The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Hurricane Season lasts from June 1 - November 30.

The 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season Has Started. Are you Prepared?

The 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season officially began on June 1st and will last through November 30th. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts another above-average hurricane season.

"We're all here at the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) because of the pandemic," said Jared Moskowitz, Emergency Management Director for the State of Florida. "That has provided more opportunities for high level planning than in years past."

But what about my pets? Well, Florida SART has you covered! Visit SART's *Pet Sheltering Resources* webpage for training material and volunteer information on pet sheltering. And don't forget to check out SART's document, *Disaster Preparedness for Pets*, for helpful information on evacuation planning and tips for pets. SART encourages you to share this information! Additionally, as we begin hurricane season, it is imperative that we assure all contact information is accurate and up to date before an activation.

County contact information such as your County Emergency Operation Center, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 Coordinator, and County Extension Office is a resourceful and highly-utilized feature on the SART website, especially during an activation or exercise. In the event of a disaster, proper preparation will pay off.

Visit www.FLSART.org for the latest information.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *SPECIAL SECTION: COVID-19 Response & Resources*
- *ESF 17 and SART Respond to the 8,000+ Acre "36th Avenue Wildfire" in Collier County*
- *FDA Provides Best Practices for Re-Opening Retail Food Establishments*

"You are invited to take part in a Livestock Lunch and Learn Summer Webinar Series: Exploring the Beef Cattle Industry: From Pasture to Plate."

— Scot Eubanks
Assistant Director of Agricultural Policy
Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Story on Page 8

SPECIAL SECTION: COVID-19 Response & Resources

ESF 17 Forms "Working Groups" to Respond to COVID-19

Since the release of the May Edition of the SART Sentinel, ESF 17 and SART partners have continued to take actions to assist Florida's animal and agricultural sectors during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Recognizing the need for a coordinated response to COVID-19, ESF 17 formed three working groups. These working groups include the Animal Care Working Group, Pet Food Donation and Distribution Working Group, and the Disease Surveillance Working Group. The Animal Care Working Group monitors pet, livestock, equine, and veterinary needs such as feeding, sheltering, animal care issues, and animal testing questions. The Pet Food Donation and Distribution Working Group coordinates with the Animal Care Working Group on pet food needs, working with SART partners to source pet food donations, and provide information to Feeding Florida for the distribution of pet food to food insecure households and animal shelters. The Disease Surveillance Working Group tracks and coordinates all COVID-19 animal test requests made to the State Veterinarian's Office, and animal tests processed at the Department's Bronson Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

During May, the Animal Care and Pet Food Donation and Distribution Working Groups collaborated to identify pet food needs and facilitated the delivery of donated pet food to the Panhandle and Central Florida counties. With help from Feeding Florida and their delivery network, pet food was delivered directly to county animal shelters and Feeding Florida food pantries. The Disease Surveillance Working Group was also busy during the month of May. They tracked 24 requests made to the State Veterinarian's Office for COVID-19 testing of animals. All 24 animals tested negative for COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. The risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is low.

The ESF 17 working groups will continue operations through the month of June to support the state's response to COVID-19.

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

COVID-19 Resources for ESF 17

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: http://www.fdacs.gov/coronavirus

CDC Releases Interim Guidance for Disaster Sheltering/Pet-Friendly Sheltering During COVID-19

- Due to the COVID-19 outbreak overlapping with the 2020 hurricane season, plans to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus in disaster shelters are being created. Guidance released by the CDC recommends "collocated" sheltering for pets in (animal areas) separate from the human sheltering area, and to separate animals 6 feet, if possible. Click here to read the interim guidance document.

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:
- ESF 17 Posts Information about Caring For Your Horses During COVID-19
- New CDC FAQs now available for "How can I safely run my equestrian facility?"

Food Safety and COVID-19

- 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/

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

Best Practices for Re-Opening Retail Food Establishments During the COVID-19 Pandemic

FDA U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

We encourage retail food establishments and their employees to follow these best practices and refer to the checklist for more details. Work closely with State and local regulatory/health authorities where the business is located to ensure all requirements are met.

BE HEALTHY, BE CLEAN

	Stay home, if sick.
	Check for symptoms like fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and consider conducting health checks prior to starting work.
	Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
	Don't touch Ready-To-Eat foods with bare hands.
	Wear cloth face coverings if Personal Protective Equipment is not required. Check State or local guidelines.

