The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Photo by Sgt. Michael Baltz

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Commissioner Nikki Fried Issues Emergency Orders & Rules During COVID-19*
- *Sarasota County Emergency Response Teams Train Together*
- *FVMA Successfully Intervenes to Prevent Mandatory Closure of Veterinary Practices*

"[T]he U.S. food supply remains safe for both people and animals. There is no evidence of human or animal food or food packaging being associated with transmission of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19."

— Frank Yiannas
Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response, FDA
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SPECIAL EDITION: COVID-19 Response

On December 31st, 2019, Chinese health officials reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) that over 40 Chinese citizens in Wuhan, China were sickened by an unrecognizable type of pneumonia. A week later, Chinese scientists discovered that the sickness was caused by a new infectious disease of the Coronavirus family.

Since December, the Novel Coronavirus, now referred to as COVID-19, has rapidly spread across the globe due to its ease of transmission and 5.1-day incubation period.

The COVID-19 virus spreads human-to-human primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes (WHO, 2020). Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath (CDC, 2020). On March 11th, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was declared as a pandemic by WHO.

As of Wednesday, April 1st, 2020, the number of worldwide positive cases of COVID-19 is 887,067. The United States tops the list of countries with the highest amount of positive cases at 190,740.

In Florida, there are 6,693 positive cases of COVID-19 and more positive cases are being identified every day.

See COVID-19 Response, page 2.

COVID-19 Response (continued)

In this special edition of the SART Sentinel, we detail some of the actions taken by Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 and the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) during the ongoing COVID-19 activation and provide resources for Florida's animal and agriculture sectors.

- The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee activated to a Level 1 on Friday, March 14th, 2020. The SEOC remains at a Level 1 activation and ESF17 continues to remotely staff the SEOC.
- Florida State Animal Response Coalition is donating pet food to county municipal animal shelters in certain counties of the state to provide emergency relief. Florida SARC is encouraging people to keep their pets in homes to support pet retention and avoid pets being surrendered to county animal shelters.
- ESF17 coordinated with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to have necessary agricultural commodities exempt from size and weight limits while passing inspection at the weigh stations. An emergency road use permit has been released to include Poultry and Poultry Products, Livestock, Forestry Products, Milk and Milk Products included as "necessary agricultural commodities" in the waiver. This request was made to Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried by the industry as they are striving to restock grocery shelves as quickly as possible and the extra capacity will help this effort.
- Following news that the Mayor of Miami issued an order to close all non-essential business in the City of Miami, The Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) worked with County Mayor Gimenez's office to amend the order to designate veterinary practices in the Miami-Dade area as "essential".

COVID-19 Resources

Animals, Pets, and COVID-19

- ESF17 and SART partners have provided animal and pet resources on FDACS' dedicated COVID-19 page: FDACS.gov/COVID19
  - ESF 17 Information packet Regarding Animal Shelters, Mosquitoes, and Food Safety
  - Frequently Asked Questions for Veterinarians and Pet Owners (American Veterinary Medical Association)
  - Important COVID-19 Information for Animal Shelters (University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Program)
  - Protecting Yourself, Your Pets, and the Community from COVID-19 (Florida Veterinary Medical Association)
- The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) has released COVID-19 resources for Florida's shellfish growers: http://shellfish.ifas.ufl.edu/news/covid-19-resources-for-shellfish-growers/

Food Safety and COVID-19

- FDACS Division of Food Safety has provided food safety guidance on FDACS' dedicated COVID-19 page: FDACS.gov/COVID19
- FDA reassures public that the supply chain is in-tact and that COVID-19 is not transmitted by food**:** https://www.fda.gov/fda-offers-assurance-about-food-safety-and-supply
- FDA COVID-19 Food Safety Webpage: https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19

FDA Fact Sheet on Safety Distributing Unused Human Food for Animal Food Use During COVID-19

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions on in-store dining, restaurants and restaurant suppliers may have surplus food that they cannot use and are looking for ways to repurpose their inventory. The preferred option is to use this food as human food and FDA has provided some regulatory flexibility for that redistribution. Another option is to send the unused food for use as animal food. Unused restaurant and grocery store food is commonly repurposed as animal food and is a valuable way to re-use food in a way that limits the impact on the environment.

