The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

As of Nov. 26, 2018, the romaine lettuce E. coli outbreak has resulted in 43 people becoming ill in 12 states.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *UF VETS to Host Technical Operations Course*
- *Food Safety and Food Defense Report: A special section dedicated to feed and food emergency planning and response.*
- *Enrollment Open: Multiple Courses for Small Animal Emergency Sheltering*

Efforts Continue on Romaine Lettuce E. coli Outbreak Investigation

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state authorities, continue to investigate a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections associated with consumption of romaine lettuce in the U.S.

As of November 26, 2018, this outbreak has resulted in 43 people becoming ill in 12 states, with the last reported illness onset date being October 31, 2018. An additional 22 people in Canada have become ill, and the FDA and their partners are coordinating the investigation with Canadian health and food safety authorities.

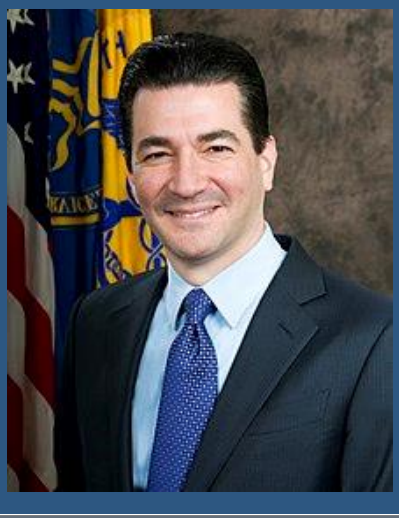
Over the Thanksgiving holiday, the FDA continued to investigate the outbreak. The investigation at this point suggests that romaine lettuce associated with the outbreak comes from areas of California that grow romaine lettuce over the summer months, and that the outbreak appears to be related to "end of season" romaine lettuce harvested from these areas. The involved areas include the Central Coast growing regions of central and northern California.

To prevent additional cases of E. coli O157:H7, on November 20, 2018, the CDC advised the public not to consume romaine lettuce and to destroy any romaine lettuce in their homes.

See *Romaine Lettuce Investigation* on page 2.

"As we continue to investigate this outbreak, today the FDA is announcing new steps to help consumers better identify where their romaine is grown through voluntary labeling."

— Scott Gottlieb, M.D.
Commissioner of Food and Drugs
U.S. Food & Drug Administration



Romaine Lettuce Investigation (continued)

Below is the updated advice and official public warning:

Based on discussions with major producers and distributors, romaine lettuce entering the market will now be labeled with a harvest location and a harvest date. Romaine lettuce entering the market can also be labeled as being hydroponically or greenhouse grown. If it does not have this information, you should not eat or use it.

If consumers, retailers, and food service facilities are unable to identify that romaine lettuce products are not affected – which means determining that the products were grown outside the California regions that appear to be implicated in the current outbreak investigation -- we urge that these products not be purchased, or if purchased, be discarded or returned to the place of purchase.

Romaine lettuce that was harvested outside of the Central Coast growing regions of northern and central California does not appear to be related to the current outbreak. Hydroponically- and greenhouse-grown romaine also does not appear to be related to the current outbreak. There is no recommendation for consumers or retailers to avoid using romaine harvested from these sources.

