The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Photo: Collier County staff receiving donated pet food.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Florida Farm Bureau Donates $400,000 to Feeding Florida*
- *FDA Provides Flexibility to the Food Industry to Support Food Supply Chain and Meet Consumer Demand During COVID-19*
- *Study: African Swine Fever Outbreak Could Cost US Up To $50 Billion*

SPECIAL EDITION: COVID-19 Response

SART Coordinates with Feeding Florida to Donate Pet Food

Since the release of the April Edition of the *SART Sentinel*, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 and SART partners have continued to take actions to assist the Animal and Agriculture Sectors of Florida during the COVID-19 outbreak.

During this unprecedented time, one of SART's goals is to encourage people to keep their pets in homes and avoid pets being surrendered to animal shelters, while also helping stabilize animal shelters. Access to pet food is critical to meet this goal.

To support this goal in Florida's areas of high impact and community spread, SART has partnered with Feeding Florida. Feeding Florida is Florida's food bank network that serves healthy nutritious food to food insecure households. Many of those households have pets, and several SART partner agencies distribute donated pet food during emergencies through their network.

SART Partners have arranged the donation of pet food into the state and Feeding Florida have accepted these donations to be distributed to households with pets and animal shelters using their food delivery network. By providing pet food to citizens, SART will support food insecure households with pets and avoid pets being surrendered to animal shelters.

See COVID-19 Response, page 2.

"Partnerships like these are how we will keep Florida growing."

— Nicole "Nikki" Fried
Commissioner of Agriculture,
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Story on Page 3

COVID-19 Response (continued)

Due to COVID-19, the donations of pet food to animal shelters across the nation are diminished. By providing pet food to animal shelters, SART will help to stabilize animal shelter feeding operations during the pandemic. SART and Feeding Florida have already utilized this model to plan the distribution of over 3,886 cases of dog and cat food to Florida's households and animal shelters in need. ESF17 continues to monitor pet food needs across the state and will coordinate donated pet food, as needed.

Human crises can also affect animals, and we are very fortunate here in Florida to have a strong partnership of mass care and animal service providers working together like SART and Feeding Florida.

In this edition of the SART Sentinel, we continue to highlight actions taken by 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
- ESF 17 provided N95 masks to ESF 16 Law Enforcement to protect FDACS Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement while they work during this pandemic.
- FDACS has created a new webpage called "Keep Florida Growing" to provide information for agricultural producers and consumers. Guidance includes information on economic assistance for Ag producers.
- In March, ESF 17 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. In April, citrus was added to the size and weight limit waiver. This will help citrus farmers get their products to grocery stores faster.
- FDACS has issued COVID-19 information and guidance for Horse Owners, Veterinarians, and Equine Practitioners. This information can be found here.
- SART Partner ASCPA is providing dog and cat food to Miami residents through their relief and recovery services.

Florida Farm Bureau Donates $400,000 to Feeding Florida

SART partner Florida Farm Bureau Insurance Companies donated $400,000 to Feeding Florida Food Banks. According to Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumers Services (FDACS), the Florida Farm Bureau donation will pay for harvest, packing, transportation and distribution costs involved in providing additional nutrition for the state's food-insecure households.

FDACS Commissioner Nikki Fried announced the donation by saying, "I applaud Florida Farm Bureau Insurance for their generous efforts to feed Florida's families during this pandemic. With our food bank networks like Feeding Florida facing tremendous demand, Florida Farm Bureau Insurance stepping up at this critical time will help people in need access farm-fresh, Florida-grown nutrition. Partnerships like these are how we will keep Florida growing."

On April 23, SART arranged the second delivery of pet food donations to Feeding Tampa Bay food bank consisting of 3,886 cases of dog and cat food (47 pallets/nearly 43,000 pounds). Feeding Florida is distributing the pet food to animal service organizations in Polk, Hillsborough, and Collier Counties, and to food insecure households. This donation was made possible by the GreaterGood and our SART partner, Florida State Animal Response Coalition.

In March, SART coordinated its first pet food donation of 27 pallets into Tampa and distributed the pet food to Hillsborough, Charlette, Pinellas, Citrus, Manatee, Brevard, Pasco, Sarasota, and Lake Counties. Here is a video of the Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center picking up some of the pet food.

