The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

The State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, Florida

Special Features of this Issue:

- *COVID-19 Considerations for Animal Activities at Fairs, Shows, and Other Events*
- *SART Held July Monthly Webinar*
- *FDACS Asking Floridians to Report Suspicious Seed Packets from China*

ESF 17 and Florida SART Respond to Isaias

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) have been engaged with "co-response" operations at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee. With the team already participating in the COVID-19 response, Tropical Storm Isaias added additional pressure to Florida's East Coast.

FDACS and SART are charged with staffing Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17, which provides support for Florida's animal and agricultural sectors.

"We are very fortunate to not suffer catastrophic impacts from Tropical Storm Isaias, but this storm has also given FDACS and SART the opportunity to begin working together this hurricane season on disaster preparedness and response for animals and agriculture," said FDACS' LeiAnna Tucker who serves as the Emergency Programs Manager and Emergency Coordinating Officer for ESF 17.

FDACS and SART have worked together to provide the public and county emergency management agencies with the following resources to ensure they adequately prepare their area for Tropical Storm Isaias. These disaster resources are also helpful for preparing your family, businesses, animals and agriculture.

See page 8 of *The Sentinel* for the listing of storm-related resources. Additionally, page 2 contains up to date COVID-19 resources.

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— LeiAnna Tucker
Emergency Programs Manager
Co-ECO for ESF 17
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

SPECIAL SECTION: 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: 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, to reduce human-to-human transmission in the animal area. 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?"
- Caring for pets from COVID-19 Exposed Homes: https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/2020/05/21/watch-caring-for-covid-19-exposed-pets-in-shelters/
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Veterinary Clinics Treating Companion Animals during COVID-19 Response: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html

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

COVID-19 Considerations for Animal Activities at Fairs, Shows, and Other Events

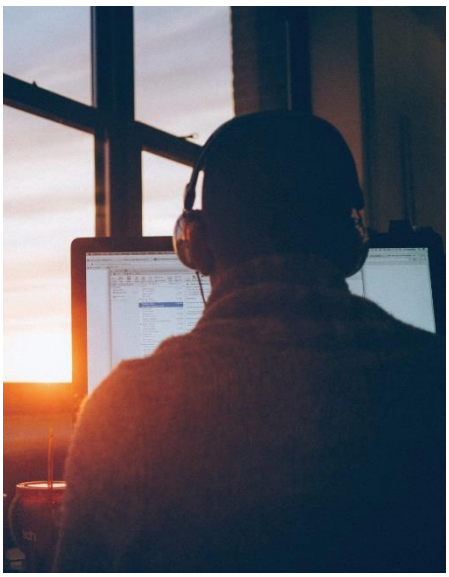
Events that bring together people and animals, such as fairs and agricultural shows, can increase the spread of COVID-19 among people and animals. The risk of animal-to-person spread is considered to be low. However, fair and agricultural show organizers should consider the potential for spread from person-to-person, person-to-animal, and possibly animal-to-animal. If people will be interacting with animals at an event, take precautions to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published new guidance regarding "COVID-19 Considerations for Animal Activities at Fairs, Shows, and Other Events." This guidance is available on the CDC website at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/animals/events-animal-activities.html. The guidance provides biosecurity steps and materials for maintaining healthy environments in animal interaction areas, precautions for animals, maintaining healthy operation, and social distancing strategies for livestock and horse shows.

Florida SART strongly encourages you to review and share this guidance with your local UF/IFAS Extension Office, Extension Agents, animal exhibitors (e.g., 4-H programs), fair boards, agricultural centers, and groups participating in animal activities at fairs, shows, and other events.

SART Held July Monthly Webinar

On July 8th, SART held its monthly webinar for SART partners to provide updates and to discuss hurricane preparedness initiatives. LeiAnna Tucker provided a legislative update, which celebrated the inclusion of SART funding in the State budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Her update also announced the approval of CS/HB 705 by Governor DeSantis. CS/HB 705: *Emergency Sheltering of Persons with Pets* requires that certain counties designate a shelter that can accommodate persons with pets.



LeiAnna Tucker provided a presentation to the group on the upcoming SART Online Pet-Friendly Sheltering training. Ms. Tucker played videos from the training and guided the group through one of the lessons. The training will be hosted on the SART website and should release in the coming months.

Hurricane preparedness topics covered during the July SART Webinar included a new Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) equine hurricane preparedness video, the Florida Division of Emergency Management's new guidance document for a COVID-19/Hurricane co-response, Florida Veterinary Medical Association's pharmaceutical routing standard operating procedure document, and the ESF17 Donation Staging Area donation management tracking system. **Look for EDEN's Equine Hurricane Preparedness video in the resources section of this month's issue!**

The next SART monthly webinar will take place on August 13th at 2PM EST.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Outbreak

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) has been confirmed in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas in 2020. 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.

