The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Attendees at the October 10th workshop.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Keep Food Safety in Mind when Planning for the Holidays*
- *Enrollment Open: Animal Emergency Sheltering*
- *Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried Celebrates Grand Opening of New $11 Million State Laboratory*

SART Holds its Strategic Directions Workshop

October 10th, SART held a "Strategic Directions Workshop." This workshop was the fourth installment in a series of strategic planning workshops designed to help update the SART Organizational Declaration, Steering Committee, and Advisory Board.

Using the roadblocks identified in a previous workshop, the "Strategic Directions Workshop" helped to build courses of action for how to break roadblocks and build the practical vision of SART for the future.

Through discussion and exercises, the group was able to develop a framework and shared understanding of concrete steps that will help SART attain its goals.

Our next strategic planning workshop entitled "Focused Implementation Workshop" will take place in Gainesville on November 19th. Attendees will work to answer the question:

What will our specific, measurable accomplishments be for the first year?

There will be two more workshops, so mark your calendars now! See page 12 for more details.

"I was in the fourth grade here in Kissimmee when this original facility was opened – and it's been long due for an update, to continue the important work that's done here to protect animal and public health and safety."

—Charles Bronson
Former Commissioner of Agriculture
Comments at the opening of a new lab.
Read the story on page 8.

LECALE Enrollment Open for December 9-13, 2019

The objective of the Livestock Education and Certification for Agriculture Law Enforcement (LECALE) program is to provide law enforcement and state attorney personnel rigorous and relevant training curriculum regarding generally accepted livestock production practices, skills to discern acceptable animal well-being, and ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills in the field and during litigation proceedings.

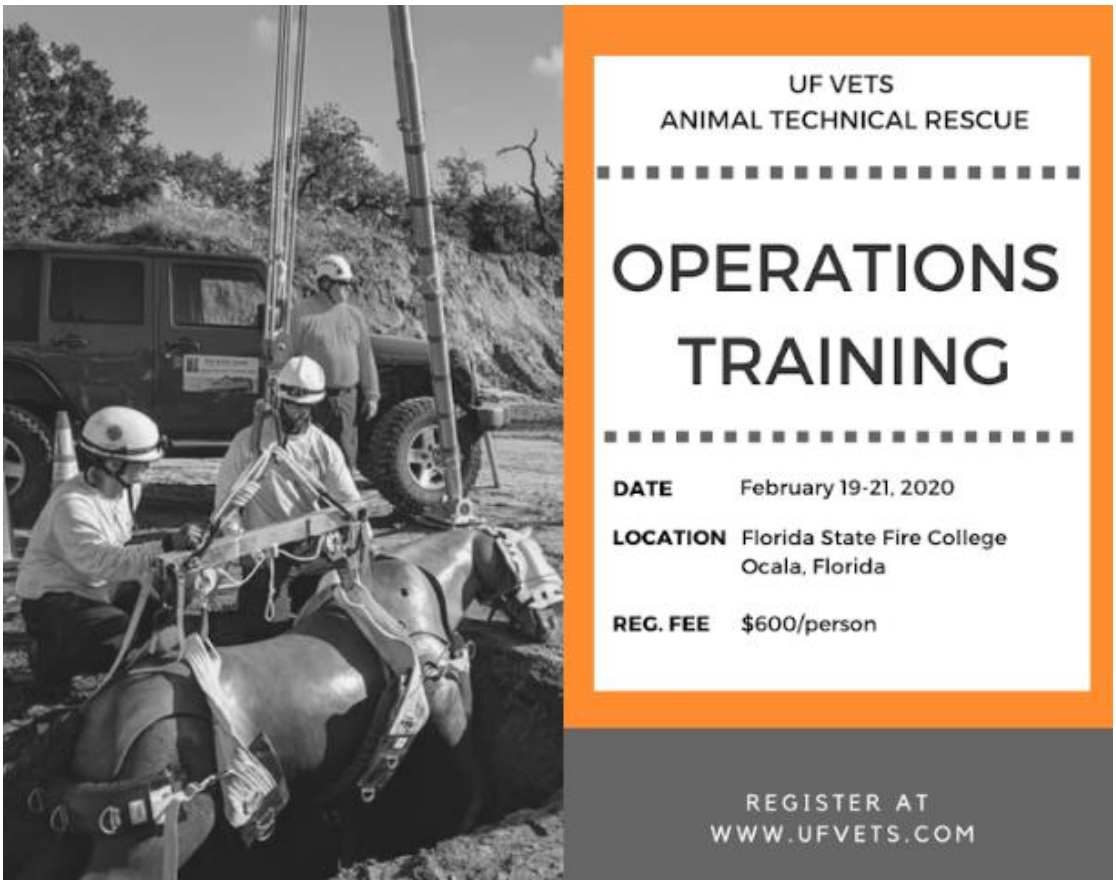
Specific learning objectives include: Basic Animal Husbandry, Identification, Behavior and Handling, Nutrition, Pastures, Disease and Biosecurity, Euthanasia, Body Condition Scoring, and Live Animal Evaluations.

