The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Class participants engage in an exercise at the K9 Handler Training.

SART Sponsors K9 Handler Training

Made possible by the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) and in partnership with the Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force and K9 MEDIC, a **K9 First Responder & Tactical Combat Casualty Care Training** was hosted on April 23rd-25th at Camp Blanding, the primary military reservation and training base for the Florida National Guard.

The training was a 3-day, 24-hour, in-person training. Topics ranged from safe K9 handling and comprehensive vital assessments to treating the most common emergencies such as heat stroke and bloat/Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV), and tactical injuries such as gunshot wounds. K9 handlers who attended the training were from a variety of jurisdictions including local, state, and federal law enforcement and regulatory agencies. Several handlers even brought their K9 companions to the training to get hands on experience with their four-legged partner.

"By partnering with K9 MEDIC and the Florida National Guard, SART worked to bring an intense, hands-on training experience that focused on protecting and caring for canine first responders in the field, when a veterinarian or hospital isn't around," said LeiAnna Tucker, Florida SART Administrator, FDACS Division of Animal Industry. "By teaching the handler to learn and apply these emergency medical skills for their canine, they're preparing themselves for all situations, whether a missing child, a massive hurricane, or even an act of terrorism they're called to assist with."

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Bronson Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory COVID-19 Services Update*
- *Register for 'Hurricane Preparedness Planning for Mosquito Control Response' Training*
- *Florida SART Receives PPE from State DEM*

"Congratulations, It's your time to shine. Wish you all the best in your endeavors, May your future be filled with sunshine."

— Julie Hebert
Read by LeiAnna Tucker to Sue Rantuccio on her final day of employment with the State of Florida.

Below, Sue (left) accepts an award from David Perry at the 2014 SART Planning Conference. The story continues, page 9.

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 ESF 17 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.

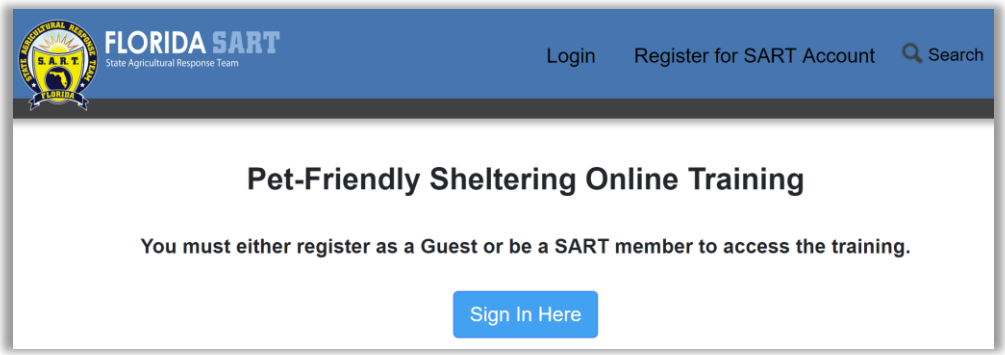
Please follow the link to our form below to provide your shelter's point of contact, a direct line for that contact, a cell phone number and a social media/messenger connection. Why a cell phone and messenger contact? Trying to call a main shelter line during a hurricane when there is often power outages 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

Bronson Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory COVID-19 Services Update

Recently, the Bronson Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (BADDL) experienced a critical shortage of staffing that impacted the receipt and testing of samples, particularly within the Serology Section; however on April 16, 2021, the BADDL returned to operations under a COVID-19 mission critical plan. All laboratory sections will continue to receive and process samples; however, due to limiting the number of team members at the laboratory at one time, turnaround times could vary. All reasonable efforts will be made to provide quality results in a timely manner. If your sample is urgent and you cannot afford a delayed turnaround time, please call the laboratory to discuss your processing options.

Our top priority is to continue to provide mission-critical services and superior customer service to the animal industries of Florida.

We request that clients dropping off samples in person complete the sample submission forms prior to arrival. If you need to complete the sample submission forms at the laboratory, there is a station located outside of the Receiving doorway to complete the necessary paperwork and submission forms. A member of the laboratory team will be on-site to assist you outside. All BADDL submission forms can be found at: www.FDACS.gov/BADDL.

We appreciate your patience and thoughtfulness as we are limiting our staffing and interactions during the COVID-19 response. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call your BADDL team at 321-697-1400.

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 Small Animal Emergency Sheltering course. FLSARC provides emergency animal sheltering training for Florida, its counties, and communities. The course is 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.

Awareness Level Courses

- 5/18-5/20 Awareness (Level 1) Small Animal Emergency Sheltering – 6:30-9PM EST (3 Night Sessions)
- 6/12-6/13 Awareness (Level 1) Small Animal Emergency Sheltering – 9:30AM-1PM EST (2 Sessions)

SPECIAL OFFER: Use Promo Code "ESF17" to waive the fee when you register!

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

Earn your Mental Health First-Aid Certification!