CLEAN & DISINFECT

	Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and common use areas more frequently, such as door knobs and handles, display cases, check-out counter, order kiosks, grocery cart handles, restrooms, and waiting areas. Clean and sanitize equipment like ice machines and ice bins.
	Prepare and use sanitizers and disinfectants according to label instructions.
	Avoid high-touch containers and items like ketchup bottles, utensils, salt/pepper shakers, and reusable menus by using single service items, when possible.

SOCIAL DISTANCE

	Restrict the number of workers, customers and visitors in sit-in dining areas, bars and in shared spaces like kitchens, break rooms, waiting areas, and offices to maintain at least a 6-foot distance between people.
	Increase spacing for customers and increase utensil disinfection and cleaning frequency at self-service stations/buffets.
	Minimize contact at check-out and pay stations. Mark 6-foot distances with floor tape and temporarily move workstations to create more distance, consider installing partitions, if feasible.

PICK-UP & DELIVERY

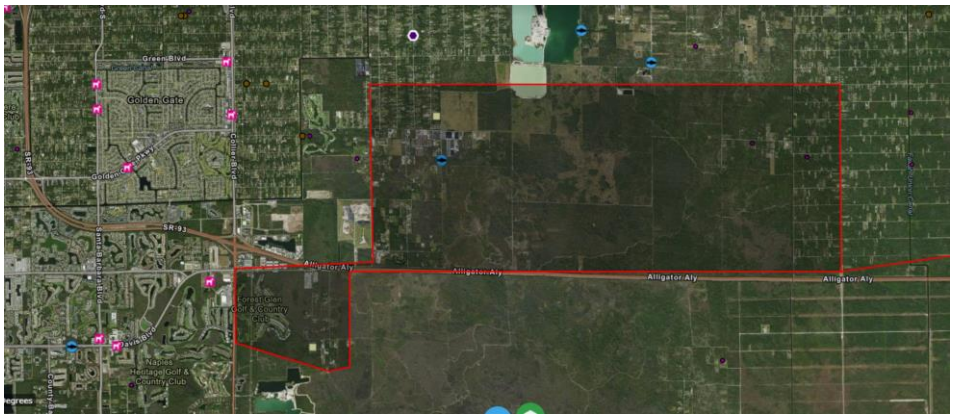
	Maintain food time and temperature controls.
	Initiate "no touch" deliveries and payments.
	Designate pick-up zones.

PHYSICAL FACILITY

	Ensure premises are operational and in good working order.
	Clean, disinfect, and sanitize throughout the facility before re-opening.
	Monitor for pests.

ESF 17 and SART Respond to the 8,000+ Acre "36th Avenue Wildfire" in Collier County

ESF 17 jumped into action quickly to determine agricultural impacts in the area when the State Emergency Operations Center sent initial notification about the 36th Avenue Wildfire. The wildfire spread rapidly, threatening a large residential and agricultural area with little containment. ESF 17 utilized its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping tool that holds location data of agricultural premises and facilities in Florida for livestock, poultry, Cervidae, aquaculture, apiaries, and crops to name a few. This GIS mapping tool allows ESF 17 to capture, visualize and pinpoint agricultural locations for rapid impact assessment during disasters.



Top: Wildfire east of Naples Florida. Photo May 14, 2020 by Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Left: A picture from the ESF 17 mapping tool that plots the evacuation zone of the 36th Avenue Wildfire.

After identifying agricultural premises in and around the evacuation area, ESF 17 district specialists worked quickly making phone calls to SART partners in the area. The University of Florida (UF) Institute for Food and Agriculture Sciences (IFAS) Extension, animal control, county emergency management, and equestrian facilities were contacted to determine evacuation status and any unmet needs. ESF 17 and UF IFAS Extension coordinated to locate available shelter facilities for livestock, if needed. Fortunately, there were no unmet needs or requests for state assistance, and the area evacuated quickly.

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, ESF 17 and SART 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…

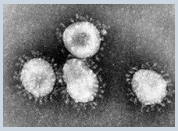
RHDV Confirmed in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas
Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) is an extremely contagious and often fatal viral disease of domesticated and wild rabbits. The first sign of infection with RHDV is typically sudden and unexpected death in previously healthy rabbits. The use of biosecurity is critical to prevent the spread of the disease. UF IFAS Extension, a SART partner, has been helping to distribute this information to all 67 Extension offices and directors. Read More

Livestock Lunch and Learn Summer Webinar Series by Farm Bureau
You are invited to take part in a Livestock Lunch and Learn Summer Webinar Series: *Exploring the Beef Cattle Industry: From Pasture to Plate*. The webinar is free of charge; however, registration is required. To access the registration link, please see the flyer on page 11 or Register Here. Please contact Scot Eubanks at scot.eubanks@ffbf.org with any questions you may have.