DATES AND TIMES
December 9-13, 2019

LOCATION
Department of Animal Sciences
2250 Shealy Drive, Room 102, Building 459
Gainesville, Florida 32611

For more information and to register, visit:
https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/courses/lecale/

UF VETS: Animal Technical Rescue Operations Training



UF VETS Participated in Animal Search and Rescue Training

In October, members of the University of Florida (UF) Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service (VETS) team and trained Animal Technical Rescue (ATR) responders from St. Johns County Fire and Lakeland Fire participated in a water-based animal search and rescue training. This training was hosted by RVR Horse Rescue and ASAR Training & Response, and provided participants with the opportunity to practice skills related to flood and swiftwater rescue of animals.

Exercises included boat operations, water entry, and emergency life safety to mitigate hazards in these environments. Regular training is a critical part of maintaining preparedness for emergency and disaster events and keep our responders well prepared in case of deployment.

In other news, UF VETS will be hosting an open enrollment Operations Level Animal Technical Rescue Training in Ocala at the Florida State Fire College February 19-21. This hands-on training will provide participants with the opportunity to engage in scenario-based training using tools and techniques critical for human life safety and animal welfare. Registration is $600/person and can be accomplished by visiting www.ufvets.com or contacting Brandi Phillips at brandikphillips@ufl.edu.

Enrollment Open: Animal Emergency Sheltering

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) has upcoming opportunities for their Awareness Level 1 and Operations Level 2 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 1 course (FL-003-RESP) gives students the knowledge necessary to work in a small animal emergency shelter. This class provides expertise and practical experience required to become a disaster animal responder. The Operations Level 2 (FL-607) course gives many new job options, in addition to leadership skills and team-led opportunities. This course expands upon information covered in Awareness Level 1 and ICS-100 courses. Both courses are certified by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and are geared for Florida responders who want to help rescued animals, 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

Awareness Level 1 Courses

When: Saturday, November 16, 2019
Where: Marietta, GA - Hosted by Good Mews Animal Foundation
Registration: http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=cmn8hziab&oeidk=a07egekoh9j82260716

Operations Level 2 Courses

When: Saturday and Sunday, November 23 and 24, 2019
Where: Lakeland, FL - Hosted by Florida SPCA
Registration: http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=cmn8hziab&oeidk=a07egfrtum29713135a

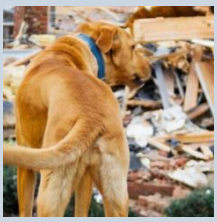
In the News

Short stories and updates from around the state and nation…

As African Swine Fever Spreads Across Asia, U.S. Pork Industry Preps for an Emergency
Currently, African swine fever is nowhere in the western hemisphere, but it could arrive on any plane or ship from an infected country. "It won't come across our land borders unless it first gets into a different country," said Iowa State University veterinary medicine professor Jim Roth. "So the major concern is people and products from positive countries, and there are more and more positive countries all the time." The African swine fever virus first infected hogs in China in August 2018 and since then, it's devastated that country's pig population, which is the world's biggest. (Iowa Public Radio) Read More

