The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

FAD SAFE planned for 2021.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *FDA: Aflatoxin Poisoning in Pets*
- *SART Partner Spotlight: UF Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program*
- *Podcast: Food and Agriculture: Disruptions and Planning for a Crisis*

ESF 17 and SART Schedule FAD SAFE Preparatory Activities and Exercises

The Foreign Animal Disease Southern Agriculture Functional Exercise, or "FAD SAFE," is a functional exercise designed to test state agricultural agency response capabilities to a multi-state Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak. FMD is a foreign animal disease and a severe, highly contagious viral disease of livestock that has significant economic impact.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Division of Animal Industry (DAI) will lead the FAD SAFE for Florida's response.

The five-day exercise, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), will have participation from federal, state, local, tribal, and agriculture industry representatives.

In preparation for the FAD SAFE exercise taking place on November 15-19, 2021, a series of trainings, exercises and meetings will be conducted to prepare FDACS, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17, SART, and agriculture industry stakeholders for the FAD SAFE.

Listed on **page 2** is the lineup of the training and exercise program.

"More than 24,000 Floridians have perished from this pandemic, leaving behind shattered families and communities."

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

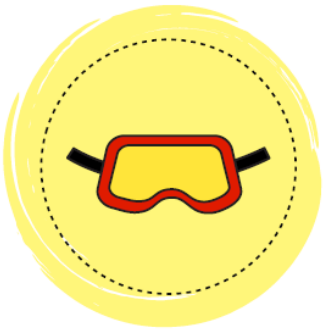
FAD SAFE Training and Exercise Program (continued from front page)

- **December 2 and January 6:** ESF 17 Incident Management Team (IMT) held two Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) virtual trainings hosted by the USDA. EMRS is a web-based application managed by USDA and used by FDACS ESF 17 for the reporting of routine animal disease investigations, foreign animal diseases, surveillance and control programs, state specific animal disease outbreaks, and national animal health emergency responses.
- **March:** FDACS DAI will host the first of three Animal Carcass Management Working Group meetings and drills. The purpose of these meetings with animal carcass disposal stakeholders is to discuss and plan for a large-scale animal carcass disposal incident in Florida. The realization of an FMD outbreak in the USA, like the scenario in the FAD SAFE exercise, would rely heavily on these stakeholders to dispose of depopulated animals. The Working Group will hold two additional meetings later this year in August and December, tentatively.
- **May:** FDACS DAI will take part in a Tri-state meeting with Georgia and Alabama state animal and agricultural health officials to discuss the logistics of an animal movement standstill scenario during a foreign animal disease outbreak. The tri-state meeting will also review the USDA FAD response plan.
- **May:** FDACS staff will attend a combo training on Public Information Officer Foundational Skills and Joint Information Center/System to prepare IMT members on how to interact with media, develop public messaging, and co-responding agencies to increase situational awareness during an animal disease outbreak.
- **July:** FDACS DAI will host a Florida Livestock Movement Standstill Tabletop Exercise with industry and government stakeholders to discuss the logistics and effects of a livestock movement standstill as a result of an animal disease outbreak in Florida.
- **September:** FDACS DAI will conduct a tabletop exercise to review and test Florida's Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Operations Plan.
- **October:** FDACS DAI will conduct a "dry run" exercise before the official FAD SAFE. The dry run exercise will be held for FDACS DAI, respectively. The exercise will focus largely on entering resource and logistics requests in EMRS and practicing foreign animal disease investigation that will take place during the official FAD SAFE in November.

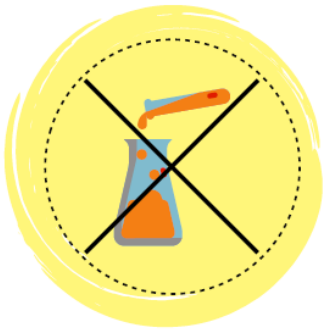
Cleaning & Disinfecting: Important Reminders

Wear gloves

Do not use more than the amount recommended on the label



Protect your eyes from splashes



Do not mix chemical products

Increase ventilation

Label all cleaning solutions

Source: www.cdc.gov | UGA Extension
Courtesy of the Georgia Zoo & Exotic Risk Communication Workgroup

Podcast: Food and Agriculture: Disruptions and Planning for a Crisis

The Louisiana State University (LSU) National Center for Biomedical Research and Training (NCBRT)/Academy of Counter-Terrorism Education (ACE) is a nationally recognized center for emergency preparedness and response training located at Louisiana State University's flagship campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. They provide mobile training to both the national and international emergency response community. Together with our stakeholders, they challenge themselves each day to influence human safety, security, and resilience in a positive manner.