Due to RHD2, an emergency rule has been implemented to safeguard Florida's domestic and wild Lagomorphs, which includes rabbits, hares and pikas. The emergency rule requires a shortened time period for the Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI), and a veterinary statement for importation of Lagomorphs into Florida from affected states. The full rule wording is provided below. The requirement of an OCVI dated within 30 days of entry is still in effect for Lagomorphs imported from non-affected states.

Emergency Rule

5CER20-4 Temporary Restrictions on the Importation of Lagomorphs.

(1) Definitions.

(a) Lagomorph. Any member of the taxonomic order Lagomorpha.

(b) Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD). A highly fatal hemorrhagic disease of rabbits and other lagomorphs caused by viruses in the family Caliciviridae, primarily Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus and Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2.

(2) All Lagomorphs originating from a state that has had RHD diagnosed in wild or domestic animals in the past 24 months, are required to be accompanied by an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection which must include the statement in (3) and be dated within seventy-two (72) hours prior to entry into Florida.

(3) The OCVI must include the following statement from the examining veterinarian, "All animals on this shipment have not been exposed to a known or suspected case of RHD and show no clinical signs of diseases on the inspection date of (inspection/examination date)."

Rulemaking Authority 570.07(21), (23), 585.08(2)(a) FS. Law Implemented 585.08(1), 585.145 FS. History–New 07-21-20.

A copy of the rule text is located at: https://www.flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=23454035.

If you have any questions regarding RHD or the new import requirements, please contact (850) 410-0900 or email AnimalIndustry@FDACS.gov.

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 to help protect animals, agriculture and pets.

In the News

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

African Swine Fever Transmission Mitigated by Additives
A Kansas State University veterinary researcher has demonstrated how additives help mitigate the risk of African swine fever transmission through feed. New research at the school is showing that the risk of spreading a deadly animal virus through feed can be effectively reduced using different feed additives. The University says its research team, headed by Megan Niederwerder an assistant professor of diagnostic medicine and pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine, has published a new study, Mitigating the risk of African swine fever virus in feed with antiviral chemical additives, in the scientific journal Transboundary and Emerging Diseases. (WIBW)
Read More

Florida's Agriculture, Marine Industries Report Effects of COVID-19 Restrictions
University of Florida economists now have a baseline understanding of ways the pandemic has affected the agriculture, aquaculture and marine sectors of Florida's economy. According to Christa Court, who led a monthlong survey effort along with her colleagues in the UF/IFAS food and resource economics department, the one consistency across the responses seems to be inconsistency. Read More

Study Confirms SARS-CoV-2 Not Transmitted by Mosquitoes
A new study by Kansas State University researchers is the first to confirm that SARS-CoV-2 cannot be transmitted to people by mosquitoes. The article, "SARS-CoV-2 failure to infect or replicate in mosquitoes: an extreme challenge," details the study's findings, which provide the first experimental investigation on the capacity of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease, to infect and be transmitted by mosquitoes. Read More

USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)
Are you a farmer or rancher whose operation has been directly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic? The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. USDA's Farm Service Agency is accepting CFAP applications now through August 28, 2020. Read More and Apply

Save the Date: Upcoming SART Webinars

SART August Monthly Webinar – August 13th, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM EST

SART Strategic Planning Meeting "Wave Process" – August 26th, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM EST

For more information, contact Nick Morrow: Nicholas.Morrow@fdacs.gov

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 SART.

RELEASE DATE
Summer 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

SART Resources – The 2020 Hurricane Season

As Florida has now passed its first big test of the 2020 Hurricane Season, take time to visit our Florida SART website at www.FLSART.org to check out new resources and available trainings. Please login to your SART member account to ensure your contact information is correct so that you can receive the monthly SART newsletter, *The Sentine*l, and important messages about animal and agriculture emergency response before, during and after disasters. Below, we offer some additional resources to aid in your planning and for understanding the roles and responsibilities of SART and our partner agencies.

Videos

- **Florida State Agricultural Response Team Overview**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXAU837U8k4&feature=emb_logo
- **Florida SART: Building Partnerships**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXujEb1_LDM&feature=emb_logo
- **EDEN Equine Hurricane Preparedness**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyfBO8mHIwM&feature=youtu.be

Documents

- **Disaster Preparedness for Horses (PDF)**
  https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/11445/file/Disaster%2520Preparedness%2520for%2520Horses.pdf
- **Disaster Preparedness for Livestock (PDF)**
  https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/11446/file/Disaster%2520Preparedness%2520for%2520Livestock.pdf
- **Disaster Preparedness for Pets (PDF)**
  https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/11447/file/Disaster%2520Preparedness%2520for%2520Pets.pdf

Websites

- **FDACS Animal-Related Emergency Response**
  https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Animals/Animal-Related-Emergency-Response
- **Maddie's University** (A free online learning environment of all things animal welfare.)
  https://www.maddiesuniversity.org

Food Safety and Food Defense Report

A special section dedicated to feed and food emergency planning and response.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) Division of Food Safety is responsible for assuring the public of a safe, wholesome, and properly represented food supply through permitting and inspection of food establishments, inspection of food products, and performance of specialized laboratory analysis on a variety of food products sold or produced in the state. The Division of Food Safety monitors food from the farm gate, through processing and distribution, to the retail point of purchase.