SART and Feeding Florida are working to coordinate two more pet food donations into the state. Human crises can also affect animals, and we are fortunate in Florida to have a strong partnership of mass care and animal service providers working together like SART and Feeding Florida.

Read more at: https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2020-Press-Releases/Commissioner-Nikki-Fried-Applauds-400-000-Donation-By-Florida-Farm-Bureau-Insurance

COVID-19 Resources

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services General Information

- ESF17 and SART partners have provided animal and pet resources on FDACS' dedicated COVID-19 page: FDACS.gov/COVID19

Animals, Pets, and COVID-19

- 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)
- HSUS COVID-19 Information Webpage provides information for Pet Owners: https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-faq
- Information for Horse Owners, and Guidance for Veterinarians and Equine Practitioners: https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/COVID-19-Information/COVID-19-Information-for-Consumers

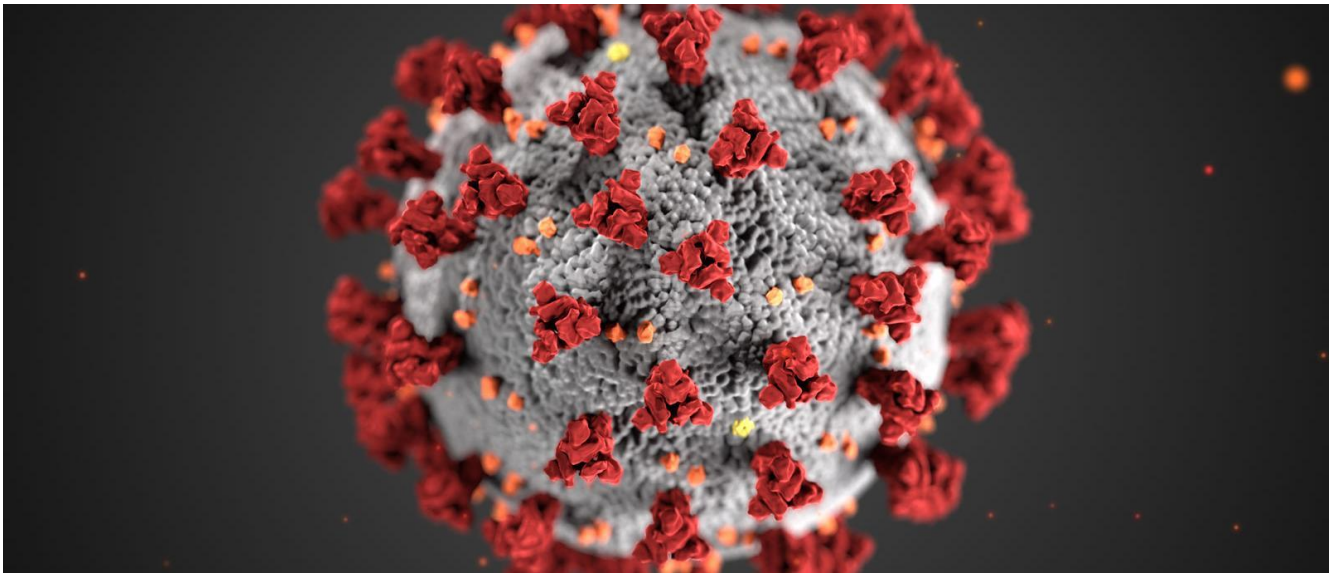
Food Safety and COVID-19

- 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
- 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/
- FDA COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions
- Association of Food and Drug Officials Coronavirus Resources: http://www.afdo.org/coronavirus-resources

SART Partner COVID-19 Webpages

- The UF/IFAS COVID-19 Webpage provides information resources for agricultural producers and consumers: https://ifas.ufl.edu/covid19-information-updates/
- Florida Department of Health Coronavirus Webpage: https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/

Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



Right now, you and your clients might have questions about whether COVID-19 can enter your home through food and food packaging. Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19, but it is still important to remember that food safety starts at the grocery store. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) fact sheet, COVID-19: Information for Consumers – Shopping for Food, can be shared with clients who have questions about shopping safely. This fact sheet is available in English, Spanish, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Another resource to help keep your food safe from the grocery cart to the refrigerator is FDA's guide for Food Safe Shopping, Storage, and Meal Prep. Remember to wash your hands with clean water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food. In addition, it's always important to follow the four key steps of food safety—clean, separate, cook, and chill—to prevent foodborne illness.