Their latest effort is a podcast on food and agriculture crisis planning. In this edition, they continue a series on food safety and security during the COVID-19 pandemic with guests Joe Reardon, Assistant Commissioner for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and NCBRT Subject Matter Expert; Lorenzo Alba, Jr., Executive Director of Casa de Peregrinos Emergency Food Program; and Jeff Witte, Secretary of Agriculture for State of New Mexico and NCBRT Subject Matter Expert.

In this episode, they discuss the impact of the pandemic on food distribution to those in need, the effects that food processing slowdowns have on the supply chain, and the safety measures their own agencies have implemented to keep employees safe. The final episode in this series will be published on February 9.

Select the link below to listen!
https://anchor.fm/lsu-ncbrt/episodes/29---Food-and-Agriculture-Disruptions-and-Planning-for-a-Crisis-epf6im

For more information on LSU's National Center for Biomedical Research and Training and our available resources on COVID-19, please visit our website at ncbrt.lsu.edu.

Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Anchor, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

SART Partner Spotlight: UF Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program

Mission Statement

To provide veterinary students and practitioners with the specialized knowledge and skills to enhance the medical and behavioral health of sheltered animals, to increase shelter lifesaving, and to promote public health. This mission is delivered through the following core strategies:

- Training of veterinary students and practitioners in the problems of homeless animals, the animal sheltering system, and medical and behavioral care of individual animals and the shelter population as a whole;
- Advanced training of residents, interns, and fellows to become experts and future leaders in the shelter medicine specialty field;
- Outreach field services to assist shelters with implementation of industry best practices regarding animal health and welfare and provision of disease outbreak diagnosis, response, and prevention strategies, and;
- Research to develop and disseminate new knowledge to solve existing and emerging threats to successful sheltering programs.

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Additional Agency Information

Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida supports the state's 160 animal shelters in the following ways:

- Infectious disease outbreak diagnosis with planning for quarantine and isolation.
- Comprehensive shelter operations consultation.
- Disaster response and recovery in coordination with local and state ESF 17 and SART.
    - Coordinate evacuation of shelter animals to other lifesaving organizations outside of the impact area before a disaster strikes.
    - Post-disaster animal evacuation to make room for lost pets impacted by the storm.
    - Coordination of medical supplies, food, cages, and transportation.
    - Link to emergency grants.
    - Florida Animal Shelter Disaster Communication Network - shelters should sign up at www.surveymonkey.com/r/FLShelterDisasterComms

More information: https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu

SPECIAL SECTION: COVID-19 Resources

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services General Information

- ESF 17 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.

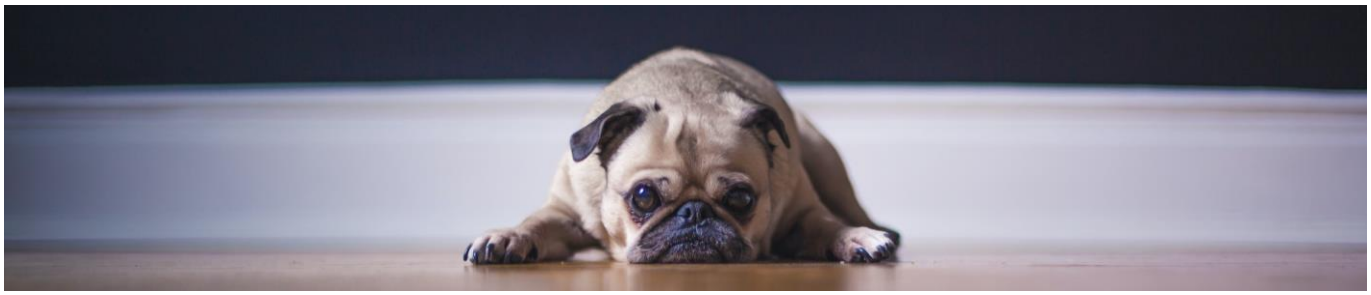
Prepare for Staff Illness:

- 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

FDA: Aflatoxin Poisoning in Pets



According to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), aflatoxins are toxins produced by the mold Aspergillus flavus that can grow on pet food ingredients such as corn, peanuts, and other grains. At high levels, aflatoxins can cause illness (aflatoxicosis), liver damage, and death in pets. The toxins can be present even if there is no visible mold on the pet food.

