

NIH Begins Study of Vaccine to Protect Against Mosquito-Borne Diseases

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) has launched Phase 1 of clinical trials to test an investigational vaccine intended to provide broad protection against a range of mosquito-transmitted diseases, such as Zika, malaria, West Nile fever and dengue fever, and to hinder the ability of mosquitoes to transmit such infections.

"Mosquitoes cause more human disease and death than any other animal," said NIAID Director Anthony S. Fauci, M.D. "A single vaccine capable of protecting against the scourge of mosquito-borne diseases is a novel concept that, if proven successful, would be a monumental public health advance."

For more information, visit https://www.niaid.nih.gov/news-events/nih-begins-study-vaccine-protect-against-mosquito-borne-diseases

USDA Warns it Only Takes One Person to Spread Harmful Invasive Pests

Each year, harmful invasive plant pests and diseases cost the United States about $40 billion in crop losses, damage to forests and vulnerable ecosystems, and expensive eradication and control efforts. It only takes one person who moves one piece of infested firewood, one infected plant, or one piece of infested fruit to spread these invasive pests to a new area. That's why USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has designated April as Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness Month.

Spring is the perfect time to remind everyone of the simple steps they can take to prevent the spread of harmful invasive plant pests.

"People wonder if their individual actions really matter. The answer is yes," said APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine Deputy Administrator Osama El-Lissy. "If you're not careful, you can unknowingly spread invasive pests by simply taking firewood on a camping trip, buying plants or seeds online, or mailing a friend a gift of homegrown fruit."

For example, USDA believes Huanglongbing (HLB, or citrus greening) was spread from Florida to California by one person who likely mailed an infected plant to that State. HLB was first detected in Florida in 2005 and has since spread rapidly. A concerted effort by USDA, states, and the citrus industry is underway to find new strategies in the fight against HLB.

The good news is that individuals can also stop the spread of invasive pests by looking for and reporting suspicious insects or signs of damage.

For example, USDA detected Asian longhorned beetle in Boston in 2010 when a single groundskeeper with a keen eye noticed and reported an unusual dime-sized hole in a tree. That one call provided early warning to jumpstart an eradication effort that quickly eliminated this destructive pest from that city.

To learn more, visit www.HungryPests.com. The website includes photos and descriptions of 19 invasive pests that can be moved easily by people, an online federal quarantine tracker by state, and phone numbers for reporting signs of invasive pests.

Florida SART Concludes 2017 Planning Meeting

Last month, the Florida State Agricultural Response Team completed their biennial planning meeting. Occurring March 28-30 at the Plaza Resort and Spa in Daytona Beach, the event served as the perfect opportunity to familiarize participants with disaster situations and provide background information on animal and agriculturally-related emergency management issues.

Meeting follow-up information with be posted online at www.flsart.org, and in the May edition of the SART Sentinel.

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.

Editor: Michael T. Turner, The Turner Network, LLC (www.TurnerNetwork.com) under contract with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
Email: flsart@turnernetwork.com

Associate Editor: Dr. Greg Christy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
Email: gregory.christy@freshfromflorida.com