Source: U.S. Food & Drug Administration

FDA Provides Flexibility to the Food Industry to Support Food Supply Chain and Meet Consumer Demand During COVID-19

By: Susan Mayne, Ph.D., Director, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

During these turbulent times of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our daily lives have changed, and consumers are understandably worried about what kind of, and how much food is available to feed themselves and their families. We have no nationwide shortages of food, thankfully, but we are seeing a shift in demand for certain foods and other goods that are leading, at times, to temporary shortages on supermarket shelves and other places where consumers shop.

The reasons for this shift are varied. Restaurants may be closed or limited to take-out or delivery only, schools and hotels are closed, and many of us are cooking more at home. This has resulted in an imbalance in the food supply chain with excess quantities of food typically supplied to restaurants and other food service establishments and increased demand for food supplied to supermarkets.

Read more at FDA.gov.

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

Outbreak Investigation of *E. coli* O103: Clover Sprouts (February 2020)

FDA's investigation is complete. CDC declares outbreak over.

Recommendation
Chicago Indoor Garden recalled all products containing Red Clover sprouts. FDA recommends that consumers not eat the following recalled items with "Best By" dates between 12/1/2019 and 3/12/2020 that were distributed to Coosemans Chicago Inc., Battaglia Distributing, Living Waters Farms, and Whole Foods throughout the Midwest:

- Red Clover 4oz. clamshell
- Red Clover 2lb. boxes
- Sprout Salad 6oz. clamshell
- Mixed Greens 4oz. clamshell
- Spring Salad 6oz. clamshell

Recalled products are now past their "Best By" dates and should be thrown away.

Raw and lightly cooked sprouts are a known source of foodborne illness. We recommend that consumers, restaurants, and other retailers always follow food safety practices to avoid illness from eating sprouts. Generally, it is recommended that children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems should avoid eating raw sprouts of any kind.

Background
FDA, along with CDC and state and local partners, investigated an outbreak of 51 illnesses caused by *E. coli* O103 in Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, New York, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Wyoming linked to clover sprouts.

FDA's investigation is now complete, and CDC has declared this outbreak over.

The FDA's analysis of a sample of Chicago Indoor Garden's sprouts identified the presence of *E. coli* O103. Whole Genome Sequencing of this bacteria showed that it matches the current outbreak strain. The sample also matches the outbreak strain from the November-December 2019 outbreak in Iowa, which was associated with sprouts from various Jimmy John's restaurants.

Source: https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/outbreak-investigation-e-coli-o103-clover-sprouts-february-2020?utm_campaign=Outbreak_E.coliCoverSprouts_04222020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua

In the News

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

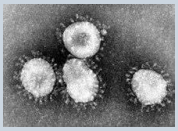
Study: African Swine Fever Outbreak Could Cost US Up To $50 Billion
A new study from Iowa State University and BarnTools, which calls itself "a digital biosecurity platform company," estimates an outbreak of African swine fever in this country could cost at least $14 billion over two years and as much as $50 billion over 10 years. Iowa State University economist Dermot Hayes, one of the study's authors, says the difference in the estimates comes from whether the virus is kept to the wild boar population or if it gets into the domestic pork supply. (Iowa Public Radio) Read More

Global Health Experts Advise WHO to Identify Animal Source of COVID-19 Virus
International experts have advised the World Health Organization (WHO) to work to identify the animal origins of the virus behind the COVID-19 pandemic and its transmission to humans, the UN agency said. (United Nations) Read More

Commissioner Fried Encourages Farmers to Utilize USDA Farmers to Families Program
Through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, the USDA will partner with regional and local distributors, whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other foodservice entities. The USDA will make agricultural purchases estimated at $100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, $100 million per month in dairy products, and $100 million per month in meat products. (FDACS) Read More

How the Coronavirus Pandemic is Changing Florida's Hurricane Response Plan
We're now just one month away from the official start of the 2020 hurricane season. And yes, COVID-19 is having an impact. The virus is forcing state emergency workers to change their approach to hurricane response and that will mean changes for all of us, too. The way we prepare for, respond to, and recover from storms will all be impacted by the need for social distancing. (WTSP) 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
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SART Partner Spotlight: Florida Animal Control Association

The Florida Animal Control Association, Inc., (FACA) was originally organized in 1961 as the Florida State Animal Control Officers Association. In 1984 the Association was reorganized and chartered as the Florida Animal Control Association.

