The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Commissioner Nikki Fried visits the Escambia Emergency Operations Center in response to Hurricane Sally.

SPECIAL EDITION: ESF 17 and Florida SART Respond to Hurricane Sally

On September 16th, Hurricane Sally made landfall near Gulf Shores, Alabama as a category 2 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph. In advance of the storm, Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency in 13 counties. Following landfall, President Donald Trump issued an emergency disaster declaration for the state of Florida.

In Florida, Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties took the brunt of the storm. Due to the slow-moving nature of the storm, large amounts of rain fell in the Florida Panhandle leading to heavy aerial and river flooding. Rainfall totals in some areas of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties reached over 30 inches.

The heavy rainfall and strong winds of Hurricane Sally crippled power infrastructure. In Escambia County, approximately 95% of the county were without power following landfall. In Santa Rosa and Okaloosa, 65% and 20% were without power, respectively.

Severe weather bands from Hurricane Sally moved throughout the Florida panhandle and several tornado warnings were issued. A preliminary assessment of agricultural products at stake in the region affected by Hurricane Sally valued the products at $400 million, according to the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

Continued on Page 2.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Florida SART Launches New Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training Course*
- *Register Now: Farm Labor Supervisor COVID-19 Safety Training*
- *SART Resources – The 2020 Hurricane Season*

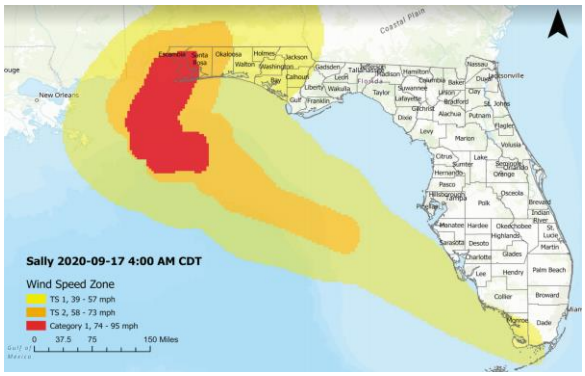
"Years of extreme weather, droughts, and storms like Hurricane Sally have made it tougher for North Florida farmers. Family farms in the area are facing up to 80 percent losses to cotton and massive losses to other crops like peanuts and corn."

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

SART Responds: Hurricane Sally

On September 15th, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) located in Tallahassee, Florida, was activated to a Level 1. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 staff reported to the SEOC and began conducting daily ESF 17 and State Agricultural Response Team (SART) coordination calls to plan emergency protective actions for the state's animal and agricultural sectors.

To assess the critical needs of the animal and agriculture sectors in the counties affected by Hurricane Sally, ESF17 and SART partners conducted Rapid Needs Phone Assessments prior to and immediately after storm impact. SART partners from the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, UF Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, and the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission, joined efforts with FDACS ESF 17 to conduct 502 total phone assessments to animal and agricultural facilities accounting for 4,280 animals; 118 assessments of veterinary clinics and hospitals, and; 13 assessments of animal shelters. Assessed areas included commercial and backyard poultry, cattle, dairy facilities, equine facilities, sheep and goat facilities, veterinary clinics and hospitals, animal shelters, and exotic and captive wildlife facilities located in the impacted counties. No unmet needs were revealed.



Continued on Page 3.

SART Responds: Hurricane Sally

ESF 17 received several mission requests for assistance during the Hurricane Sally activation. Most notably, Escambia County requested four swift water animal rescue teams in anticipation for the potential need to rescue animals from flood waters. ESF 17 reached out to SART Partner, Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), who provided four teams to the county. Fortunately, no animal rescues were needed. The teams sent by HSUS still assisted Escambia County with door-to-door assessments to check on survivors and pets of Hurricane Sally.

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 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:

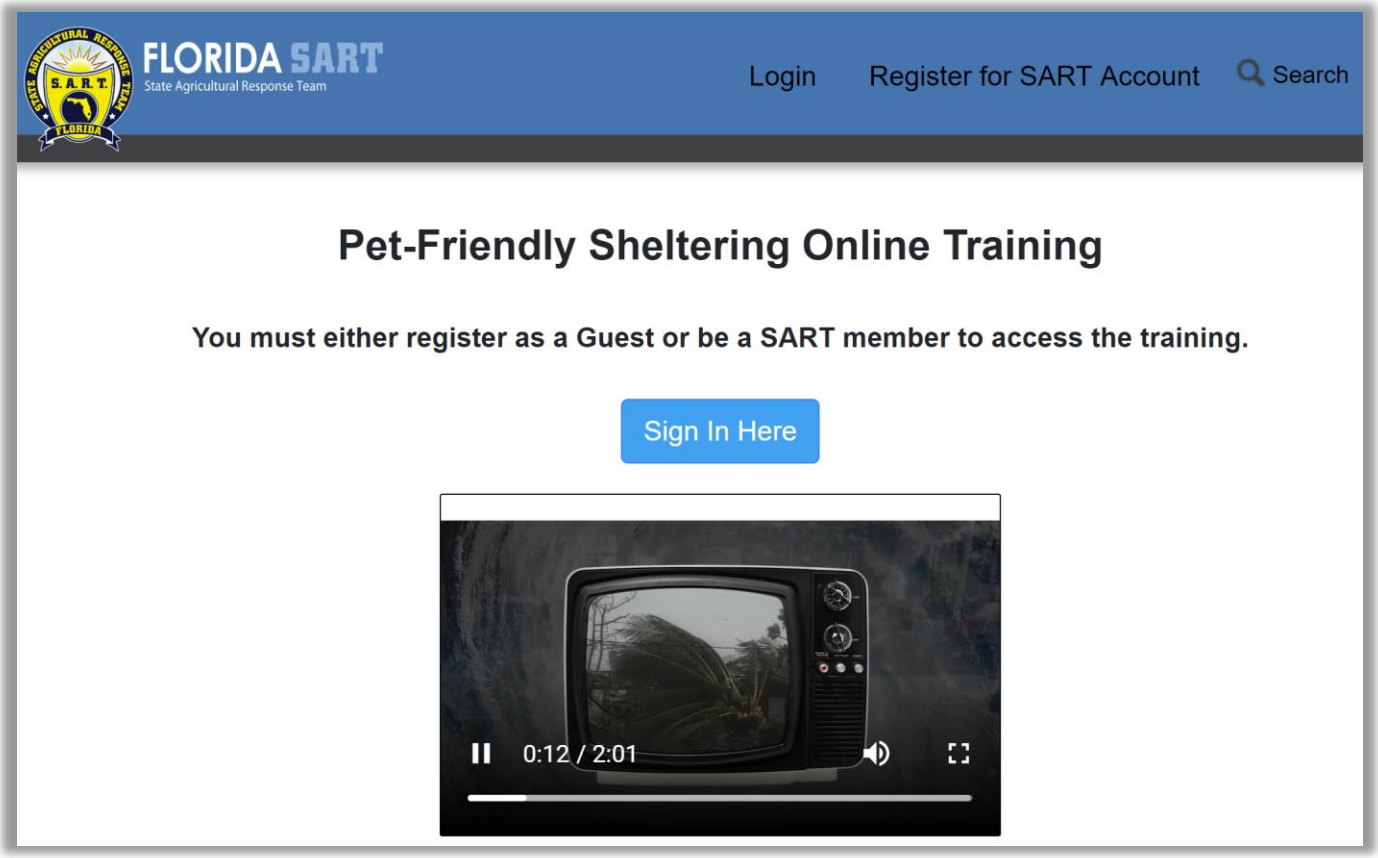
- Strongly encourage your employees and volunteers to stay home when sick.
- Check availability of volunteers who can assist in a staff shortage.
- Connect with local boarding facilities, surrounding shelters and rescues and communicate plans.
- Click here for the CDC's interim guidance for businesses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

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

FDACS-P-01922

Florida SART Launches New Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training Course

After more than two years in the making, SART's new Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training is now live on www.FLSART.org! The training provides guidance to private, local and state entities on how to plan for and operate a pet-friendly shelter to ensure that individuals evacuating from a disaster with their household pets are accommodated. While this training will provide you with basic information and guidance, further training with local or state emergency management programs is essential to fully prepare for pet-friendly sheltering in your community. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services developed this training collaboratively with SART.



Course objections include:

- Understand the benefits of and requirements for opening pet-friendly shelters during emergency evacuations.
- Understand the concept of the Incident Command System (ICS) and how it can be applied to pet-friendly shelter planning and operations.
- Identify strategies and planning considerations for writing a pet-friendly shelter plan for all-hazards.
- Understand the benefits of establishing partnerships and Multiagency Coordination Groups with key agencies and organizations to achieve local resource allocation for pet-friendly shelter preparedness.
- Understand the critical role social media plays in emergency communications, and how to develop an accurate and effective message about available pet-friendly shelters in a disaster.
- Apply best practices when setting up a pet-friendly shelter.