The International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) Fellowship Program is a unique, year-long program for food protection professionals who want to make a positive impact on the profession through association membership, advocacy, and applied leadership. This Program takes a multifaceted approach incorporating three on-location week-long sessions, periodic webinars, and a mentor-guided research project.

The Fellowship program is guided by recognized leaders in food protection and focuses on the areas of Professional Skills, Program Management, and Applied Leadership. Within the past year, Summer Williams (FDACS) has been participating in this program alongside nine other food safety professionals from across the United States of America. Her research project focused on tools used during natural disaster response among food protection agencies. She surveyed programs nationwide and presented her final research in July on a webinar.

You can check out more information about Summer's research below.

- Read the article: Specialized Tools Used by State Food Protection Regulatory Agencies During Response to Natural Disasters
- View to presentation: IFPTI Fellowship in Food Protection Cohort VIII Fellowship Presentations

FDACS Asking Floridians to Report Suspicious Seed Packets from China

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is warning Floridians about unsolicited packages of seeds received through the mail. The seed packets, which may arrive unexpectedly in packages bearing Chinese characters, may bear the name China Post, and may be labeled as jewelry, have been reported in multiple states including Virginia, Kansas, Washington, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Utah, and others.

As of July 27, FDACS has received at least 160 reports from Florida residents reporting having received suspicious seed packages. The content of the seed packages is unknown at this time.

The introduction of plant seeds into the United States is tightly regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Seeds of unknown origin may constitute agricultural smuggling, may be invasive, may introduce pathogens, toxins, or plant and animal diseases, may pose a risk of foodborne illness, and may pose a threat to plant, animal, and human health. FDACS is working closely to receive guidance from the USDA and its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the lead regulatory body on this issue, in consultation with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

"Plant seeds from unknown sources may introduce dangerous pathogens, diseases, or invasive species into Florida, putting agriculture and our state's plant, animal, and human health at risk," said Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried. "Anyone receiving these suspicious seed packets should not open them, should not plant them, should limit contact with them, and should report them immediately to both our department and USDA officials."

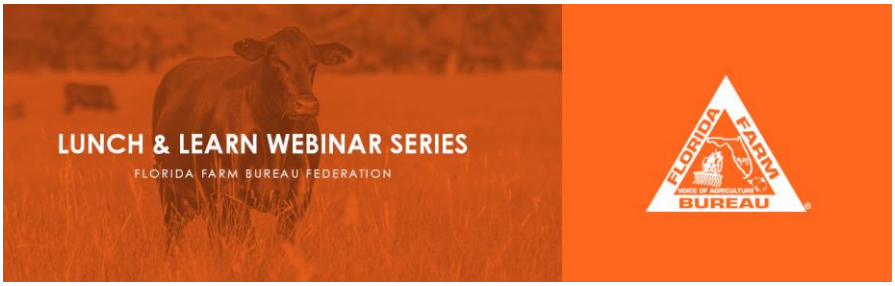
What To Do: Anyone receiving unsolicited seed packages from other countries should follow these directions:

- **Do not open** the seed packet and avoid opening outer packaging or mailing materials, if possible
- **Do not plant** the seeds or discard them in trash that will be landfilled
- **Limit contact** with the seed package until further guidance on handling, disposal, or collection is available from the USDA
- Report the seed package to the **FDACS Division of Plant Industry** at 1-888-397-1517 or DPIhelpline@FDACS.gov
- Report the seed package to the **USDA APHIS Anti-Smuggling Hotline** at 1-800-877-3835 or SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov

When reporting the seed package to FDACS and USDA/APHIS, please be prepared to provide one's name, physical address, phone number, and email address for contact purposes.

For more information, visit: https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2020-Press-Releases/FDACS-Asking-Floridians-to-Report-Suspicious-Seed-Packets-from-China

Exploring the Beef Cattle Industry: From Pasture to Plate



The Florida Farm Bureau has been hosting a six-part webinar series focusing on the beef cattle industry. Webinar topics include effects of COVID-19 to the food animal industry, animal traceability, transportation, cattle feeding, an inside look to meat packers and understanding the beef checkoff.

Past webinars include:

- 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

The final webinar in the series is scheduled for August 6th, entitled "Beef Marketing: It's What's for Dinner."

Registration is required at:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dN9U8K4TTBe6iX3IW01kxA?_x_zm_rtaid=1TK_ImtPRlCzS6jdECrpoQ.1596386176961.7ef4543569614e0947827bfee2322811&_x_zm_rhtaid=451

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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