The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Photo: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture/Elizabeth Santini, DVM

Special Features of this Issue:

- *ESF 17 Staff Continue Preparation for FAD SAFE*
- *We Need to Talk: It's Time to Prepare for Hurricane Season*
- *A COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit is Now Available for Agricultural Organizations in the Southeast*

SART Hosts Virtual Florida Animal Carcass Management Working Group Meeting

On March 23rd, SART held a 2-hour virtual Florida Animal Carcass Management Working Group (ACMWG) meeting. The working group meeting was attended by stakeholders who would be tasked with assisting in the disposal of animal carcasses following a large-scale animal disease event in Florida. During the meeting, SART partners from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the US Department of Agriculture presented updates on Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and reviewed new USDA guidance on Above-Ground Burial carcass disposal methods to manage catastrophic livestock mortality.

The Working Group also conducted a virtual Tabletop exercise, which is a discussion-based exercise, to practice regulatory considerations and resource requirements for carcass disposal in Florida during a highly pathogenic Avian Influenza disease scenario. The group was also briefed on the role that the ACMWG will play in the November Foreign Animal Disease Southern Agriculture Functional Exercise (FAD SAFE) as policy experts or incident management team members.

To continue to engage and prepare the working group for its participation in FAD SAFE, SART will host a couple more ACMWG meetings this year. Upcoming meetings will include exercises to evaluate the group's ability to work through hypothetical carcass disposal scenarios in Florida. The scheduled meeting dates are outlined in the FAD SAFE events schedule on page 2.

"Beginning Monday, April 5, all individuals age 18 and older will be eligible to receive the [COVID-19] vaccine."

— Ron DeSantis
Governor, State of Florida

ESF 17 Staff Continue Preparation for FAD SAFE

The Foreign Animal Disease Southern Agriculture Functional Exercise, or "FAD SAFE," is a functional exercise between 11 participating states 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 FDACS Division of Animal Industry (DAI) will lead the FAD SAFE for Florida's response. The four-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 15-18, 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.

FAD SAFE 2021 Schedule

- **Monthly:** ESF 17 staff are now attending the monthly USDA Veterinary Services (VS) National Training and Exercise Program (NTEP) Multi State Working Group Call. In February's call, the work group reviewed the participating states support needs from the USDA VS National Incident Management Teams (NIMT) for the FAD SAFE exercise.
- **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 the USDA Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) and practicing foreign animal disease investigation that will take place during the official FAD SAFE in November.

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.

Did you know that every year the University of Florida's Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program is tasked with providing pre and post storm disaster assistance to shelters around the state of Florida? UF coordinates with the statewide disaster response system even before the storm hits to start assessing needs and coordinating assistance.

How We Help

- Coordinate pre-storm evacuation of shelter animals to other lifesaving organizations, outside the area of the impact
- Coordinate post-storm evacuation to make room for lost pets impacted by the storm
- Coordination of medical supplies, food cages and transportation
- Link to funding for emergency grants

Hurricanes are unpredictable, so we need to prepare. One critical piece is moving animals out of the shelter in order to make room for post storm victims. The UF team has been essential in coordinating these transport efforts during Hurricanes Irma, Maria, and Michael.

To be effective, we need an emergency contact from every shelter *before* a threat is looming.

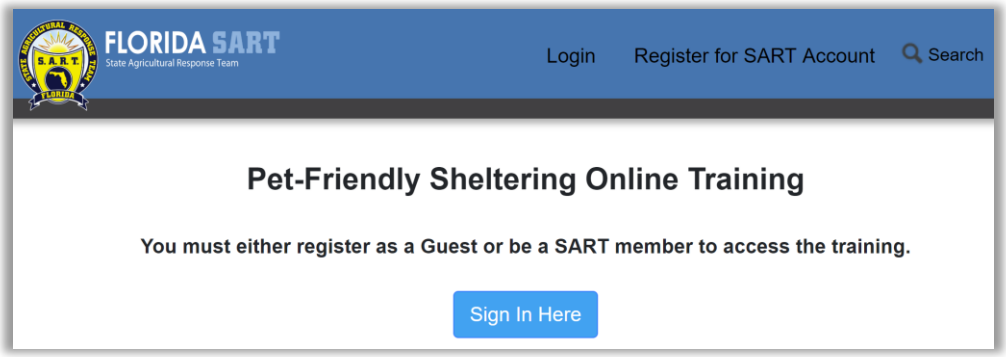
Please follow the link to our form below to provide your shelter's point of contact, a direct line for that contact, a cell phone number and a social media/messenger connection. Why a cell phone and messenger contact? Trying to call a main shelter line during a hurricane when there is often power outages and shelter closings does not help you get the resources and assistance you need. Even cell phone service can be interrupted but social media seems to stay online more consistently. There's no need to worry, we aren't going to call just to catch up...hurricanes are serious business. Help us help you! Your contact information will be held strictly confidential.