If you can't redistribute the unused food for human food use, FDA has developed a new Fact Sheet on how to safely distribute it for animal food use during COVID-19.

FDA Offers Assurance About Food Safety and Supply for People and Animals During COVID-19

By Frank Yiannas, Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response, FDA

A critical part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's mission is safeguarding the human and animal food supply, helping to ensure that our food is not contaminated at any point during its journey along the supply chain.

COVID-19 is a new frontier for all of us as we deal with the realities of a pandemic and the impact it is having on our lives, on our families, our communities, and on our work. The FDA is committed to protecting the health of the American people, and to facing any challenges in food safety and access that arise during this public health emergency. That has never been more true than now.
So, let me assure you first that the U.S. food supply remains safe for both people and animals. There is no evidence of human or animal food or food packaging being associated with transmission of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. This virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission. For these reasons, we do not anticipate that food products would need to be recalled or withdrawn from the market for reasons related to the outbreak, even if a person who works in a human or animal food facility (e.g. a food packager) is confirmed to be positive for the COVID-19 virus.

See *FDA's Frank Yiannas,* page 2.

FDA's Frank Yiannas (continued)

No Current Disruptions in the Supply Chain
There are currently no nationwide shortages of food, despite localized reports of shortages. Speaking personally, I've had the same experience that many other consumers have had of going to my neighborhood grocery store and seeing shelves empty of certain items. But based on our ongoing communication with industry, we understand this is largely an issue of unprecedented demand – not a lack of capacity to produce, process and deliver – and manufacturers and retailers alike are working around the clock to replenish shelves.

Food production and manufacturing – for both people and animals – are dispersed throughout the U.S. and there are currently no widespread disruptions reported in the supply chain. Overall, retail supply chains remain strong, and the FDA is working with food manufacturers and grocery stores to closely monitor the human food supply chain for any shortages. The agency is in close contact with industry and its trade associations, which are in touch with their members about supply chain issues. The same is true for animal food. The FDA is monitoring the availability of foods for livestock and pets. There are no shortages, and no current disruptions in the pet and livestock food supply chain.

Protecting Government and Industry Workers
We have an unwavering commitment to protecting the health of FDA, state, and local personnel on the front lines of food safety as well as the health of the workers on farms and in human and animal food facilities all over the nation who play critical roles in helping to feed Americans and our animals every day.

We've taken steps to help reduce the risk of infection for FDA investigators and state inspectors in ways that won't interrupt the process of how safe foods reach the market. Specifically, we have postponed routine surveillance inspections of domestic human and animal food facilities and farms out of concern for the health and well-being of FDA investigators and state inspectors and to respect industry safety concerns about visitors. We will, however, continue to inspect "for cause" when a potential threat to public health (human or animal) is identified.

Regulations Require Actions to Control Risks for Workers in Food Facilities
We care about workers in human and animal food facilities – their risk of infection and problems they may have getting to and from work with curfews and quarantines in certain places. Some protections live in the FSMA requirements that human food facilities have food safety plans to control risks associated with workers who are ill, regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. There are also requirements for human food facilities to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. Food-service workers also must continue to practice frequent hand washing and glove changes before and after preparing food. The animal food regulations also include requirements for cleanliness of the facility and personal cleanliness of employees.

If You Have Questions
The FDA's website, www.fda.gov/coronavirus.

New FAQs on the CDC COVID-19 Website Regarding Household Pets/Animals

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated and posted new frequently asked questions on the CDC COVID-19 website regarding household pets/animals.

