The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Course participants pose for a photo at Camp Blanding.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *UF VETS Complete Successful Operations Training*
- *Hernando County Holds Mental Health First Aid Training for Disaster Responders*
- *Vet Knowledge in Podcast Form*

SART Hosted K-9 Handler First Aid Training at Camp Blanding

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) partnered with K9 MEDIC and the Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force, provided the first ever K-9 First Responder & K-9 Tactical Combat Casualty Care Training on February 22 – 24 at the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. Twenty-five (25) K9 handlers and their working K9s attended, providing multijurisdictional representation from local, state, federal, and military agencies, law enforcement and Urban Search and Rescue Teams.

Students participated in a highly interactive, hands-on learning environment packed with tactical scenarios that required them to provide the best field emergency care for their four-legged partner. Two canine handlers from the FDACS Division of Plant Industry – whose K9s inspect agriculture material at commercial shipping facilities – also attended the training.

The FDACS Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement also provided Continuing Education credits for the training. Student testimonials shed light on the critical K9 first aid skills they never knew until this training, and that they now feel confident that they can take care of their K9 wherever and whenever needed. This training was funded and made possible by Florida SART.

See K-9 Handler Training, page 2.

"We ask canines to defend us, to find us, and to go before us in times of danger and in extreme conditions. Their mission is to serve, protect, and save lives – and this training is our opportunity to protect them in return."

— Nicole "Nikki" Fried
Commissioner of Agriculture,
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

K-9 Handler Training (continued)

"We ask canines to defend us, to find us, and to go before us in times of danger and in extreme conditions. Their mission is to serve, protect, and save lives – and this training is our opportunity to protect them in return," said Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried. "Training law enforcement and military canine handlers these crucial emergency veterinary medical skills enhances not only their careers, but the wellbeing of their four-legged partners. We thank the State Agricultural Response Team, the Florida National Guard, and everyone who made this unprecedented tactical training a success."

"By partnering with K9 MEDIC and the Florida National Guard, SART worked to bring an intense, hands-on training experience that focused on protecting and caring for canine first responders in the field, when a veterinarian or hospital isn't around," said LeiAnna Tucker, Florida SART Administrator, FDACS Division of Animal Industry. "By teaching the handler to learn and apply these emergency medical skills for their canine, they're preparing themselves for all situations, whether a missing child, a massive hurricane, or even an act of terrorism they're called to assist with."

"K-9 medical training is a skill rarely offered to handlers," said Sergeant Meyers, Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force. "Providing this course with life-saving, pre-veterinary competencies to handlers throughout the state of Florida helps the communities in which they serve by increasing handlers' abilities to recognize, intervene, and transport their K-9 so they can continue working for years to come."

"This training helped us realize the importance of being prepared to save our dogs in a trauma situation," said Officer Jason Hutchinson, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "This class reiterated that we take seriously first aid for humans, but opened our eyes to the importance of K-9 first aid, as well. If you're given a K-9, you're given a life to care for – it's your responsibility to be ready and equipped to care for your partner."

Read more at: https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2020-Press-Releases/State-Local-Agencies-Hold-K-9-First-Responder-Tactical-Care-Training

Editorial note: Tactical photos above include a simulated dog; no animals were injured.

FDACS Food Safety Team Tackles Super Bowl LIV

By Summer Williams, FDACS

What is one of the first things you think of when you talk about Super Bowl? Football, commercials, and FOOD! When the Division of Food Safety, heard the Super Bowl was coming to Miami in February 2020, we had to start brainstorming.

The Super Bowl LIV food safety and food defense planning process began in the summer of 2019. As you may know, there are many food regulators in the State of Florida: Department of Business and Professional Regulation's (DBPR) Division of Hotels and Restaurants, Florida Department of Health (FDOH), Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Children and Families, Elder Affairs, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and our two federal agencies- the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

With many of these agencies involved with Super Bowl events, there were weekly coordination calls and planning leading up the events. Once we started the planning process, we wanted to focus on large public events that could potentially target any agroterrorism or intentional contamination events. There were hundreds of events surrounding Super Bowl in Miami. How do we narrow it down? We decided to select the largest events for the population; ones that were open to the public, free admission or just a small fee.

Some of these events were 10 days long, which were expected to see the largest crowds. We narrowed it down to the seven largest events in the two-week period prior to Super Bowl Sunday. Some of these events were NFL sponsored and required special NFL credentials to get into the events. This was another process we had to fit into our planning. NFL Credentials had to be submitted months before Super Bowl so Miami Dade Police Department could go through the vetting process to provide official badges and entrance for our teams.

See Super Bowl LIV Food Safety, page 4.

