The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

2020… A year for the history books! SART looks back at our accomplishments.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Have You Seen SART's New Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training?*
- *Florida SARC Announces New Virtual Trainings Available in December and January*
- *COVID-19: What to Report if You're Sick*

2020: SART Year-in-Review

Thanks to our many State Agricultural Response Team (SART) Partners, 2020 was a marked success in terms of training, equipping and coordination. Despite COVID-19 dominating the news for most of the year, many other achievements were made. Below are some of the highlights we've reported on this past year.

Q1: January – March

SART Holds its First-Year Accomplishments Workshop

On January 23rd, SART held its "First-year Timeline and Assignments Workshop." This event was the seventh installment in a series of strategic planning workshops designed to help update SART's organizational documents, meeting structure, and schedule of trainings and exercises. The purpose of the "First-year Timeline and Assignments workshop" was to build a schedule for completing the future accomplishments that SART partners identified to be implemented over the next year. (February 2020)

Florida Awarded USDA Grants for Animal Disease Prevention

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced the awarding of grant funds in 25 states to support animal disease prevention, emergency response training, and laboratory diagnostic capability. As part of the federal 2018 Farm Bill, Florida received two awards from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) totaling $172,525. (February 2020)

See *SART Year-in-Review*, page 2.

"A key thing for us to learn and note is that once they found ASF in feral swine, Germany's commercial production was banned for exports by most of their trade partners."

— Dr. Dave Pyburn
Chief Veterinarian, National Pork Board
In reference to the growing African swine fever spread in Europe
Story on Page 9

SART Year-in-Review (continued)

SART Hosted K-9 Handler First Aid Training at Camp Blanding

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and SART partnered with K9 MEDIC and the Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force to provide the first ever K-9 First Responder & K-9 Tactical Combat Casualty Care Training on February 22 – 24 at the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center.

Twenty-five (25) K9 handlers and their working K9s attended, providing multijurisdictional representation from local, state, federal, and military agencies, law enforcement and Urban Search and Rescue Teams. (March 2020)

Q2: April - June

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

In March, Agriculture Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried issued the following emergency orders and rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic. "During this pandemic, we are taking every step necessary to protect Floridians," said Commissioner Fried. "This includes waiving fees for businesses and license applicants, extending the expiration on concealed weapons and security guard licenses by 30 days, providing training flexibility for workers, and helping move gasoline to consumers more efficiently. These are common-sense actions that will help our state continue to thrive in these challenging times." (April 2020)

Continued on next page…

SART Year-in-Review (continued)

SART Coordinates with Feeding Florida to Donate Pet Food

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. 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. (May 2020)

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. (June 2020)

Continued on next page…

SART Year-in-Review (continued)

Q3: July – September

Governor Signs CS/HB 705: Emergency Sheltering of Persons with Pets
Beginning on July 1, 2020, counties within the State of Florida need to have designated emergency shelters for persons with pets. Signed by Governor Ron DeSantis on June 29th, the law now requires the Florida Department of Education to assist the FDACS and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) in the new requirements. These requirements include determining strategies regarding the evacuation of persons with pets, and requiring counties that maintain designated shelters to select a shelter that can accommodate persons with pets, and specifying requirements for such shelters. If a county maintains designated shelters it must also designate a shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. This new legislation also requires the shelter comply with applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Assistance Policies and Procedures, and with safety procedures regarding the sheltering of pets established in both local and State comprehensive emergency management plans. (July 2020)

ESF 17 and Florida SART Respond to Hurricane Isaias

FDACS and 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 more pressure to Florida's East Coast.

FDACS and SART are charged with staffing 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. (August 2020)

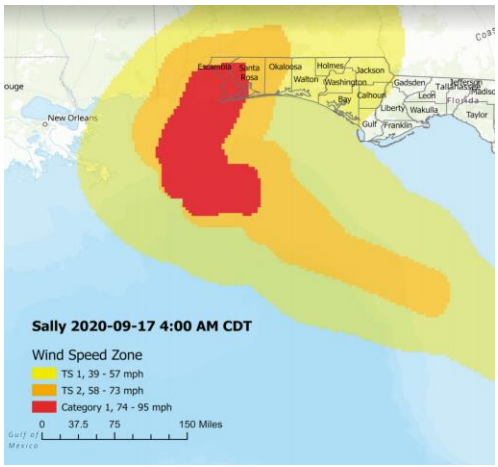
ESF 17 Holds Virtual Training for Donation Staging Area Operations
On August 20th, members of the ESF 17 Incident Management Team (IMT) participated in a Donation Staging Area (DSA) Inventory Management training. This training was designed to educate and prepare IMT staff who coordinate donations to the state for animals and agriculture during disaster. The training covered the three phases of donation management: receiving, inventory, and distribution. Each of the three training modules contained practice problems that required attendees to use the newly created Inventory Management Spreadsheet System to track the status of donations moving through the DSA. (September 2020)