Virus in Mexican Tomatoes Causing Concern, USDA Action Needed
The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has issued an alert regarding a virus found in Mexican tomatoes imported into Florida and potentially other U.S. states. ToBRFV, the tomato brown rugose fruit virus, is a highly virulent virus that can cause severe fruit loss in tomatoes and peppers. Imported tomatoes potentially carrying ToBRFV pose a risk to the state's fresh-market tomato supply. The ToBRFV tobamovirus was recently intercepted by FDACS inspectors in packaged Mexican tomatoes in Naples, Florida and Gainesville, Florida. These tomatoes have been destroyed. Read More

Commissioner Nikki Fried Issued Statement to Congress on Aquaculture
Last month, Agriculture Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried submitted testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, in advance of the committee's hearing on sustainable offshore aquaculture. In Florida, aquaculture is a $77 million industry, with over 700 aquaculture leases covering 2,700 submerged acres; the industry produces over 1,500 varieties of fish, plants, crustaceans, mollusks, corals, reptiles, and other marine products for food and non-food markets. Florida is one of the nation's top states for fresh seafood production, supporting 14,000 jobs. Read More



Disaster Preparedness for Animals Information Available

FDACS is proud to announce "Disaster Preparedness for Animals" for horses, livestock and pets. Information is now available on their website. Please visit: https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Consumer-Resources/Animals/Animal-Related-Emergency-Response

Cat "Five" Rescue

Consie von Gontard, Director of Training with the Florida Animal Response Coalition (SARC), was recently in the Bahamas to provide animal rescue and sheltering support in response to Hurricane Dorian. While there, she and her team spotted and rescued a lost cat in the debris while using infrared camera technology.

After some investigating, the owners of the cat—as a result of their home being destroyed—were found to have relocated to Seattle, Washington. Consie sheltered the feline, since named "Five," then worked with the family to have him sent to his new home in Seattle. During its time of rescue, the cat was named "Five" because it survived a major Category 5 hurricane and because it appears that he has a hurricane-like marking on his side.

Counties, Is Your Contact Information Up-to-Date on the SART Website?

Please review your county emergency contact information at https://flsart.org/resource/countyinformation.jsp. If you need to make changes to your county contact information, please send a request to LeiAnna Tucker at LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov. During an emergency, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services provides necessary food and water to affected areas and helps protect animals and pets.

The Department's Florida Forest Service is responsible for incident management and assists emergency responders in clearing debris and distributing supplies. Additionally, the Department's Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement provides law enforcement services to police departments and county sheriff's offices as necessary.

For more information and tips on hurricane preparedness, visit www.floridadisaster.org.

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Pet-Friendly Sheltering
Online Training Announcement

The Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) will soon offer an online, state-certified training on pet-friendly sheltering. The online training will provide participants with guidance on how to plan for and operate a pet-friendly shelter to ensure that individuals evacuating from a disaster with household pets are accommodated.

This training will include useful information on how to:

- Use the Incident Command System in pet-friendly shelter planning and operations;
- Plan for a pet-friendly shelter;
- Understand the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act);
- Establish partnerships for resource coordination;
- Deliver a unified message to the public before, during and after an emergency, and;
- Set up, operate and demobilize a pet-friendly shelter.