In 1994 the purpose statement was changed to include "protection" as well as "control".
The mission of the Florida Animal Control Association is threefold:

- To cooperate with public agencies dealing in animal control and protection.
- To provide assistance to local animal organizations through supporting disaster planning and post-disaster operations.
- To promote justice and equity in enforcement of local and state laws and regulations.

A non-profit organization, FACA is composed of individual, organizational, related associate, and corporate members. Membership fees, voting privileges, and other requirements of membership are delineated in the Constitution and Bylaws of FACA and policy-making is vested in the Board of Directors.

Mission Statement
The mission of the Florida Animal Control Association is to improve the methods and standards of the animal control and protection profession throughout Florida, to inform the public of the true nature and importance of the work performed by animal control and protection organizations, to cooperate with the other public agencies dealing in animal control and protection, to promote local and state animal related regulations and laws, to provide assistance to local animal control and protection organizations, to assist state agencies and local animal control and protection organizations in disaster planning and post-disaster operations, and to promote justice and equity in the enforcement of animal control and protection laws.

For more information, visit: https://floridaanimalcontrol.org/

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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

NOTE: Live classes are currently suspended, but registration continues for future deliveries. Please verify with FLSARC in advance of attendance to confirm the status of the training.

Awareness Level 1 Courses

- 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. 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.

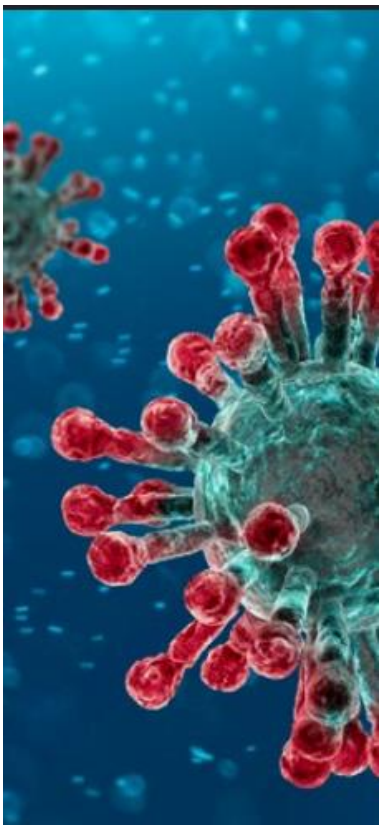
If you need to make changes to your county contact information, please send a request to LeiAnna Tucker at LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov. During an emergency, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services provides necessary food and water to affected areas and helps protect animals, agriculture 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.

Key points from the CDC are:

- We do not know the exact source of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), but we know that it originally came from an animal source.
- At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.
- We are still learning about this virus, but it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations.
- 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. 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

FDACS Division of Food Safety Responds to Tornadoes

The FDACS Division of Food Safety is responsible for assuring the public of a safe, wholesome, and properly represented food supply.

Following tornadoes that hit the State on April 20 and April 23, the Division of Food Safety conducted phone assessments with food facilities in the areas where impact occurred. Below is a summary of that work:

April 20:

- Homosassa Springs Tornado- 19 phone damage assessment surveys completed
- Marion County Tornado- 12 phone damage assessment surveys completed
- Santa Rosa County Tornado- 1 phone damage assessment survey completed
- Volusia County Wind Damage- 2 damage assessment surveys completed by in-person visits

April 23:

- Defuniak Springs tornado- 35 damage assessment surveys in process of being completed by phone
- Keaton Beach damage- 3 damage assessment surveys in process of being completed by phone
- Panama City damage- 28 damage assessment surveys in process of being completed by phone
- Tallahassee tornado- 11 damage assessment surveys in process of being completed by phone
- Southport tornado- 4 damage assessment surveys in process of being completed by phone
- Still awaiting National Weather Service reports regarding Marianna and other areas with reported tornadoes

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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