Continued on next page…

SART Year-in-Review (continued)

Q4: October – December

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. 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).
(October 2020)

Florida SART Sponsors ICS300 & 400 Combo Course for ESF 17
Made possible by Florida SART, ESF 17 held a week-long combined Incident Command System 300 and 400 combo training for Tallahassee-located FDACS staff who would be tasked to respond for ESF 17. Attendees learned how to use the Incident Command System to size up a disaster, form an Incident Management Team (IMT), and use the IMT planning process to respond to a hypothetical emergency event. Sixteen FDACS staff from Animal Industry, Food Safety, Aquaculture, Agricultural Environmental Services, Agricultural Water Policy, and Agricultural Law Enforcement attended. The classroom allowed for social distancing and face masks were required at all times.
(November 2020)

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:

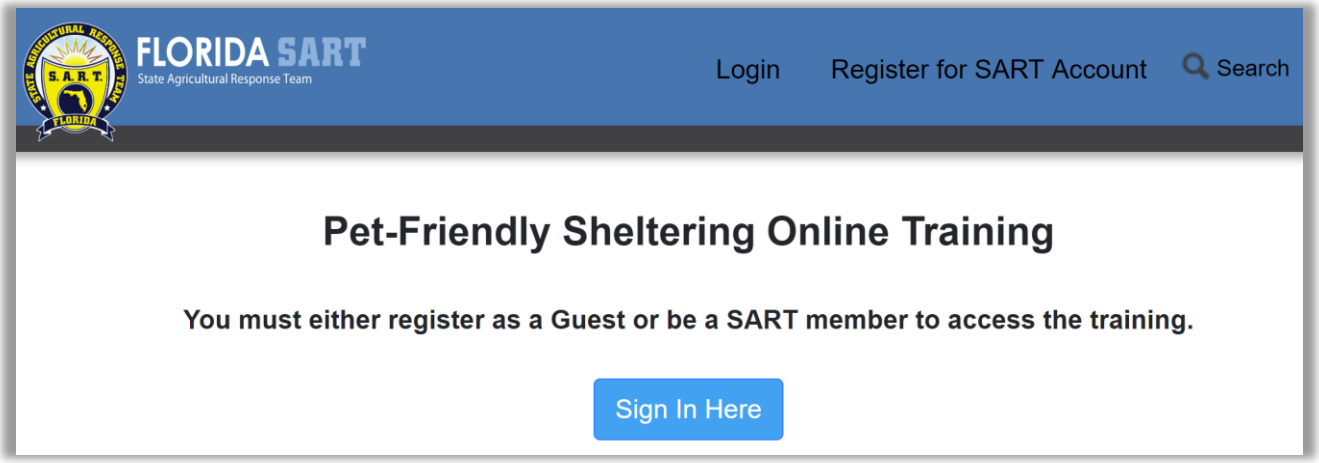
- Strongly encourage your employees and volunteers to stay home when sick.
- Check availability of volunteers who can assist in a staff shortage.
- Connect with local boarding facilities, surrounding shelters and rescues and communicate plans.
- Click here for the CDC's interim guidance for businesses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

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

FDACS-P-01922

Have You Seen SART's 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. FDACS developed this training collaboratively with SART.