Lesson 1:
Welcome and Course Structure

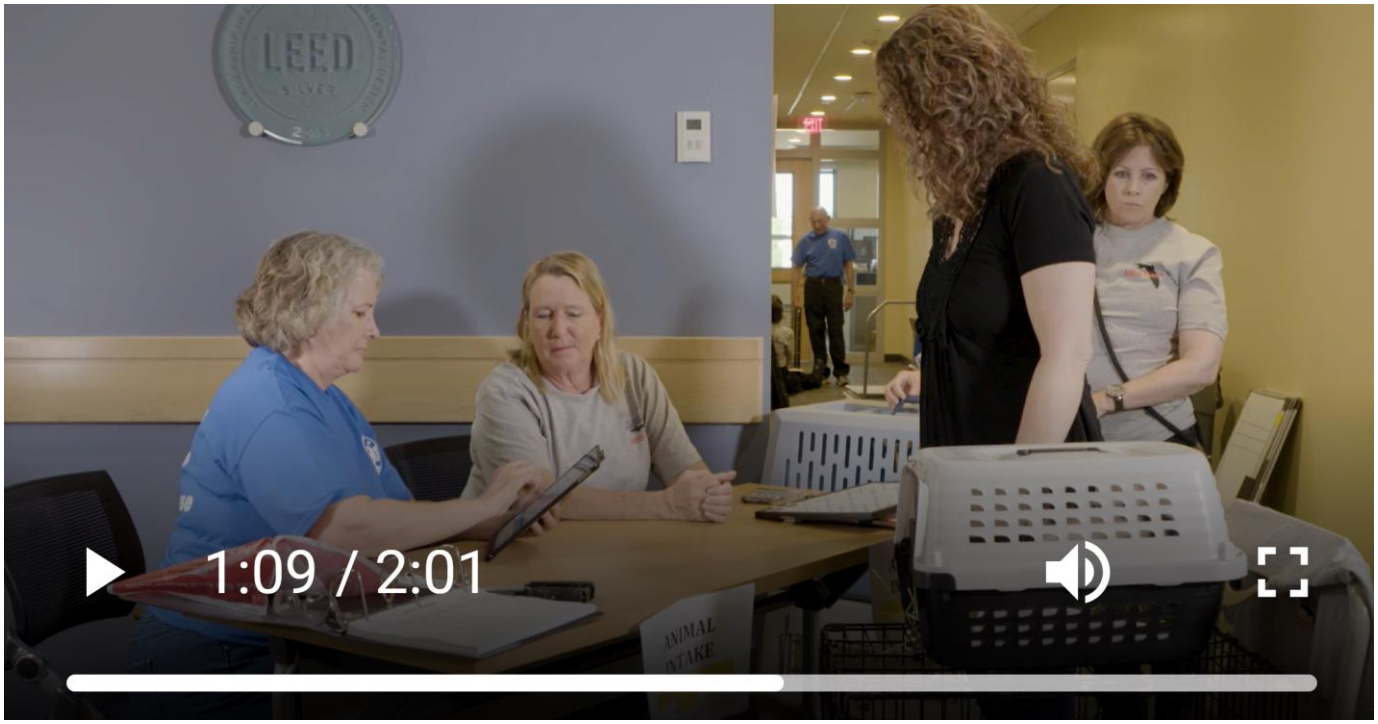
Learn about the overall course objectives, the instructions for navigating through the course, how to receive credit for this course, and how to receive the Tool Kit upon successfully completing this course.

Lesson 2:
Opening the Doors to Pet Friendly Sheltering

Lesson 2 is a course background lesson. The question of "Why Pet-Friendly Sheltering?" is introduced and participants will receive numbers and statistics on pet-friendly sheltering from previous disasters.

See *SART Online Training*, next page…

SART Online Training (continued)



Primary Audience: The target audience includes local and state government agencies, emergency management agencies, county employees, shelter volunteers, veterinary and animal care services, and persons involved with the planning and response for emergency sheltering of individuals and household pets during disasters.

Prerequisites: None

Course Length: Total course length is approximately 4 hours to complete. You will be given 7 days to complete this training from the date you register. If you do not complete the training within 7 days, then your training registration will restart, and you will be required to complete the training from the beginning again.

Course Requirements: Students must pass the Final Exam to receive the certificate of completion.