Our Mental Health First Aid course includes:

- An introductory two-hour, self-paced session
- A seven-hour live virtual course led by Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.

Learn more about the Mental Health First Aid certification at the following link:
https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

This certification is sponsored by the *Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety* at the University of Florida.

Register for 'Hurricane Preparedness Planning for Mosquito Control Response' Training

Scheduled for **Thursday, May 6, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time**, this virtual training will provide a fundamental overview of how Florida mosquito control programs respond post-storm, the role of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Mosquito Control Incident Response Team (MCIRT), and what you need to do to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. In addition, available resources for templates and other helpful information will be provided. This webinar is intended for mosquito control personnel, emergency management personnel and any stakeholders of SART.

For more information and to register, visit:
https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/6229407786404506114

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

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

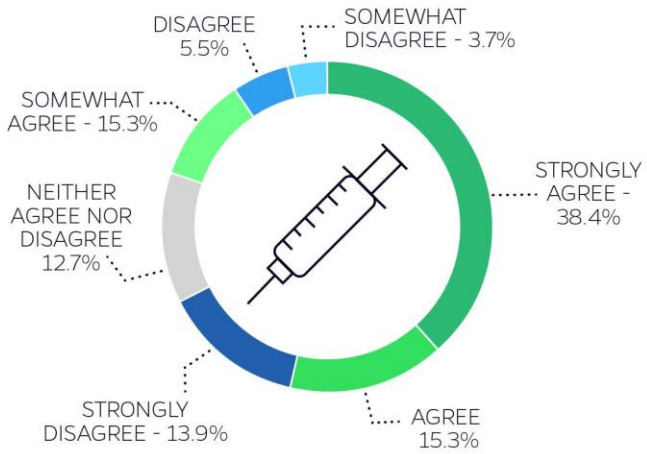
- The UF/IFAS COVID-19 Webpage provides information resources for agricultural producers and consumers: https://ifas.ufl.edu/covid19-information-updates
- Florida Department of Health Coronavirus Webpage: https://floridahealthcovid19.gov
- Southern Coastal Center for Agriculture Health and Safety COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit: http://www.sccahs.org/index.php/covid-19-vaccine

WHAT DO AMERICANS THINK ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

In a recent survey conducted by the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center), Americans were asked about their attitudes, beliefs and intent to recieve the COVID-19 vaccine. This study was conducted between January 8 and 21, 2021 among 1,549 American adults sampled for characteristics to match the U.S. Census.

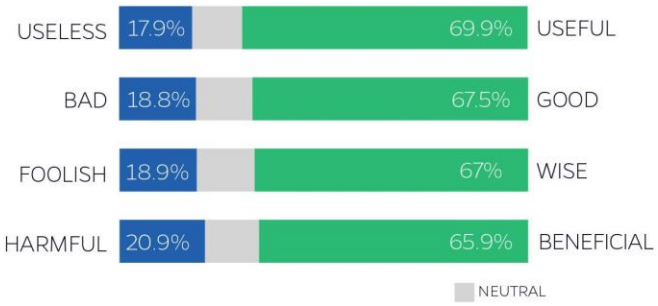
INTENT TO RECEIVE COVID-19 VACCINE

When asked about their intent to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the majority of respondents indicated they intend to get the vaccine when it becomes available to them.



ATTITUDES TOWARD COVID-19 VACCINE

Respondents reported overall positive attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine. The majority of respondents indicated they believed the vaccine was useful, good, wise and beneficial.



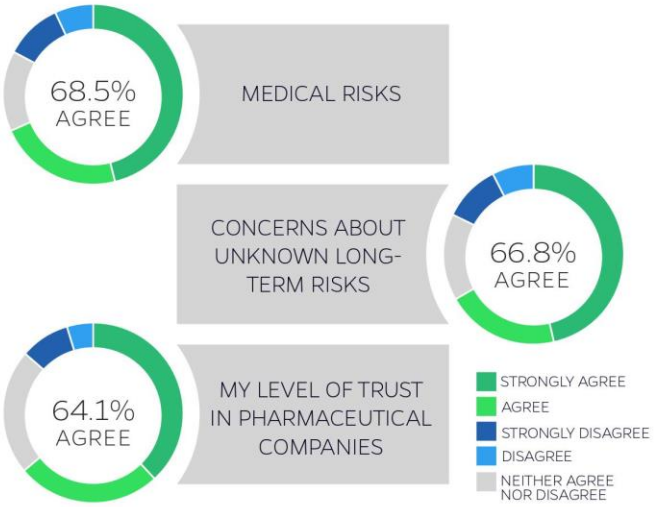
TOP 3 PREVENTATIVE FACTORS:

1. POTENTIAL RISKS
2. ASSOCIATED COSTS
3. INSURANCE COVERAGE CONCERNS

Respondents were asked what factors would prevent them from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Potential risks, associated costs and insurance coverage concerns were the most reported preventative factors.