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…

Global Update on African Swine Fever – China, Russia, Germany, Romania
In an interview with *The Pig Site*, Dr. Dave Pyburn, Chief Veterinarian at the National Pork Board, delves into the current spread of African swine fever (ASF). As noted, the global industry continues to monitor the ASF outbreak in Germany that was first reported September 10, 2020, in feral swine in Brandenburg state, located in the eastern part of Germany near its border with Poland. "Brandenburg is a long way from where they have most of their commercial production," Dr. Pyburn explained. "Where they have found the feral swine positive in that state is about 300 miles from their closest commercial production. So far, all their findings, and there's been 90+ total positive findings in feral swine. A key thing for us to learn and note is that once they found ASF in feral swine, Germany's commercial production was banned for exports by most of their trade partners." (The Pig Site) Read More

UPDATE: Additional County Farmworker COVID-19 Testing Availability
Commissioner Nikki Fried and the FDACS announced additional COVID-19 testing sites in Miami-Dade, Hendry, and St. Lucie County for farmworkers as the fall harvest season begins. The ongoing efforts to provide access to testing for farmworkers is part of a partnership with the UF/IFAS, Florida Division of Emergency Management, and local county governments. Read More

Norway makes its first discovery of highly pathogenic bird flu
As reported by Reuters, Norway has detected its first case of the highly pathogenic H5N8 strain of bird flu, the country's Food Safety Authority (FSA) said in a statement last month. Farm birds in southern Norway must be kept indoors following the discovery of the infection in a wild short-billed goose, the FSA said. The highly contagious and deadly form of avian influenza is spreading rapidly in Europe, putting the poultry industry on alert. (Reuters) 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

Florida SARC Announces New Virtual Trainings Available in December and January

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.

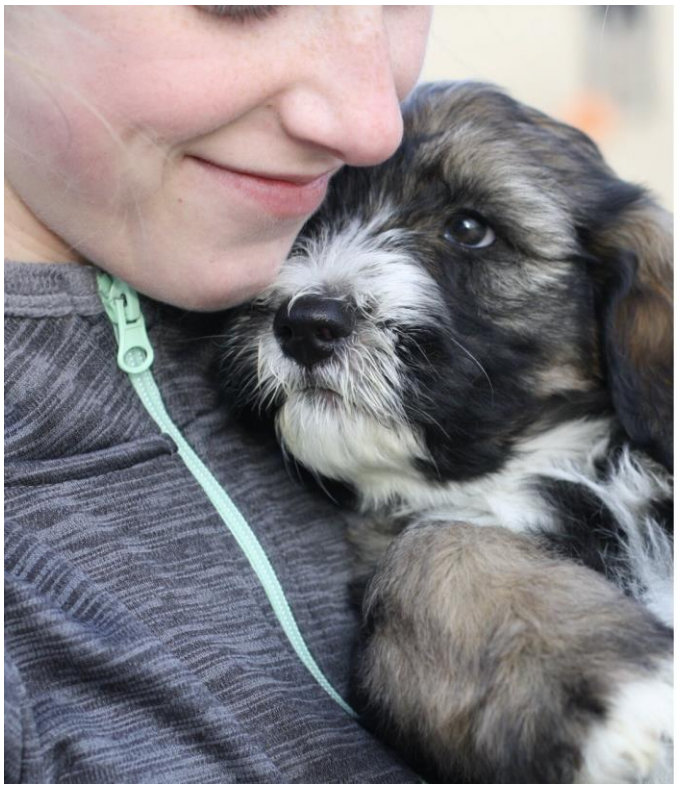
The Awareness Level 1 course (FL-003-RESP) gives students the knowledge necessary to work in a small animal emergency shelter. This class provides expertise and practical experience required to become a disaster animal responder. The Operations Level 2 (FL-607) course gives many new job options, in addition 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.

Classes are now all online through Zoom conferencing. They have been divided into multiple days to improve online engagement. Level 1 classes are either 2 or 3 days, and Level 2 classes are 4 days. Students will need a computer, tablet, smartphone, or laptop with a webcam and sound to participate in these classes.

Thanks to funding from Florida SART, all course fees are 50% off by using the promo code "FAMILY."