The new FAQs are below:

Q: Do I need to get my pet tested for COVID-19?
A: No. At this time, routine testing of animals for COVID-19 is not recommended. Talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to care for your pet.

Q: Can animals carry the virus that causes COVID-19 on their skin or fur?
A: At this time, there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread to people from the skin or fur of pets.

Q: Are pets from a shelter safe to adopt?
A: There is no reason to think that any animals, including shelter pets, in the United States might be a source of COVID-19.

For more information, visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584390773118

Commissioner Nikki Fried Issues Emergency Orders & Rules During COVID-19

Last month, Agriculture Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried issued the following emergency orders and rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency orders and rules may be viewed here.

"During this pandemic, we are taking every step necessary to protect Floridians," said Commissioner Fried. "This includes waiving fees for businesses and license applicants, extending the expiration on concealed weapons and security guard licenses by 30 days, providing training flexibility for workers, and helping move gasoline to consumers more efficiently. These are common-sense actions that will help our state continue to thrive in these challenging times."

Emergency Order 2020-002 provides relief to pest control, pesticide, fertilizer, and animal feed licensees by suspending the late fees assessed for failure to timely pay fees, or timely renew licenses and certifications. Additionally, it extends (by 30 days) the timeframes required for both quarterly and annual reporting, as well as for renewing licenses and certificates.

Emergency Order 2020-003 waives fees that would typically be imposed for late renewals of the following permits and registrations: solicitors of contributions (charities), brake fluid, commercially-used weights and measures (e.g., scales), motor vehicle repair shops, and dealers of agricultural products.

See Nikki Fried Issues Emergency Orders, page 6.

Nikki Fried Issues Emergency Orders (continued)

Emergency Order 2020-004 will help concealed weapon licensees and Chapter 493 licensees by suspending renewal application late fees, providing additional time (30 days) to renew licenses set to expire, providing armed security officers additional time to submit proof of annual requalification, and allowing unarmed security officer training to be conducted by live video conferencing.

Emergency Rule 5JER20-1 states that the COVID-19 global health crisis and the U.S. Center for Disease Control's directive to limit travel, there is an extreme and unusual oversupply of fuel meeting winter season volatility requirements, known as "winter blend" fuel. This emergency rule will allow winter blend fuel to be sold longer, ensuring the adequate and rapid distribution of available fuel and helping to stabilize the fuel market, and providing consumers a stable supply of gasoline.

Emergency Rule 5PER20-2 extends the deadlines for sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program to appeal agency action that may be issued against them by the Department in the coming weeks. The deadlines are being extended to allow sponsors the extra time needed to comply with recommendations for social distancing when responding to the agency action and to allow the Department to safely hold hearings at a later date.

FDACS Launches Webpage: Guidance for Consumers on COVID-19

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has launched a new webpage providing guidance for consumers on COVID-19. Topics currently include:

- Small Business Emergency Bridge Loans
- COVID-19 Business Damage Assessment Survey
- Food Safety Guidance
- Animal and Pet Resources
- Coronavirus Scams
- FDACS Press Releases Regarding COVID-19

Visit: https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Guidance-for-Consumers-on-COVID-19

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ANIMAL SHELTERS AND CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

FDACS.gov/COVID19

WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS.

Protect Employees and Volunteers

There is no evidence that companion animals can spread COVID-19 or that infection would be serious for them. The virus spreads primarily from person to person. The health and safety of employees/volunteers should be the focus of every animal shelter.

- Employees and volunteers who are sick or show signs of respiratory illness should not work until they are symptom free.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before eating, after using the bathroom, coughing or sneezing, and touching surfaces. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available and there is no visible dirt on your hands.
- Frequently sanitize common areas with EPA registered antimicrobial products for use against COVID-19 that are safe to use in and around the animals and shelter.
- Click here for the CDC's interim guidance for businesses and employers.

Support and Inform Your Community

Remind community members to have a plan in place for pets.