Super Bowl LIV Food Safety (continued)

In addition, we had to work with event coordinators to get supply and vendor lists ahead of time. Once we received these lists, we performed inspections and food sample collection with FDACS regulated entities prior to the Super Bowl affiliated events. In addition, the FDACS Division of Food Safety provided food defense resources to industry partners. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service team also collected food samples from suppliers prior to the events (with a focus on meat products only). FDOH conducted inspections of bars in a one-mile radius of the Hard Rock Stadium and a one-mile radius of Miami's popular South Beach.

See Super Bowl LIV Food Safety, page 5.

Super Bowl LIV Food Safety (continued)

Once Super Bowl events began, FDACS had teams on-site conducting surveillance and food safety sampling from event vendors. DBPR's Division Hotel and Restaurant conducted inspections of these vendors at the events. This also includes Hard Rock Stadium on Super Bowl Sunday.

A total of 135 samples were collected by FDACS' Division of Food Safety during the Super Bowl LIV project. Food samples were tested by the FDACS Division of Food Safety Bureau of Laboratories for micro pathogens and terrorist threat agents.

We'd like to thank Georgia's Rapid Response Team (who handled Super Bowl LIII in Atlanta in 2019) for providing guidance documents and mentorship. We couldn't have done it without them!

Two back to back Super Bowls in Florida, how did we get so lucky? Onto planning Super Bowl LV: Tampa 2021!

Looking for Resources on Food Defense?

Food Defense 101- Front Line Employee:
https://www.fda.gov/food/food-defense-tools-educational-materials/food-defense-101-front-line-employee

Employees FIRST Food Defense Awareness:
https://www.fda.gov/food/food-defense-tools-educational-materials/employees-first

See Something, Say Something Campaign- Food Sector:
https://www.fda.gov/food/food-defense-tools-educational-materials/see-something-say-something-campaign

USDA FSIS Food Defense Overview:
https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-defense-defense-and-emergency-response/food-defense-overview

UF VETS Complete Successful Operations Level Training

The UF VETS Open Enrollment Animal Technical Rescue Operations Training was a great success at the Florida State Fire College in February. The class was full at 21 students including fire fighters, an animal control officer, a veterinarian, as well as livestock owners and members of other animal response agencies. We had participants from the panhandle down to Charlotte County, and from Texas, Alabama, and South Dakota. During the three days of training, students learned some large and small animal techniques that may apply to technical rescue emergencies that they are likely to encounter.

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, agriculture and pets.

In the News

Short stories and updates from around the State, nation, and globe…

ESF 17, SART and Walton County Emergency Management Partner Up to Hold Training for Management of Animals, Agriculture and Food Related Disasters
Last month, two courses—All Hazards Preparedness for Animals in Disasters (AWR 328) and All Hazards Planning for Animal, Agricultural, and Food-Related Disasters (MGT 448)—were held in Defuniak Springs, FL. The courses were presented by the Western Institute for Food Safety & Security, and sponsored by Walton County Emergency Management, FDACS, and SART. The two days of training averaged 25 participants per class.

China Says African Swine Fever Vaccine Effective in Lab Tests
China's Harbin Veterinary Research Institute, the country's top research body on animal diseases, said it developed an African swine fever vaccine that laboratory testing has showed is safe and effective. The institute, which is overseen by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said the live vaccine with reduced virulence was created from a series of gene-deleted viruses using the country's first African swine fever strain as a backbone. (Bloomberg News) Read More

2020 Florida Legislative Session: Senate Bill 752 Emergency Sheltering of Person with Pets
This bill would require FDACS and the Department of Education to assist the Florida Division of Emergency Management in determining strategies regarding the evacuation of persons with pets; requiring counties that maintain designated shelters to designate a shelter that can accommodate persons with pets; specifying requirements for such shelters, etc.

Have Questions About Coronavirus and Pets/Animals?

In case you get questions regarding the novel Coronavirus, here is a link to FAQs produced by the CDC including questions on pets and other animals and animal products: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

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
Spring 2020

COURSE DURATION
4 hours

COURSE FEE
Free

COURSE MODE
100% online at
www.FLSART.org

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

Florida Interdiction Station Blitz

The Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement (OALE) held its monthly interdiction blitz at Station 9 (Lake City) on February 19, 2020. In conjunction with OALE Officers, FDACS' Food Safety inspectors prevented foodborne illness from Florida consumers by destroying over 3,700 pounds of tofu products that were out of temperature.

When the truck was stopped at the station, the refrigeration unit was not powered on and had an ambient temperature of 68 degrees. Product temperatures should range from 46-47 degrees. As a result, all products were voluntarily destroyed at the local landfill.

Hernando County Holds Mental Health First Aid Training for Disaster Responders

Disasters are undisputed stressful events for many people throughout the world, and the impact of psychological distress can be seen in impacted communities as well as in emergency responders. Presented by the UF/IFAS PIE Center, UF/IFAS Family Youth & Community Sciences (FYCS) and the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART), last month's training was designed to provide emergency responders, UF/IFAS extension agents, and community members who are active in natural disasters with the skills needed to address mental health needs and issues following disasters.