PLEASE COMPLETE OUR EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM!

THEN VISIT OUR WEBSITE

UF | Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program

Florida Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training - FREE REGISTRATION OPEN!



Course Overview
The Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training is the first of its kind to be offered in Florida. 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 the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART).

Course Objectives
- 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.

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 and to Register
Please visit the Florida SART website at: https://flsart.org/petfriendly/index.jsp

SART Spotlight: FLSART.org Pet Sheltering Resources Page

https://flsart.org/resource/petshelter

Looking for resources to help you plan for the sheltering of pets? With wildfire season present (story on page 8 of *The Sentinel*) and hurricane season coming ever closer, the Florida SART encourages you to visit our Pet Sheltering Resources page at: https://flsart.org/resource/petshelter. The site contains information on volunteer opportunities, lists of pet-friendly shelter supplies, and information for cost reimbursement under the Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act).

Volunteer

The following SART partners have volunteer opportunities available to the public, veterinary technicians and veterinarians interested in emergency and pet-friendly sheltering.

- Florida Veterinary Medical Association
- Florida Veterinary Technician Association
- Humane Society of the United States
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

Pet-Friendly Shelter Supplies List

- Basic Supplies List for Pet-Friendly Shelter Set Up
- Comprehensive Supplies List for Pet-Friendly Shelter Set Up

Reimbursement for Counties

The PETS Act provides counties reimbursement - under the FEMA Public Assistance Program - for eligible expenses associated with setting up pet-friendly shelters and transporting those pets, if needed.

- The PETS Act
- FAQ on The PETS Act
- Best Practices for Pet Evacuations and Sheltering

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

Florida Wildfires: Begin your Planning Now!

Wildfire season is upon us and there are numerous wildfire threats throughout Florida. According to a March 30, 2021, report by the Florida Division of Emergency Management, "There are currently 27 active wildfires across the state burning a total of 275 acres. 24 are 100% contained. A County Burn Ban is in effect for Duval, Orange, Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Sarasota (prohibited year-round)." Pet and livestock owners should take notice and start planning now.

For family pets, Florida SART has developed a Pet Sheltering Resources site (detailed on page 5 of *The Sentinel*). For larger animals and livestock, emergency planning is just as important. "It's not necessarily a wildfire's flames that will initially force you and your horses' evacuation. Rather, it's the thick black smoke filled with toxins, along with poor air quality, that will begin having an impact well before the flames arrive," says Rebecca Gimenez, PhD, as reported in *TheHorse.com*. Horses have large lungs and no way to filter out smoke and fire's toxic byproducts-including acrid smoke and tiny particles-and can develop serious health issues even when smoke is several miles away.

To help you prepare in advance, TheHorse.com has some simple steps you can take to make farms as safe and evacuations as seamless as possible. Read the story at:
https://thehorse.com/158682/wildfires-preparation-and-evacuation-tips-for-horse-owners

To stay updated on the threat of wildfires in the State of Florida, please visit:
https://www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Wildland-Fire/Current-Wildfire-Conditions

Free Registration Open for State-Certified Virtual Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Training

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (FLSARC) has upcoming opportunities available for their Awareness Level 1 and Operations Level 2 Small Animal Emergency Sheltering courses. FLSARC provides emergency animal sheltering training for Florida, its counties, and communities. These courses teach the unique procedures, skills, and knowledge necessary to build and operate a temporary emergency animal shelter in response to natural disasters and large cruelty cases. These courses were created and designed by experts from many organizations including Florida SART, University of Florida Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service Team, and leadership of FLSARC. Both courses are state-certified by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

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.