- Identify a family member/friend who can care for pets if needed.
- Have crates, food, and extra supplies on hand for quick movement of pets.
- Keep all animal vaccines up to date and document all medications and dosing.
- Pets should have ID: collar with ID tag and microchip (best practice is microchipping).

Prepare Shelter for Increased Intake

While mass intake is not likely, people who contract the virus and are hospitalized may not have someone to care for their pets. Steps to prepare include:

- Free up shelter capacity with increased adoption efforts, rescue partners, and foster homes for animals already at the shelter.
- Prepare a facility plan with your shelter veterinarian on intake and isolation protocols.
- Be prepared to identify, isolate, or divert animals that may have been exposed to COVID-19. This includes securing disinfectants and personal protective equipment that may be used safely around animals. Identify locations available for fostering, identify capacity needs, and maintain updated list.
- Have a written protocol in place to follow and provide regular staff updates to staff.
- Secure additional food/supplies for increased intake, including foster network needs.

Prepare for Staff Illness:

- Strongly encourage your employees and volunteers to stay home when sick.
- Check availability of volunteers who can assist in a staff shortage.
- Connect with local boarding facilities, surrounding shelters and rescues and communicate plans.
- Click here for the CDC's interim guidance for businesses and employers.

For more information, visit
FDACS.gov/COVID19 or CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

FDACS-P-01922

Sarasota County Emergency Response Teams Train Together

By Sarah Bostick, Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent
University of Florida/IFAS Extension Sarasota County

On a sunny Saturday in February, the Sarasota K-9 Search and Rescue Team and the Sarasota Agricultural Recovery Group (SARG) came together for a joint wilderness exercise. Both groups know that leveraging a well-oiled response to emergencies requires practice. And both groups recognize that by working together, they can hone systems, logistics, communications, and skills better than by practicing alone.

The K-9 team is a volunteer group working under the direction of Sarasota County's Emergency Management department. Specializing in wilderness and open-water search and rescue, the team has put its skills to work across the state, the country, and even internationally. Each of the team's volunteer handlers and their dogs receive highly specialized training and, ultimately, certification, which allows their work to be used in court cases.

SARG is also a volunteer group, made up of highly skilled individuals from across Sarasota County. SARG members include ranchers, retired police and fire department officers, Sarasota Emergency Management employees, heavy equipment operators, and more. The group specializes in orchestrating a coordinated response to disasters, such as hurricanes, that affect agricultural and large-animal operations. The key to SARG's success is the extensive use of HAM radio for communication.

On this February day, 11 members and dogs from the K-9 team met with seven SARG members for a search-and-rescue exercise. Together, they made their way to the historic Cowboy Camp, located miles from paved roads, in an area of palmetto flatwoods, oak hammocks and marshes deep in the 24,000-acre Carlton Memorial Reserve of eastern Sarasota County. Once there, SARG members assembled a portable radio tower and the K-9 team readied its dogs.