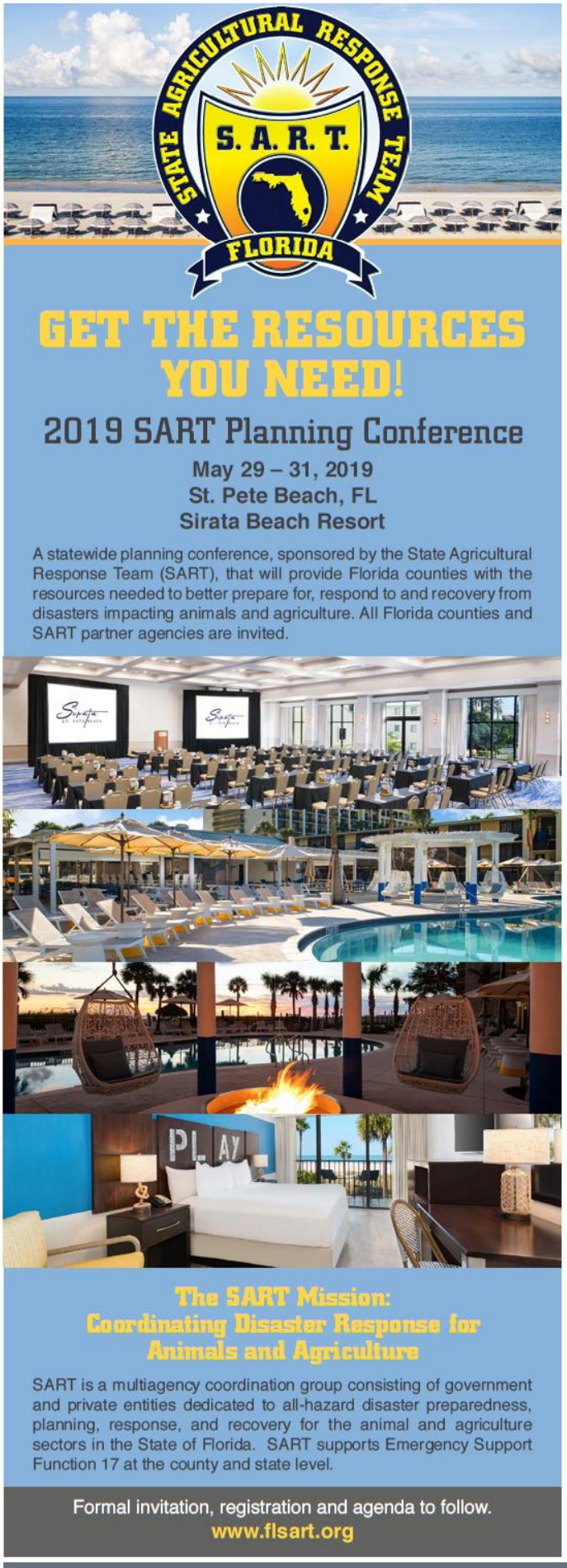
The FDA has urged growers, processors, distributors and retailers to:

- *clearly and prominently label all individually packaged romaine products to identify growing region and harvest date for romaine; and*
- *clearly and prominently label at the point of sale the growing region when it is not possible for romaine lettuce suppliers to label the package (e.g. individual unwrapped whole heads of romaine lettuce available in retail stores).*

For more information, please visit:
https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/UCM626716.htm?utm_campaign=11262018_Statement_Current%20romaine%20lettuce%20E.%20coli%20O157%3AH7%20outbreak%20investigation&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua

Would You Like to Feature a Highlight in *The Sentinel*?

We're always looking to provide the most relevant animal and agricultural emergency resources in the state. If you have stories, topics, or calendar events that you'd like to publicize, just email us at: flsart@turnernetwork.com



Welcome, Nick Morrow, to the SART Team!

Nick Morrow recently joined FDACS as the new operations analyst to support SART and ESF 17. Nick holds a bachelor's degree in International Affairs with a concentration in Emergency Management from the Florida State University. While studying Emergency Management, Nick interned with ESF 6 Mass Care at the State Emergency Operations Center.

During his 6-month internship, he was involved in multiple emergency activations including the Hurricane Michael response. Due to Nick's outstanding performance and lasting contributions during his internship, he was awarded the Florida Division of Emergency Management "Certificate of Excellence."

As a recent graduate, Nick is thrilled for the opportunity to use his education and passion for emergency management to assist SART operations.

UF VETS to Host Animal Technical Rescue Awareness Training

Animal Technical Rescue Awareness Training will be hosted at the University of Florida (UF) College of Veterinary Medicine on January 12, 2019. This 8-hour training is valuable for anyone interested in learning about managing scene safety, requesting appropriate resources, and recognizing tools and techniques used in animal technical rescue operations.