Wildfire Season had Statewide Impacts on Florida in the month of May.
Two panhandle fires caused evacuations and road closures in Walton and Santa Rosa Counties. In addition, Collier County battled a fire near I-75 in Naples over 8,000 acres in size. Due to the fires affecting commercial businesses, the Division of Food Safety conducted phone assessments to determine if there was any fire damage or power outages affecting the food supply in the immediate area. The Panhandle fires accumulated nearly $4,000 in food product destroyed due to power outages. There were no findings of damages to the food supply as a result of the Collier County fire.

Florida SARC Cancels Classes
The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) announced recently on their website that due to COVID-19, all in-person training classes are postponed. Organizers will provide updates as soon as it is deemed safe to provide in-person trainings for large groups. 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

Commissioner Nikki Fried Applauds $380 Million Federal Aid Agreement for Hurricane Michael Timber Recovery

Last month, Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried applauded the signing of an agreement between the State of Florida and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to administer $380.7 million in grant funding to help Florida's timber industry recover following Hurricane Michael in 2018. Commissioner Fried had initially announced the awarding of the grant in November 2019, with Florida a recipient of the first-ever state timber block grants from the USDA.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Florida Forest Service have been integral to negotiating the agreement and will help administer the USDA grant alongside the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

"The signing of this agreement has been long-awaited and is a positive step forward for Florida's timber producers," said Commissioner Fried. "We worked closely with the USDA for nearly a year to secure this relief for our timber industry, which has continued to show extraordinary resilience through wildfires, drought, and other challenges. With this agreement signed, our Florida Forest Service will be working with timber producers to get checks in hand and trees in the ground, and help Florida's farmers repair and rebuild irrigation infrastructure. Thank you to Secretary Perdue for helping put Florida's $25 billion timber industry first."

"Florida's forests support thousands of jobs and are critical to the Florida Panhandle's economy and ecology," said Erin Albury, State Forester and Director of the Florida Forest Service. "We will work closely with our state's Panhandle timber producers and forest landowners to help deliver the assistance for which they've waited for nearly two years."

Under the agreement, the Florida Forest Service will provide technical assistance to individual landowners in the affected area. Forest Service personnel will work with timber producers to verify their timber loss and help landowners with documentation of loss. Timber producers may expect to receive funding as soon as this fall, with funding providing relief for both timber producers and farmers whose irrigation infrastructure was damaged by Hurricane Michael. Timber producers should begin collecting records and evidence of damage and apply to the USDA Emergency Forest Restoration Program.

Timber is the leading industry in the Florida Panhandle, and suffered a $1.3 billion economic blow from 2018 Hurricane Michael. An estimated 550 million trees, weighing 72 million tons, were damaged or destroyed by the massive Category 5 hurricane. Clearing downed timber can cost $2,000 per acre, compounding the crop's financial loss.

More information at: https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2020-Press-Releases/Commissioner-Nikki-Fried-Applauds-380-Million-Federal-Aid-Agreement-for-Hurricane-Michael-Timber-Recovery

SAVE THE DATE

Livestock Lunch and Learn Summer Webinar Series

Exploring the Beef Cattle Industry: From Pasture to Plate

Join us for a New Educational Webinar Series

When:
June 18, June 25, July 9, July 16, July 30 & August 6
(no webinar held July 2 or July 23)

Time:
Noon – 1:00 P.M.

June 18
Effects of COVID-19 on the Food Animal Industry

June 25
Animal Traceability: Minimizing a Disease Outbreak

July 9
Business on the Move: Livestock and Meat Logistics

July 16
The Art of Feeding Cattle

July 30
Inside Look at Animal Protein Companies

August 6
Beef Marketing: It's What's For Dinner

Florida Farm Bureau Federation would like to give special recognition to UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences for their support in putting this webinar series together.

Watch our Facebook Page for more information!

REGISTER NOW

FloridaFarmBureau.org

USDA Now Accepting Applications for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

You can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, which provides direct payments to farmers and ranchers to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020.

The application form and a payment calculator are available on farmers.gov/cfap. A call center (877-508-8364) is set up to help you with your questions.

"We know producers are facing a tough time now, and we are making every effort to provide much needed support as quickly as possible. Producers of all eligible commodities can apply through their local FSA office. FSA is available over the phone and virtually to walk you through the application process, whether it's the first time you've worked with us, or if you know us quite well.," said USDA.

For more information, visit:
https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2020/05/29/usda-now-accepting-applications-coronavirus-food-assistance-program

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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