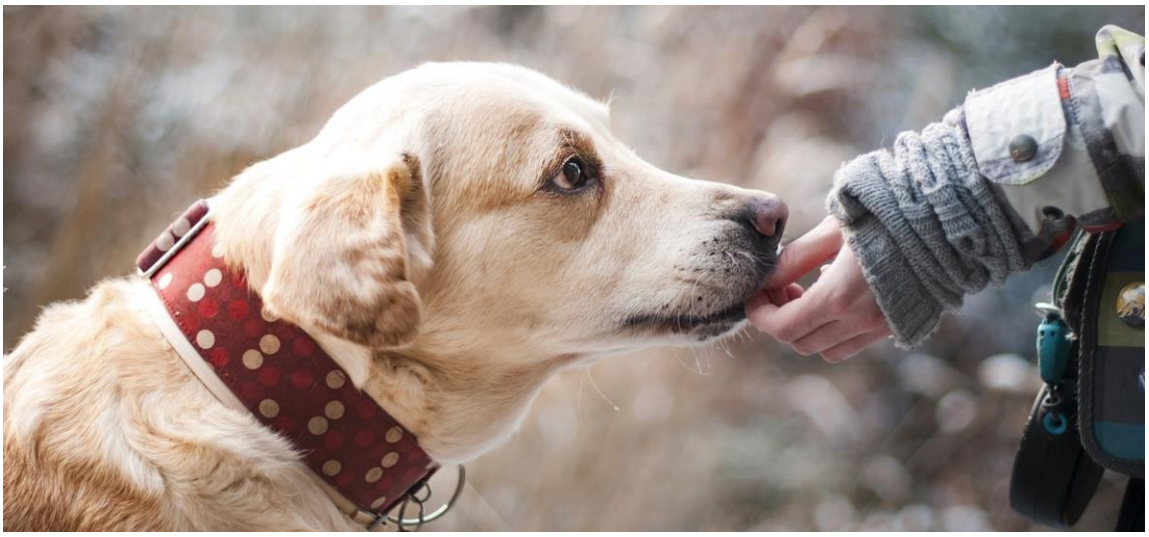
The goal of a K-9 rescue team is to provide the dogs with as much "nose time" as possible by minimizing the amount of time that dogs and handlers spend walking to and from the search area. Travelling over rough ground is exhausting for humans and dogs alike. SARG members provided off-road vehicles, along with years of experience navigating the wildlands of the county, to transport dogs and handlers cross-country to and from the search site.

The search and rescue exercise was deemed a solid success. Both groups were able to practice essential skills and work on perfecting the chain of command and communication systems that are key to success. Both groups also utilized the Incident Command System (ICS) for their command and control functions, filling out all ICS paperwork as though the exercise were a real-life incident.

By working together to stage a remote emergency response exercise, new partnerships were made. It is by working together that we achieve great things and inspire innovation in others. Organizers of the exercise report that two members of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) came to Cowboy Camp to observe how the two teams of volunteers worked together to enact an efficient, focused, and organized collaborative search and rescue.

In the News

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



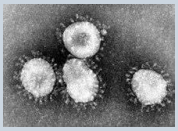
ASPCA Commits $5 Million in COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Initiative
To assist pet owners and animal welfare organizations affected by the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, the ASPCA ® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) is launching the ASPCA Relief & Recovery Initiative, a $5 million multi-pronged strategic relief response to the crisis. The response includes $2 million in grants to animal welfare organizations in critical need of funds and pet food to pet owners who face challenges providing food for their animals. Read More

PetSmart Charities Emergency Relief Grants
PetSmart Charities is evaluating conditions resulting from COVID-19 and the best ways we can support our partners, pet parents and the pets they love. If you are an organization working within the official COVID-19 response efforts, email emergencyrelief@petsmartcharities.org to inquire about possible grant assistance. Read More

FDA: Outbreak Investigation of Listeria monocytogenes: Enoki Mushrooms (March 2020)
Consumers should not eat and should check their refrigerators and throw away any recalled enoki mushrooms from Sun Hong Foods, Inc. and Guan's Mushroom Co., because they may be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. Restaurants and retailers should not sell or serve recalled enoki mushrooms distributed by Sun Hong Foods, Inc. and Guan's Mushrooms Co. Read More

FDA Letter to Stakeholders: Do Not Use Chloroquine Phosphate Intended for Fish as Treatment for COVID-19 in Humans
The FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine has recently become aware that some consumers may mistake chloroquine phosphate used to treat disease in aquarium fish for FDA-approved drugs (used to treat malaria and certain other conditions in humans) that are being studied as a COVID-19 treatment for humans. Read More

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

How Can You Get Involved? How Can You Help?

By Jenifer Chatfield

One of the most common questions from the veterinary community when I am lecturing about disaster preparation at veterinary conferences is How can I get involved? Or How can I help?