Common scenarios include overturned trailers, mud entrapment, and animals trapped below grade (e.g. swimming pools, septic tanks, canals, etc.). Participants can register for $100 per person and should contact Brandi Phillips (brandikphillips@ufl.edu) for more information.

United States Department of Agriculture Aid to Farmers

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has multiple programs to aid farmers, ranchers, and producers.

For information, visit your county USDA Farm Services Agency office or go to: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index

Enrollment Open: Multiple Courses for Small Animal Emergency Sheltering

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition has upcoming opportunities for their Awareness Level 1 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 1 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

December 8 Course – Lakeland, FL (Awareness Level 1)

When: Saturday, December 15, 2018
Where: SPCA Florida, 5850 Brannen Road South, Lakeland, FL 33813
Register: http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eft0pv80fdd61cc8&llr=cmn8hziab

February 16 Course – Lakeland, FL (Awareness Level 1)

When: Saturday, February 16, 2019
Where: SPCA Florida, 5850 Brannen Road South, Lakeland, FL 33813
Register: http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07efupmuan88443814&llr=cmn8hziab

In the News

Short stories and updates from around the state…

West Nile Virus (WNV) (Manatee, Marion, Levy, and Washington Counties)
Neurologic clinical signs began between November 7-16, 2018 for four WNV cases confirmed this week in Manatee, Marion, Levy, and Washington Counties. All four cases have received veterinary care and are recovering from the disease. WNV is an arthropod-borne virus spread by the bite of infected mosquitos and causes neurological disease. The virus primarily affects birds, but can also infect horses, bats, cats, dogs, squirrels, alligators, and humans. This year in Florida, there have been 14 confirmed WNV equine cases.

Strangles (Collier County)
On November 21, 2018, one premises in Collier County was placed under quarantine for a history of clinical signs of Strangles. This is the first Collier County quarantine in 2018. To date for Florida in 2018, there has been a total of 56 Strangles quarantines. Strangles is a contagious, infectious, upper respiratory disease of horses.

SART Steering Committee Meeting
The SART Steering Committee Meeting has been CANCELLED for the month of December.

Annual SART Advisory Board Meeting
The Annual SART Advisory Board Meeting will be held on December 13, 2018, 10:00am – 12;30pm, in Gainesville at the Florida Farm Bureau. The purpose of this meeting is to celebrate our Hurricane Michael response and share new SART projects coming in 2019. The Board Members constituting the Advisory Board is the primary contact/representative for each SART partner agency.

FCA and FVMA Accepting Disaster Recovery Donations
For those interested in donating, the Florida Cattlemen's Association and the Florida Veterinary Medical Association will accept relief and recovery donations online by credit card. Donations are tax deductible and donors will receive a tax-deductible gift receipt. Links to their donation webpages can be accessed at: Florida Veterinary Medical Association and Florida Cattlemen's Association

Natural Life Pet Products Expands Recall of Dry Food Due to Elevated Levels of Vitamin D
The products were distributed to retail stores in the southeast, including Florida. The company became aware of the elevated levels of vitamin D after receiving complaints from three pet owners of vitamin D toxicity after consuming the product. Read more

Looking for Pet-Friendly Sheltering Information?

The SART website has posted new, valuable resources for pet-friendly sheltering. For all the details, visit: https://flsart.org/jsp/petfriendly

Hurricane Michael Recovery Continues

Hurricane Michael made landfall at Mexico Beach, Florida, just south of Panama City as a Category 4 hurricane on October 10, 2018. Hurricane Michael was the third-most intense Atlantic hurricane to make landfall in the United States. It was also the strongest storm in terms of maximum sustained wind speed – recorded at 155 mph – to strike the United States since Andrew in 1992. In addition, it was the strongest storm on record in the Florida Panhandle.