Awareness Level Courses

- 4/10 Awareness (Level 1) Small Animal Emergency Sheltering – 8AM-5PM EST (1 Full Day)
- 5/1-5/2 Awareness (Level 1) Small Animal Emergency Sheltering – 9AM-1PM EST (2 Half Days)
- 5/18-5/20 Awareness (Level 1) Small Animal Emergency Sheltering – 6:30-9PM EST (3 Night Sessions)

Operations Level Courses (You must complete the awareness course before taking operations)

- 4/17-4/18, 4/24-4/25, Operations (Level 2) Small Animal Sheltering – 9AM-1PM EST (4 Half Days)

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

In the News

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

A COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit is Now Available for Agricultural Organizations in the Southeast

The toolkit was developed by the Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety and the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in collaboration with UF Health. The toolkit includes downloadable info sheets, a newsletter template, social media graphics, and helpful communication tips. Materials are available in a customizable format that allows you to add your organization's logo. Some of the materials are available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. The toolkit and materials can be downloaded at: http://www.sccahs.org/index.php/covid-19-vaccine

Want to tell your friends you received the vaccine? Share the "I Got My Vaccine" graphic found on page 12 of *The Sentinel*!

ESF 17 Staff Attend Agricultural Biosecurity Professional Development Courses

Made possible with SART funding, 18 staff from ESF 17 attended biosecurity and emergency management professional development courses hosted by the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS). These training courses were offered by USDA ARS in addition to their biosecurity symposium titled: *Emerging Biorisk Challenges in Agriculture*. Courses taught included: "Agriculture Biosecurity and Emergency On-Farm Response," "High-Containment Facility Operations Risk Analysis," and "Communicating Effectively During High-Concern Situations." Following attendance at the training, ESF 17 staff had high praise for the trainings and felt that these courses helped to strengthen their knowledge and ability to respond to emergency events involving biosecurity. ESF 17 looks forward to funding training opportunities like the ARS professional development courses to better prepare our team for future emergency responses in Florida.

Popular Flea Collar Linked to Almost 1,700 Pet Deaths

As reported by USA Today, since Seresto flea and tick collars were introduced in 2012, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has received incident reports of at least 1,698 related pet deaths. Overall, through June 2020, the agency has received more than 75,000 incident reports related to the collars, including nearly 1,000 involving human harm. (USA Today) 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
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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.

While the Atlantic Hurricane Season starts on June 1, it's never too early for to start preparing. Below is a checklist providing storm preparedness considerations for dairy industry partners:

- Do I have access or own a generator that is sized appropriately to meet all my power needs in the case of power failure to my operation?
- If I do have access to or own a generator, is it working properly and has it been maintained so that I may depend on it to sufficiently power my operation for up to two weeks?
- Do I own or have access to parts to fix or service my generator in case of mechanical or service issues? Do I have a contact in case repair is beyond the scope of my knowledge?
- Do I have ample fuel to power my generator? Where will I get fuel if needed and still without power?
- Do I have a plan to move employees around during and post storm, in which curfews may be levied, to attend to the immediate needs of the operation?
- Do my employees have access to fuel for personal vehicles to get to and from my facility post storm?
- Do I have procedures in place to check on all my employees post storm to ensure their safety? Are they familiar with these procedures?
- How long can I operate on my current supply of chemicals, resin and/or single service containers? Do I have a backup plan to access these supplies if my current shipping options are interrupted or no longer available?
- In the case of structures collapsing, do I have the proper equipment or know who to contact to clear my barn to ensure the needs of the cattle?
- Do my employees, barn and cattle have fresh, clean potable water available to them in case of a power failure? What about food/feed? Do I have a backup plan to receive any of these goods if my current means of transportation is interrupted?
- In the case of milk being adulterated or not meeting cooling requirements, do I have a plan to safely dispose that milk to allow the continuation of milking operations? Do I have the ability to document that disposal for insurance/regulatory purposes? Who do I report that to?
- If I have a tunnel barn, do I have a plan for the cattle in case of a power outage? Do I have backup generators or can I turn the cattle out to pasture?
- If I currently direct load, will I have enough tankers available as to not disrupt milking operations? If applicable, are my old bulk tanks clean, working and available to store milk?

Want to Tell your Friends you Received the Vaccine? Share the "I Got My Vaccine" Graphic!

Developed by the Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety and the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in collaboration with UF Health.

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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