A desire to help others in distress is a wonderful trait that runs through the veterinary medical family. It is what drives many of us to enter the profession initially. So, it makes perfect sense that in times of disaster, whether it is a hurricane or an emerging infectious disease like COVID-19, veterinarians and technicians want to be part of the solution.

Convergent, unaffiliated, or spontaneous volunteers as described by one emergency management entity as, "well-intended but inexperienced volunteers whose efforts have sometimes hindered rather than helped response and recovery operations."

No matter how often or how wide-spread the information is regarding "self-deployment" to areas impacted by disasters, people still "report for duty" woefully unprepared and typically become part of the problem to be managed by the response apparatus draining needed resources from the response itself. Still, the issue remains, how can a compassionate veterinary professional support their community or yours during disaster response, and more importantly, recovery?

Multiple avenues already exist for veterinary professionals to scratch that disaster response itch. Veterinarians are particularly helpful resources during public health emergencies such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the National Veterinary Response Team has already deployed multiple times during this current outbreak. What is the benefit for licensed veterinarians to respond as part of an official structure?

First, the very license that veterinarians hold is the most compelling reason. Individual veterinary licenses are not portable. Once a veterinarian crosses state lines, they need to be granted the privilege to practice by that new state.

However, if part of an official response entity, such as the Medical Reserve Corps or the National Veterinary Response Team, this complication is resolved. Additionally, if practicing outside your normal circumstances, such as an exclusively small animal practitioner opining on zoonotic disease prevention/transmission in human special needs shelters that allow service dogs or limited pets, it is good to be shrouded in the cloak of state or federal response liability insurance. The lone wolf responder has no such legal protection.

If none of these reasons are mitigating your compulsion to jump in the car and drive to a disaster site, consider the fact that you may not be the help that is needed. While the impacted population may not need you, it does not devalue your capability or diminish your good intent.
It has become readily apparent to most that the "pull vs. push" concept is most effective. A well-intended "push" of perceived resources from the outside is not helpful, but, again, occupies resources to manage. Waiting for the impacted population to request necessary aid to fill existing and confirmed needs/gaps is the most effective method by which to provide support to response.2 Veterinarians are not likely to be needed is large numbers until 2-3 weeks post-impact as human needs will appropriately be addressed first.

How You Can You Help (continued)

Now that you are feeling totally superfluous and a bit silly in your drive to provide compassionate support to your fellow humans, let go of that silliness! We all need support of our fellow human beings during times of anxiety and disaster! Take a moment and decide how you can BEST support the response/recovery effort and consider aligning yourself with one of these incredible organizations:

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

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

-
- (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

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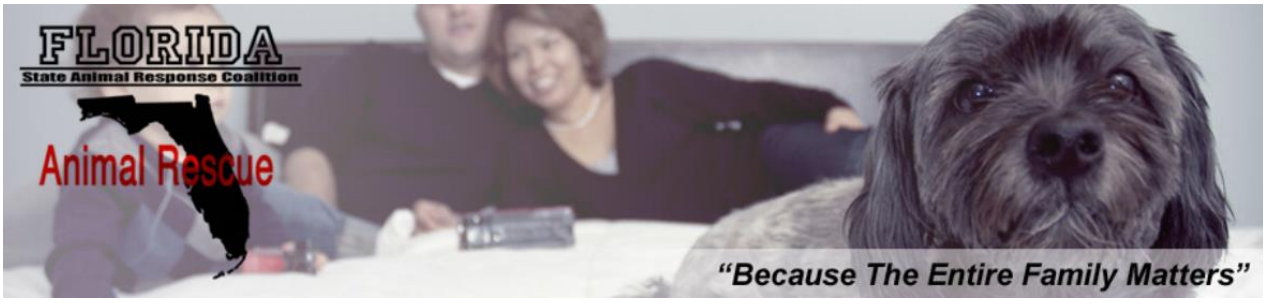
- Sat. & Sun. SEP 26 & 27, 2020 - Lakeland, FL - Hosted by SPCA Florida