ESF 17 and SART continued to support recovery efforts for Hurricane Michael through the month of December.

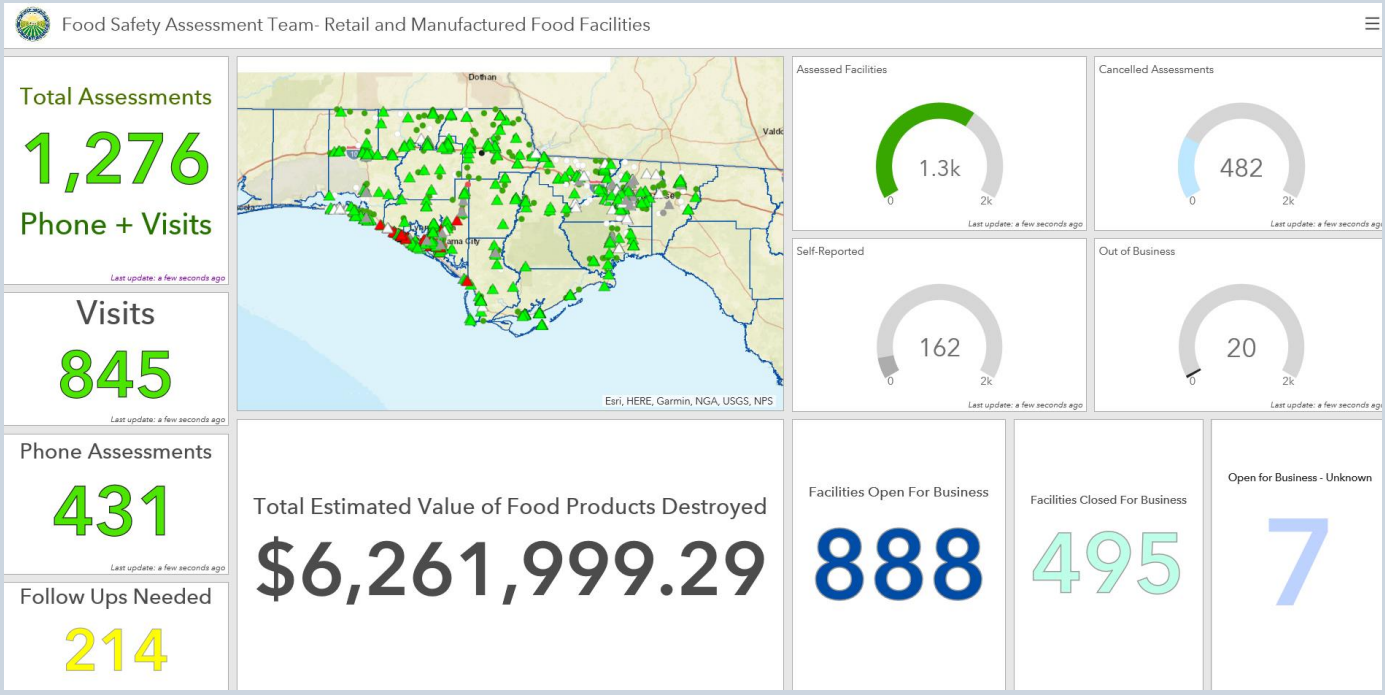
- ESF 17 ended staffing the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) on November 9, 2018, when it returned to a Level 2 (Partial Monitoring) for Hurricane Michael recovery.
- ESF 17 Incident Command Post (ICP) located in Tallahassee demobilized on October 25, 2018, and its Donation Staging Area (DSA) located in Jackson County demobilized the following week.
- The ESF 17 Donation Distribution Points, Watering Stations, and Water Hotline also closed at the end of October.
- This month, the ESF 17 Incident Management Team (IMT) finished distributing the remaining animal emergency response supplies to livestock producers and small animal organizations in the impacted areas.
- FDACS Mosquito Control Incident Response Team (MCIRT) finished aerial spray and trapping missions in the requesting counties Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, and Washington Counties.
- Honey bee farms located through the Panhandle were impacted because the high winds blew away all plant forage and blossoms that bees feed upon. Estimates were provided that 50,000 hives were at risk of starving. GreaterGood.org, an independent charitable organization devoted to improving the health and well-being of people and pets, stepped forward and coordinated donations of 35,000 gallons of corn syrup and 38,000 pounds of bee pollen that were used to feed the bees until plant growth could return. The ESF 17 IMT and SART partners assisted in receiving and distributing the donated supplies to beekeepers.