Causes
Pets that eat food containing unsafe levels of aflatoxins can develop aflatoxin poisoning. Pets are highly susceptible to aflatoxin poisoning because, unlike people, who eat a varied diet, pets generally eat the same food continuously over extended periods of time. If a pet's food contains aflatoxins, the toxins could accumulate in the pet's system as they continue to eat the same food. Aflatoxin poisoning can also occur if a pet eats moldy corn, grains, peanuts, or other aflatoxin contaminated food.

Signs of Illness
Pets suffering from aflatoxin poisoning may experience signs such as sluggishness, loss of appetite, vomiting, jaundice (yellowish tint to the eyes, gums or skin due to liver damage), unexplained bruising or bleeding, and/or diarrhea. In some cases, aflatoxins can affect blood clotting and cause long-term liver problems and/or death. Some pets may suffer liver damage without showing any signs in the early stages of aflatoxin poisoning and if they continue eating contaminated food, they may die suddenly. Pet owners who suspect their pets have been eating products contaminated with aflatoxins should contact their veterinarians and immediately stop feeding the suspected food, especially if the pets are showing signs of illness.

Diagnosis
Only a veterinarian can diagnose aflatoxin poisoning. Usually, the veterinarian evaluates the pet's signs, asks about what food the pet has been eating and what the pet might have been exposed to, and they might run some tests to check a pet's liver health. Because the symptoms of aflatoxin poisoning are nonspecific and could point to multiple toxins, a veterinarian may recommend having pet food samples analyzed to determine if aflatoxins are present. For deceased pets, tissue samples can be analyzed for aflatoxins and other toxins.

For additional information, visit: https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/aflatoxin-poisoning-pets?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

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…

ALERT: Deadly Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Reported in Florida
Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type 2 (RHDV-2) has been reported in Florida for the first time. According to information from the FDACS and The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), 18 rabbits died in an outbreak at a Lake County backyard facility, with RHVD-2 being confirmed on December 31, 2020.

FDACS Division of Animal Industry Resources:

- Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Diagnosed on Single Premise and New Emergency Rule for Importation of Rabbits
- Biosecurity Recommendations for Rabbit Clubs, Exhibitions, Fairs and Shows

Reuters: New China Swine Fever Strains Point to Unlicensed Vaccines
As reported by *Reuters*, a new form of African swine fever identified in Chinese pig farms is most likely caused by illicit vaccines, industry insiders say, a fresh blow to the world's largest pork producer, still recovering from a devastating epidemic of the virus. Two new strains of African swine fever have infected more than 1,000 sows on several farms owned by New Hope Liuhe, China's fourth-largest producer, as well as pigs being fattened for the firm by contract farmers, said Yan Zhichun, the company's chief science officer. (Reuters) Read More

Commissioner Nikki Fried: Act on Investigations of Imported Strawberries & Peppers
Last month, Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried offered formal comment to the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) on two ongoing investigations into imports of strawberries and bell peppers into the American market. Fried has been joined by seasonal crop growers, industry associations, and Florida's congressional delegation in calling for an end to unfair trade practices that have harmed Florida's seasonal produce industry for decades. In the past decade, Mexico's share of the U.S. market for strawberries and bell peppers – two of Florida's signature crops – has increased dramatically, while Florida's market share of strawberries declined 16.5 percent and bell peppers dropped 30.8 percent. 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