Upon successful completion of the course, participants will receive a downloadable **Tool Kit** that offers functional guidance and plan templates. Students will also receive a **certificate** of completion approved by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and Florida

RELEASE DATE
Winter 2019

COURSE DURATION
4 hours

COURSE FEE
Free

COURSE MODE
100% online

TARGET AUDIENCE
Emergency Managers
County Employees
Shelter Volunteers

PROVIDED BY
Florida State Agricultural Response Team, in partnership with the Florida State Animal Response Coalition

POINT OF CONTACT
LeiAnna Tucker
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
(850) 410-0920
LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov

Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried Celebrates Grand Opening of New $11 Million State Laboratory

Last month, Agriculture Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried and former Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson participated in the ribbon-cutting and grand opening of the Bronson Animal Disease Diagnostics Laboratory (BADDL).

A state-of-the-art $11 million state facility, the Bronson Lab is Florida's only animal disease diagnostic laboratory fully accredited by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. The new 22,000 sq. ft. facility houses a full-service veterinary laboratory with the latest technology, dedicated to keeping Florida's animals and citizens healthy. The lab will be managed by Dr. Reddy Bommineni of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry, Bureau of Diagnostic Laboratory.

Congressman Darren Soto and State Veterinarian Dr. Michael Short offered remarks welcoming attendees to the event, which featured State Representatives Jayer Williamson, John Cortes, and Sam Killebrew; Osceola County Sheriff Russ Gibson, Osceola County Commissioners Cheryl Grieb and Fred Hawkins, Jr., Kissimmee Mayor Jose Alvarez, Kissimmee City Commissioner Jim Fisher, and representatives for former Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, Congressman Ted Yoho, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and industry groups.

"From African swine fever to Zika virus, our experts have dedicated their careers to being at forefront of public safety. The new Bronson Animal Diseases Diagnostics Laboratory will play a pivotal role in monitoring health threats, protecting against diseases, and performing cutting-edge research and education," said Commissioner Nikki Fried. "This new state facility wouldn't be possible without our dedicated staff, industry partners, and former Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson. With a vision of supporting Florida's animal industries, Commissioner Bronson's commitment to the health of Florida's animals and residents were pivotal to this lab's success."

During the ceremony, Commissioner Fried presented former Commissioner Bronson a framed picture of the lab, in appreciation for his service and for his family's donation of the land in 1958 on which the Bronson Lab and its predecessor lab sits.

Read more at: https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2019-Press-Releases/Commissioner-Nikki-Fried-Celebrates-Grand-Opening-of-New-11-Million-State-Laboratory

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 the farm gate, through processing and distribution, to the retail point of purchase.

- On Wednesday October 16, FDACS' Division of Food Safety conducted an Environmental Sampling training for inspectors around the state. This eight-hour course was a hands-on course that taught inspectors how to collect environmental samples at retail and manufactured food facilities. For the most part, environmental samples collected are from the surfaces in the environment — mainly food preparation areas. Samples collected at these facilities are sent to the FDACS lab in Tallahassee and are tested for pathogens such as *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella*.

  Not only did students learn how to swab samples, but they learned other positions that take place on the Environmental Sampling teams – runner, scribe, photographer, and data entry/packing the coolers. An environmental sampling may occur due to a suspected foodborne outbreak at a facility or due to a positive pathogen result from a food sample conducted from the field.

- Tropical Storm Nestor spawned three tornadoes in Central and Southwest Florida, causing damage. One tornado (F1) touched down in a residential neighborhood in Cape Coral. A second, F0, touched down in Seminole causing minor damage to a mobile home park. The third tornado (F2) was in Lakeland and reportedly nine miles of land had damage. The Division of Food Safety conducted a total of 48 phone assessments in the areas of these tornadoes ensuring food facilities in these areas were not damaged. An approximate total of $930 worth of food product was reported to be disposed of due to these tornadoes (power outages).

Keep Food Safety in Mind when Planning for the Holidays

To avoid making everyone at the table sick, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) offers five tips for a food safe Thanksgiving:

Tip 1: Don't Wash That Turkey.

According to the most recent Food Safety Survey, conducted by the Food and Drug Administration, 68 percent of the public washes whole turkey before cooking it. USDA does not recommend washing raw meat and poultry before cooking. Washing raw meat and poultry can cause bacteria to spread up to three feet away. Cooking (baking, broiling, boiling, frying or grilling) meat and poultry to the right temperature kills any bacteria that may be present, so washing meat and poultry is not necessary.