The first portion of the training included Mental Health First Aid training, which is a course developed by the National Council for Behavioral Health. The second portion of training focused on understanding needs of families and community members during a disaster, and how to best support individuals in the context of a disaster. The instructors included Dr. Angie Lindsey and Dr. Heidi Radunovich, faculty members in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Dr. Lindsey's expertise is in disaster preparedness and recovery and Dr. Radunovich is a licensed psychologist working with mental health needs and gaps following disasters.

FL SARC: Open Enrollment for Animal Emergency Sheltering Courses

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 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

- Saturday, MAR 21, 2020 - Lakeland, FL - Hosted by SPCA Florida
- (Tentative) Saturday, April 25, 2020 - Jacksonville, FL
- (Tentative) Saturday, May 16, 2020 - Pensacola, FL
- Saturday, JUN 20, 2020 - Sarasota, FL - Hosted by Cat Depot
- Saturday, JUL 11, 2020 - Panama City, FL - Hosted by Operation Spay Bay
- (Tentative) Saturday, JUL 18, 2020 - Fort Myers, FL
- (Tentative) Saturday, AUG 8, 2020 - Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Saturday, OCT 10, 2020 - Lakeland, FL - Hosted by SPCA Florida
- (Tentative) Saturday, NOV 14, 2020 - Port St. Lucie

Operations Level 2 Courses

- Sat. & Sun. FEB 29 & MAR 1, 2020 - Naples, FL - Hosted by Humane Society Naples
- Sat. & Sun. SEP 26 & 27, 2020 - Lakeland, FL - Hosted by SPCA Florida

Webinar on March 12 at 2:00PM for SART Partner Agencies Only

SART will hold a webinar to discuss the draft agenda of activities, hotel accommodations, and share important information about the upcoming SART workshop in April 7 – 9 in Ocala, Florida.

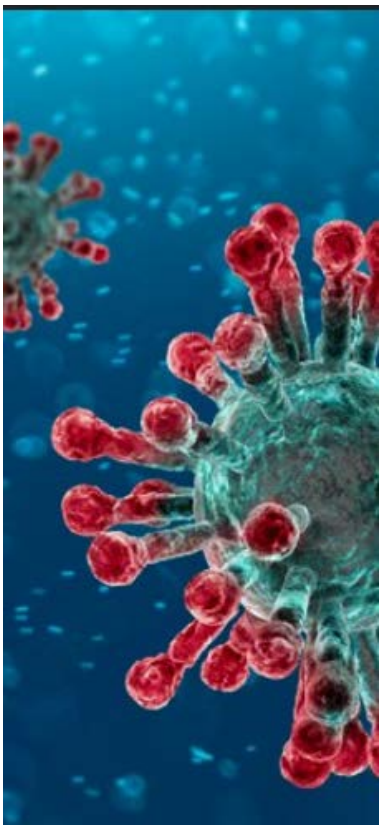
SART partners have received a webinar invitation via email. Please contact LeiAnna Tucker if you have not received the calendar invite.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Pets

The Florida Department of Health is the state's lead agency for public health issues, and coordinates with the Centers for Disease Control on public health emergencies.

In summary, based on the information from the CDC:

- There have been no reports of pets or livestock becoming ill with COVID-19.
- There is no evidence that animals or animal products imported from China or other countries pose a risk of spreading COVID-19 in the U.S.
- For questions on importation requirements of pets, please refer to CDC's requirements for bringing a dog to the United States.
- There is currently no evidence that animals in the US might be a source of the virus.
- As a common-sense precaution, people should restrict contact with pets and other animals while they are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of the household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.



USDA Opens Wildfires and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced last month additional disaster assistance available to agricultural producers, including producers impacted by drought and excess moisture as well as sugar beet growers. Through WHIP+, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is helping producers recover from losses related to 2018 and 2019 natural disasters.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will open signup on March 23 for producers to apply for eligible losses of drought (D3 or above) and excess moisture. USDA is also entering into agreements with six sugar beet processing cooperatives to distribute $285 million to grower members of those cooperatives who experienced loss. Read more at: https://www.farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus

Vet Knowledge in Podcast Form

Vet Candy is a veterinary talk show that showcases dynamic and relatable veterinary professionals. Unfiltered and always entertaining, hosts Dr. Jenifer Chatfield, Dr. Jason Chatfield, and Dr. Jill Lopez and their guests present unique and amusing points of view on literally everything related to vet life.

Recent (and relevant!) episodes include:

- **Episode 20** - In Other News... Do Vets Need To Worry About The Novel Coronavirus?
- **Episode 19** - In Other News, What Is African Swine Fever and Why Should We Be Concerned?
- **Episode 18** - Aussie Vet Student, Lucy Fuchter Gets Real About Mental Health Issues
- **Episode 17** - In Other News...Many Deadly Diseases Are Preventable!

See more at: https://www.petliferadio.com/vetcandy.html

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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