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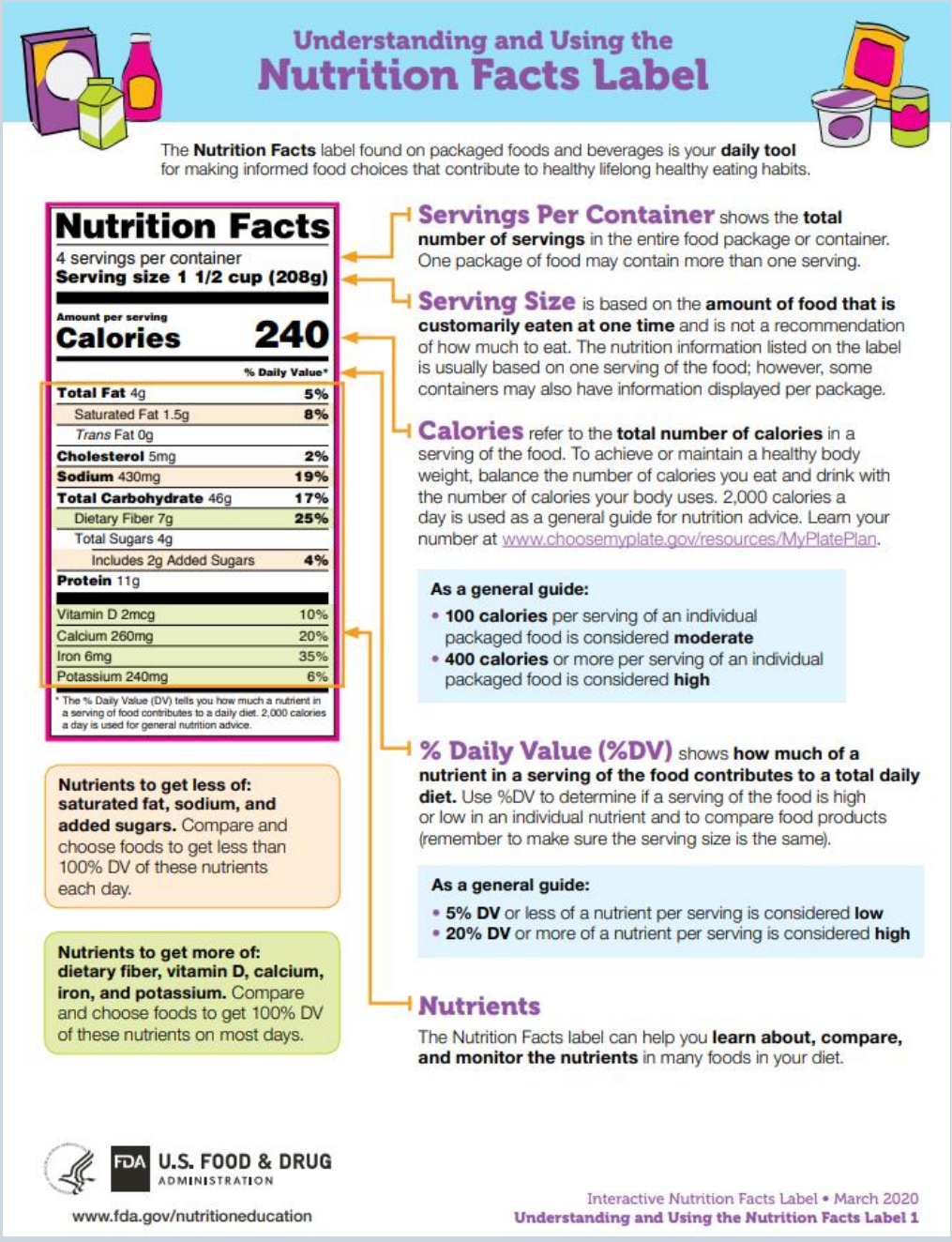
Food Safety and Food Defense Report

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.

Trying to get a fresh start on nutrition and a healthier lifestyle in 2021? Check out FDA's Interactive Nutrition Facts Label to learn more about food package labeling. Interactive Nutrition Facts Label (fda.gov)



Infographic: Daily Safety Briefings

Report weather conditions

Reinforce the use of PPE and hand washing

Remind staff that all shared tools and equipment should be cleaned after each use and disinfected at least once a day

Remind employees to report immediately to management or safety officer:

- Any work-related incidents
- Animal lethargy or illness
- If they have symptoms
- Stress/ Mental health concerns

Stay hydrated and follow all established safety procedures for your facility

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.

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