Tip 2: Use the refrigerator, the cold-water method or the microwave to defrost a frozen turkey.

There are three safe ways to defrost a turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water and in the microwave oven. Thawing food in the refrigerator is the safest method because the turkey will defrost at a consistent, safe temperature. It will take 24 hours for every 5 pounds of weight for a turkey to thaw in the refrigerator. To thaw in cold water, submerge the bird in its original wrapper in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes. For instructions on microwave defrosting, refer to your microwave's owner's manual. Cold water and microwave thawing can also be used if your bird did not entirely defrost in the refrigerator.

Tip 3: Use a meat thermometer.

The only way to determine if a turkey (or any meat, poultry or seafood) is cooked is to check its internal temperature with a food thermometer. A whole turkey should be checked in three locations: the innermost part of the thigh, the innermost part of the wing and the thickest part of the breast. Your thermometer should register 165°F in all three of these places. The juices rarely run clear at this temperature, and when they do the bird is often overcooked. Using the food thermometer is the best way to ensure your turkey is cooked, but not overdone.

Tip 4: Don't store food outside, even if it's cold.

Storing food outside is not food safe for two reasons. The first is that animals, both wild and domesticated, can get into food stored outside, consuming it or contaminating it. The second is temperature variation. Just like your car gets warm in the summer, a plastic food storage container in the sun can heat up and climb into the danger zone (above 40°F). The best way to keep that extra Thanksgiving food at a safe temperature (below 40°F) is in a cooler with ice.

Continued. See *Holiday Food Safety*, page 11.

Holiday Food Safety (continued)

Tip 5: Leftovers are good in the refrigerator for up to four days.

Cut the turkey off the bone and refrigerate it as soon as you can, within 2 hours of the turkey coming out of the oven. Leftovers will last for four days in the refrigerator, so if you know you won't use them right away, pack them into freezer bags or airtight containers and freeze. For best quality, use your leftover turkey within four months. After that, the leftovers will still be safe, but can dry out or lose flavor.

If you have questions about your Thanksgiving dinner, you can call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) to talk to a food safety expert. Last November they answered more than 3,000 calls about Thanksgiving dinner. You can also chat live with a food safety expert at AskKaren.gov, available from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, in English and Spanish.

If you need help on Thanksgiving Day, the Meat and Poultry Hotline is available from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET.

Consumers with food safety questions can visit FoodSafety.gov to learn more about how to safely select, thaw and prepare a turkey. For more Thanksgiving food safety tips, follow FSIS on Twitter, @USDAFoodSafety, or on Facebook, at Facebook.com/FoodSafety.gov

Hurricane Dorian Recovery for Pets Evacuating the Bahamas

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is providing the following guidance to all individuals who are evacuating pets from areas impacted by Hurricane Dorian and wish to enter the continental United States or territories. This guidance is for the Hurricane Dorian-affected areas of Abaco and Grand Bahama only, all other animal imports must conform to current federal, state, and local regulations.

Visit: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel/evacuation-guidance

Save the Date: SART Workshops

SART partners are invited to come and collaborate in our future workshops for updating the Organizational Declaration and building the priorities of SART. The process for updating SART priorities going forward includes a series of workshops to build commitment, roles and responsibilities, and clear objectives. Each workshop will build on the next. It is ideal that you attend each workshop, but we understand if you can't and will provide a way to hear your ideas. Mark your calendar!

Focused Implementation Workshop 2
November 19, 2019 – 10:00AM-12:30PM
FDACS Division of Plant Industry Auditorium, 1911 SW 34th St., Gainesville, FL 32608
What will our specific, measurable accomplishments be for the first year?

Focused Implementation Workshop 2
December 12, 2019
Location to be determined
What will our specific, measurable accomplishments be for the first year?

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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