Food Safety and Food Defense Report

A special section dedicated to feed and food emergency planning and response.

FDACS' Division of Food Safety is responsible for assuring the public of a safe, wholesome and properly represented food supply through permitting and inspection of food establishments, inspection of food products, and performance of specialized laboratory analysis on a variety of food products sold or produced in the state. The Division of Food Safety monitors food from farm gate through processing and distribution to the retail point of purchase.

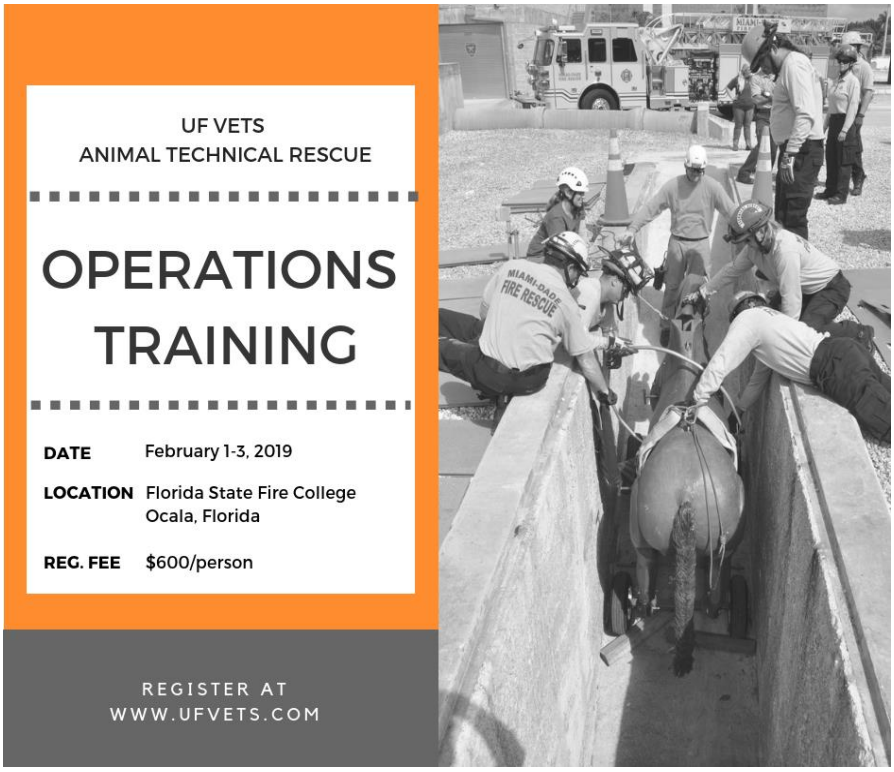
Since Hurricane Michael made landfall, the Food Safety Assessment Team has been in full gear conducting assessments on retail and manufactured food facilities. Through November 20, 2018, 1,276 assessments have been conducted across 845 visits. The snapshot below is from the ArcGIS dashboard used by the team.



UF VETS to Host Technical Operations Course

Animal Technical Rescue Operations Training will be hosted at the Florida State Fire College in Ocala February 1-3, 2019. This 24-hour training targets anyone interested in learning the skills needed to operate technical rescue equipment and successfully work with a team to conduct rescue activities. This course includes significant hands-on scenarios including mud and trailer extrication.

Participants can register for $600 and should contact Brandi Phillips (brandikphillips@ufl.edu) for more information.



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 at 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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