For more information about the courses, and to register please visit: https://flsarc.org/training



Food Safety and Food Defense Report

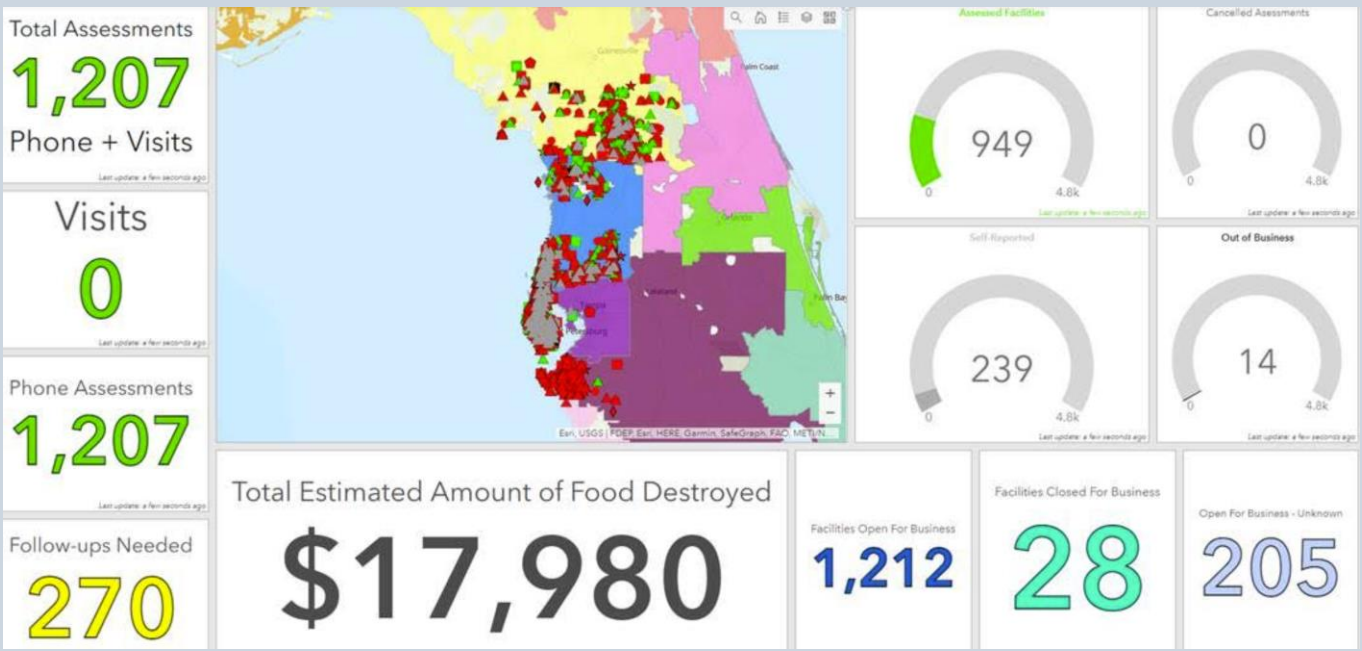
A special section dedicated to feed and food emergency planning and response.

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.

Tropical Storm Eta Food Safety Activation

The FDACS Division of Food Safety activated its Food Safety Response Team for Tropical Storm Eta on Monday, November 9, 2020. Due to the storm's various impacts to the state, assessments to facilities were completed in two different phases. Dairies facilities were assessed via phone calls (and some by visit) in South Florida during phase one of the activation. In addition, 270 retail and manufactured facilities were contacted via phone for assessment in Monroe County.

During phase two of the activation, the focus was on the counties in Central Florida along the west coast due to reports of flooding and prolonged power outages. Food Safety inspectors conducted over 1,200 phone assessments to retail, manufactured and dairy facilities in Manatee, Pinellas, Pasco, Citrus, Levy, and Marion Counties. Approximately 50 personnel were activated on the team for assessments, incident management and GIS entry. Fortunately, there was not significant damage to food and retail establishments.



Stay Safe From Foodborne Illness This Holiday Season

Learn how to make food safety a priority this holiday season. Visit the Division of Food Safety's Consumer Resources and Outreach website to access free food safety resources like information on safe internal cooking temperatures and food storage, food safety flyers, videos, coloring sheets, and more!

Serve food safely this holiday season and stay safe from foodborne illness!

COVID-19: What to Report if You're Sick

Safety is the number 1 objective during the COVID-19 response.

WHAT TO REPORT IF YOU ' RE SICK

Information of staff or volunteers you came in close contact with

Locations within the facility in which you worked

Animals you came in close contact with and might have been exposed

- Pay special attention to big cats, apes, or other vulnerable species

Inform your supervisor or safety officer immediately

Courtesy of the Georgia Zoo & Exotic Risk Communication Workgroup

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