For more information, please visit: https://flsart.org/petfriendly/index.jsp

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…

Bird Flu Viruses Can Remain Infectious for Months in US Wetlands
As reported in *The Scientist*, Avian influenza viruses can remain infectious in the surface water of northern US wetlands for at least seven months, according to a study published yesterday (September 9) in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. Using a combination of lab and field experiments, researchers at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) showed that viruses shed by wild ducks were still viable after more than 209 days in situ, suggesting that these areas could act as environmental reservoirs for the pathogens while birds overwinter in areas further south. (The Scientist) Read More

Florida SARC Announces New Virtual Trainings Available in October and November
The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) trains volunteers, municipal employees, and pet wellbeing organizations how to respond to disasters involving animals. We instruct Level 1 (Awareness) and Level 2 (Operations) Small Animal Emergency Sheltering courses virtually, via Zoom.us over numerous days. To ensure high engagement, class sizes are limited. To see the most current course list, please visit: https://flsarc.org/training

UF College of Veterinary Medicine Helps X-Large 12' 4" Gator
At 12-foot, 4-inches, an American alligator named Bob brought to the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine on September 3 for X-rays to assess a cause of hind-limb lameness, is over two feet shorter than the largest recorded size of his species. But Bob is still a reptile for the record books—the largest gator ever treated at the UF Veterinary Hospitals. Soon after Bob arrived, the college posted photos and a video taken of him during his UF stay on social media. Within hours, Bob blossomed into a viral sensation on the internet. One week after his visit, his story had a combined reach of nearly 1.5 million people on the college sites alone. The story was picked up by the Associated Press and many major media outlets. Read More

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

Farm Labor Supervisor COVID-19 Safety Training: How to Protect Your Farm Labor

Due to popular demand we are offering more dates!
September 16 September 24 October 7 October 13 October 21
10:00 AM – 12:30 PM English and Spanish Instruction
By Videoconference (Zoom)

Free training on how to protect your workers, supervisors and essential personnel from contracting COVID-19! Training will be based on CDC guidelines. We encourage all your employees who are in direct contact with farm workers to attend. Instruction will be given by videonconference in English or Spanish. You will receive a copy of resources to help you access further information related to COVID-19 and assist you in obtaining masks and other materials.

FREE REGISTRATION

Pre-registration is required. To register please send an email to Barb Hyman at hymanb@ufl.edu and include:

- Which date you would like to attend
- Your company name and address
- Your email address and phone number
- Names of those who will be attending, their job title and which language they prefer; English or Spanish. (There will be separate Zoom links for each language.)

Upon receiving your email, you will be sent the Zoom link. It is suggested that you set up your free Zoom account before the meeting, if you do not have it already. We will include the website in our email.

Credit: AP/Luis M. Alvarez

SART Resources – The 2020 Hurricane Season

As Florida continues its readiness for the 2020 Hurricane Season, please 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

- **FDACS Animal-Related Emergency Response**
  https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Animals/Animal-Related-Emergency-Response
- **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