When asked what would influence their decision to receive a vaccine, respondents indicated medical risks, concerns about unknown long-term risks and level of trust in pharmaceutical companies were the most influential deciding factors.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE VACCINE DECISIONS:



Data was collected between January 8 and 21, 2021 by the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education. This survey was conducted among 1,549 adult Americans sampled for characteristics to match the U.S. Census.

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA Center for Public Issues Education

www.piecenter.com/covid-19/

Congratulations to FDACS' Sue Rantuccio on Retirement

FDACS' Sue Rantuccio (center) pictured with Leianna Tucker and Dr. Greg Christy

Susan "Sue" Rantuccio, Senior Management Analyst Supervisor with FDACS and true budgeting and financial expert on behalf of SART, retired this past February. Our entire team celebrates Sue's tremendous contributions to the organization; and she will be greatly missed around the office!

Sue started working for the State of Florida in May of 2000. She worked for FDACS but eventually transitioned to the Department of Health (DOH). Sue returned to FDACS in 2007 where she played a pivotal role in grants, contracts, funding, and budgeting for nearly all SART's work.

During a recent SART partners call, FDACS' Emergency Programs Manager, LeiAnna Tucker, read a poem (at right) to Sue, and thanked her for all of her years of service.

On behalf of the entire SART and FDACS family…

CONGRATULATIONS, SUE!!!

Do your very best,
In everything you do,
So when it comes time,
You can choose whatever you want to.

This next chapter of your life,
Will be an exciting one.
Do your very best,
To enjoy all the fun.

When things don't go your way,
And you don't know what to do.
Do your very best,
Remember you are you!

Congratulations,
It's your time to shine.
Wish you all the best in your endeavors,
May your future be filled with sunshine.

— Julie Hebert

In the News

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

Florida SART Receives PPE from State DEM
ESF 17 received 57,600 N95 Masks at our Florida State Agricultural Response Team warehouse in Tallahassee from the State Logistics Response Center located in Orlando. Thanks to the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM), this personal protective equipment will be supplied to our Department's field staff who are working to protect Florida's food and agriculture critical infrastructure sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NBC News: Otters at Georgia Aquarium Test Positive for COVID-19
Otters at an aquarium in Atlanta have tested positive for Covid-19 but are expected to make full recoveries. "They began exhibiting mild respiratory symptoms such as sneezing, runny noses, mild lethargy, and some began coughing," the Georgia Aquarium said in a statement. The aquarium said the Asian small-clawed otters are doing well. (NBC News) Read More

Podcast: Free Offer for Rescues, Kennels, and Shelters
In this near-post-pandemic time, biosecurity and infection control at animal facilities is certainly front of mind for everyone. The International Boarding and Pet Services Association (IBPSA) counts facilities of all kinds among its broad membership and further provides an inclusive opportunity to learn industry best practices through an accreditation program focused on animal health and welfare. The IBPSA founder and Executive Director joined Dr.'s Jenifer and Jason Chatfield for a candid conversation about the last 12 months and her strong hope for the future. Additionally, Rescue disinfectants offer a free "pandemic tool kit" for listeners. Learn More / Listen

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

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.

Severe Weather Blows Roof off Food Establishment

Even though Florida can see tornadoes and severe weather year-round, the strongest and deadliest tornadoes in Florida's history have occurred in the late winter and early spring, generally from January through April. Did you know Florida ranks 4th nationally in the annual average number of tornadoes (trailing Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, and tied with Nebraska)? In 2020, there were 65 tornadoes in Florida.

Florida was threatened with severe weather statewide the weekend of April 10-11. During this time, there was a total of six reported tornadoes: three in Bay County, one in Walton County, one in Manatee County, and one in Polk County. The Division of Food Safety had 20 regulated entities in the vicinity of the Bay County tornadoes. All other tornadoes were very small and only occurred in residential areas. Inspectors conducted phone and on-site assessments at these entities; with some noting building damage including one convenience store with an entire roof lost and over $70,000 worth of food product destroyed in Panama City Beach. Oddly enough, the roof was lifted off the convenience store and landed on a nearby home. Luckily there were no injuries.

In addition, a report was received from the State Emergency Operations Center for a damaged water facility in Brooksville affecting another convenience store. The Division of Food Safety issued a stop sale on all food processing due to a damaged well head and minimal water pressure with no boiled water procedures (store had already discontinued beverage service and closed restrooms).

SART Sponsors K9 Handler Training (continued)

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) had representation from the Division of Plant Industry (DPI). You may be wondering why DPI has K9 handlers. FDACS/DPI canines search shipping hubs for material that may carry invasive plants and diseases, patrol for contraband agricultural products in airline passengers' luggage. DPI canines even have noses that are tuned to detect the scent of invasive pests such as the giant African land snail, which has been the subject of eradication efforts in Miami-Dade County since 2011. The training prioritized COVID-19 safety by requiring masks and temperature checks every day. SART looks forward to sponsoring this valuable training again in the future.

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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