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

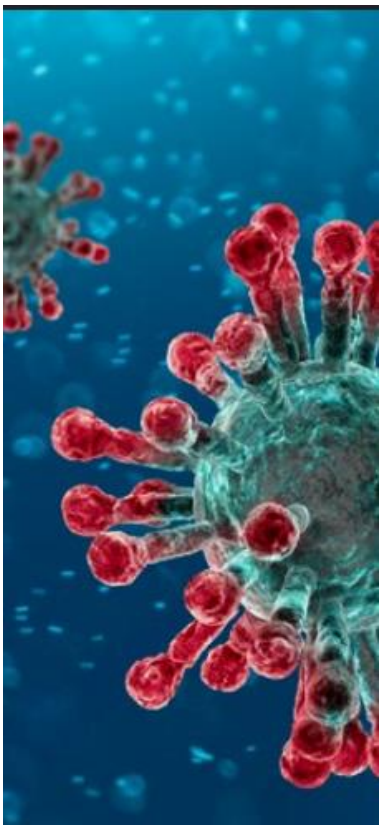
Please review your county emergency contact information at https://flsart.org/resource/countyinformation.jsp.

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.

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:



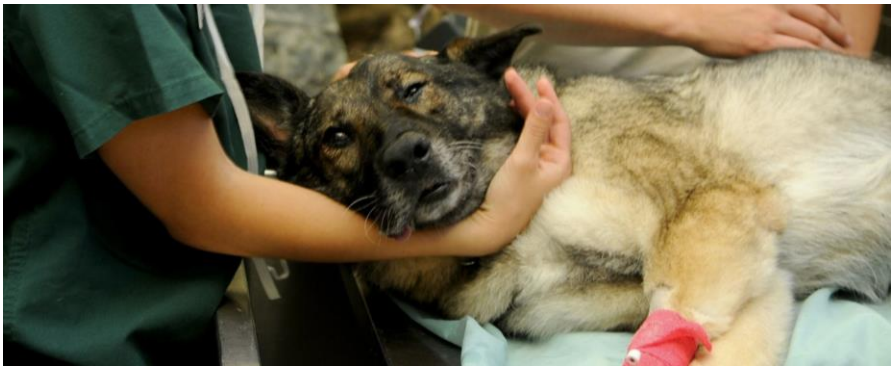
- There have been no reports of pets or livestock becoming ill with COVID-19.
- There is no evidence that animals or animal products imported from China or other countries pose a risk of spreading COVID-19 in the U.S.
- For questions on importation requirements of pets, please refer to CDC's requirements 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.

Florida Department of Health: What You Need to Know Now About COVID-19 in Florida

Visit https://floridahealthcovid19.gov for the latest updates from the Florida Department of Health.

The COVID-19 Call Center is available 24/7 | 1 (866) 779-6121 | COVID-19@flhealth.gov

FVMA Successfully Intervenes to Prevent Mandatory Closure of Veterinary Practices



The Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) received its first notice of mandatory business closures directly impacting veterinary practices. Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez issued Executive Order 07-20 on March 19, closing all non-essential businesses in to limit the movement of persons and safeguard the lives and health of its citizens. The initial order would have closed veterinary clinics and hospitals in Miami-Dade, Florida's largest county, with a population of more than 2.8 million residents.

Immediately upon receiving notification of this order, the FVMA interceded with County Mayor Gimenez's office to designate veterinary practices in the Miami-Dade area as "Essential Businesses." Within a few hours of our request, Mayor Gimenez issued an Addendum to his Executive Order to clarify which businesses can remain open. Veterinarians and pet boarding facilities are now included.

The FVMA is currently working with officials in Governor DeSantis' office to request that veterinary clinics and hospitals be classified as "Essential Businesses," should statewide closures be implemented.

Read more at: https://fvma.org/coronavirus-and-your-practice/

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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