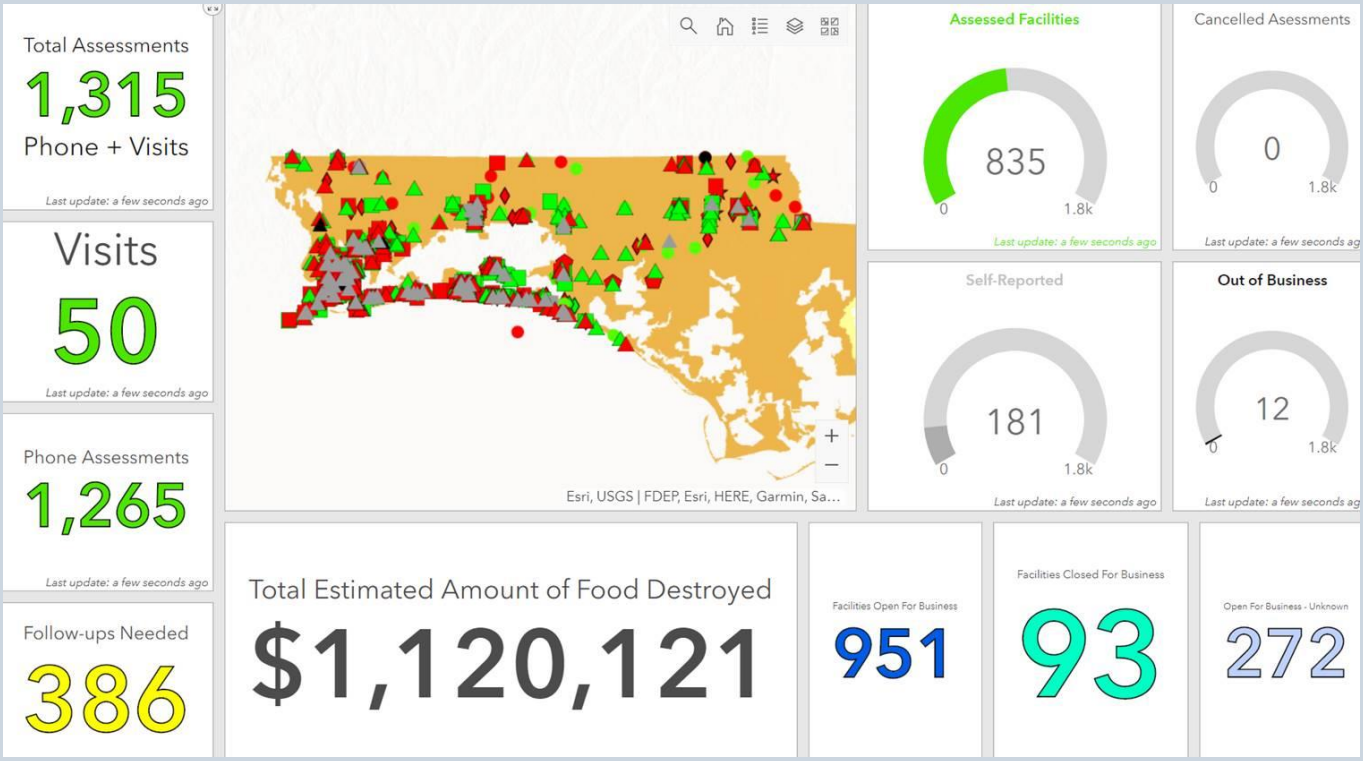
Websites

- **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
- **The USDA Southeast Climate Hub**
  https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/southeast/topic/hurricane-preparation-and-recovery-southeast-us has hurricane preparation and recovery resources for Southeast USA producers. (Guidelines specific to Florida are at: https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/southeast/hurricane-preparedness-and-recovery-guides-florida-producers)

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.



Above: The GIS tracking dashboard for assessments completed as of September 24, 2020. Teams are still conducting assessments.

Sally made landfall as a Category 2 Hurricane on September 16, 2020. The Florida Panhandle saw a large amount of flooding impacts to include long-term power outages. The Division of Food Safety activated its Incident Management Team on September 17, 2020. Due to COVID-19, the teams started with phone assessments.

Phone teams conducted assessments with facility owners in the impacted areas through the weekend and the onsite team members began field assessments to follow up issues noted during phone assessments on September 22. Assessments surveyed open/close status, power outages, structural damage, flooding, and food product disposal. The Division of Food Safety collaborated with the Bureau of Standards on convenience store assessments.

In addition to staffing the ESF 17 room at the State EOC alongside the Divisions of Animal Industry and Agricultural Environmental Services, the Division of Food Safety activated forty-nine staff members for incident management and assessment teams for Hurricane Sally.

At Stake in Sally's Wake: $400 Million in Florida Panhandle Agricultural Products

By Kirsten Romaguera

As slow-moving Hurricane Sally approached the Gulf Coast – eventually making landfall as a category 2 storm near Gulf Shores, Alabama, early Wednesday morning – its bands enveloped most of the Florida Panhandle.

But like the rest of the state, the Panhandle is more than its tourist-attracting beaches. The seasonal crops, livestock and aquaculture products produced in the region are valued at approximately $400 million and directly support over 8,000 jobs, and that's not including related economic contributions in supporting industries.

The affected counties represent major producers of several agricultural products. This includes, per 2018 data from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, approximately 100,000 acres each of peanuts, cotton and hay; around 10,000 acres of corn; nearly 4,000 acres of horse farms; plus other commodities like aquaculture fish and shellfish. To capture the full impact on the damages to these commodities from Hurricane Sally, the UF/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program is preparing to conduct an assessment of the damages.

"These types of climate-related disasters are the most destructive to agriculture," said Christa Court, director of the program and an assistant professor in the UF/IFAS food and resource economics department. "When we do our assessments, we're really looking to capture the acute, short-term impacts, like losses of seasonal crops that were in the field when the storm hit, but we know that other impacts will appear in the long-term."

Read the complete story at:
https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/news/2020/09/18/at-stake-in-sallys-wake-400-million-in-florida-panhandle-agricultural-products/

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.

Editor: Michael T. Turner, The Turner Network, LLC (www.TurnerNetwork.com) under contract with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: flsart@turnernetwork.com

Associate Editor: LeiAnna Tucker, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov