The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Hurricane Season kicks off on June 1. Are you and your pets prepared?

Are You and Your Animals Prepared for the 2021 Hurricane Season?

On June 1st, the 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season began. Like in 2020, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has once again predicted an above-normal number of named storms (60% chance) for the 2021 season in their pre-season outlook.

NOAA predicts between 13-20 named storms, 6-10 of those potentially becoming hurricanes, including 3 to 5 major hurricanes (Category 3-5).

NOAA's Secretary of Commerce, Gina Raimondo, stated, "Now is the time for communities along the coastline as well as inland to get prepared for the dangers that hurricanes can bring." These dangers are life threatening hazards such as storm surge, inland flooding, high winds, and tornadoes.

Are you and your animals ready for Hurricane Season?

The Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) has a variety of resources available on its website at www.FLSART.org to help get you and your animals ready for hurricane season. You can find training materials and resources on pet-friendly sheltering, animal technical rescue, vector control, food safety, how to volunteer with a SART organization, and more.

Additional resources and information follow on the next page and throughout this month's edition of the *SART Sentinel*.

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Special Features of this Issue:

- *Hurricane Season 2021: Let's Get Prepared!*
- *Reduce Stress in Shelter Pets with Fear Free*
- *Petco Love Lost: Utilizing Pet Facial Recognition in Disasters*

"Creating one central database for lost and found pets utilized by all can be a gamechanger for reuniting lost pets, especially in times of disasters, like we experience almost annually in the Florida hurricane season."

— Dr. Julie Levy
Fran Marino Professor of Shelter Medicine Education at the University of Florida
Story on Page 9.

Hurricane Season 2021: Let's Get Prepared!

Check out the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) Animal-Related Emergency Response Page. This webpage includes a document titled "Disaster Preparedness for Pets" that contains information for evacuation planning and tips for caring for pets during a disaster. The webpage also contains disaster preparedness documents for Livestock and Horses. SART encourages you to share this information!

SART's Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training is now state-certified! If your county needs information on how to plan for and operate a pet-friendly shelter, we strongly encourage animal sheltering stakeholders to take SART's new Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training. 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. This training is state-certified by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (Course Code FL-017).

Additional Resources: SART partners and county emergency management offices have helpful resources for handling pets and pet sheltering during a disaster.

- Pinellas County has a great pet preparedness webpage that details supplies needed to evacuate with your pet as well as the locations of pet-friendly shelters in Pinellas County: Pinellas County Pet Preparedness Webpage.
- The UF/IFAS Extension Disaster Handbook details essential information, in Spanish and English, for before, during and after severe weather.
- The Florida Division of Emergency Management Hurricane Hazard Webpage provides general information about the hazards associated with Hurricanes and suggests guidance on how to prepare for them. Visit Floridadisaster.org for the latest emergency information this Hurricane season.

Reduce Stress in Shelter Pets with Fear Free

The Fear Free Shelter Program provides training suitable for all of the individuals involved in the care and oversight of shelter and rescue animals—from medical and behavioral staff to intake, reception, kennel, and cattery staff to animal control officers, adoption counselors, foster caregivers, and shelter volunteers. It is an excellent resource for disaster responders as they're dealing with animals in high-stress scenarios.

Fear Free Certification is FREE for all shelter, rescue, and animal welfare personnel and volunteers. Veterinary students and faculty may also take the Fear Free Shelter Program at no cost.

For more information, visit: https://fearfreeshelters.com

FEAR FREE

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

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

The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (FLSARC) has an upcoming opportunity 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 (FDEM).

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 Course

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

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

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.
- **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.

UF VETS Prepare for Hurricane Season '21

In preparation for the 2021 Hurricane Season, the University of Florida (UF) Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service (VETS) team hosted a mass casualty field hospital exercise with DVM students from the University of Florida. Led by medical director Dr. Lawrence Garcia, students worked through sample scenarios to triage and treat patients following a simulated hurricane.

UF VETS is back to providing live and hands-on training opportunities at the Florida State Fire College, thanks to grants provided by Florida SART. Our operations training in March allowed participants to work through scenarios including mud entrapment and trailer extraction, as well as work to operate a portable high point and package large animal patients on a rescue glide. In April, participants learned critical safety precautions, identified resources, and networked from others from a wide range of agencies and departments in our Awareness training.

An open enrollment operations level course will be available at the Florida State Fire College November 5-7th. Seats are available at $600/person. Contact Brandi Phillips at brandikphillips@ufl.edu to register.

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

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

Petco Love Lost: Utilizing Pet Facial Recognition in Disasters

Petco Love, formerly the Petco Foundation, is stepping up with a new and innovative solution called Petco Love Lost (lost.petcolove.org) to reunite lost pets, including those affected by disasters. As Florida is a state impacted by emergency weather conditions annually, this tool can revolutionize the reunification process for animal response teams.

Petco Love Lost is a searchable national database that uses patented facial recognition technology to make reuniting lost pets quicker and easier. This free and simple-to-use tool is easily accessible to shelter and disaster personnel, pet parents, as well as any person who finds a lost pet. Uploaded lost pet photos are immediately scanned for matches at a participating shelter, providing initial results in less than a minute.

In a time of disaster, reuniting pets quickly is crucial. More than 900 animal welfare organizations have already adopted Petco Love Lost in 47 states.

When used by all involved in animal disaster support, Petco Love Lost can be the central search database for pets displaced during disasters. It allows pets to be reunited across state lines, is easy to use on a mobile device, and supports disaster prep by encouraging uploads prior to an emergency.

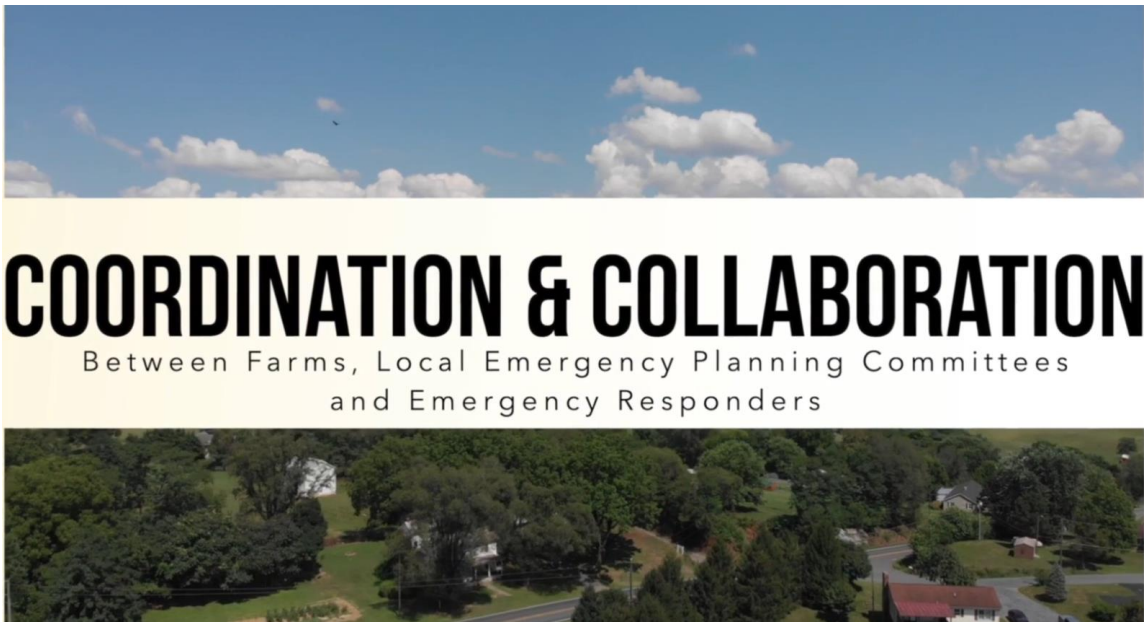
As Dr. Julie Levy, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, DABVP, Fran Marino Professor of Shelter Medicine Education at the University of Florida suggests: "*Creating one central database for lost and found pets utilized by all can be a gamechanger for reuniting lost pets, especially in times of disasters, like we experience almost annually in the Florida hurricane season.*"

Early additional supporters of Petco Love Lost and the goal to "unite to reunite" include Petco, the North American Veterinarian Community, ASPCA, Greater Good Charities, 24PetWatch, Michelson Found Animals, Universities LSU, Texas A&M, UC Davis, BOBS from Skechers, Blue Buffalo, the American Pet Products Association, Hill's Pet Nutrition, the Human Animal Bond Research Institute, Nationwide, State Farm, along with many more.

Disaster focused agencies, corporations, animal welfare organizations and pet industry participants seeking more information can contact Jennifer.Schulz@petcolove.org.

In the News

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



Animal Ag, First Responder Groups Release Emergency Planning Video
USPoultry has released a new video, *Coordination & Collaboration Among Farms, Local Emergency Planning Committees & Emergency Responders*.
The video is accessible at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3meOP-y3gj8

Florida Forest Service Deploys Task Force to Assist with South Florida Wildfires
Last month, the Florida Forest Service is deployed a Task Force from the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend regions to South Florida to assist with wildfire suppression efforts. Resources included 16 personnel, 2 tractor-plows, 2 heavy dozers, and 2 brush trucks. Currently, there are 46 fires burning 4,072 acres across Florida. Of those, 29 are south of the I-4 corridor and are burning 4,017 acres. "It's more important than ever for residents to be cautious and understand their role in preventing and preparing for a wildfire," said Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried. Read More

Governor Ron DeSantis Encourages Floridians to Prepare for Hurricane Season Ahead of Florida Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday
Governor Ron DeSantis, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and the Florida Department of Revenue are encouraging Floridians to prepare for the 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season by taking advantage of the 2021 Florida Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday, which runs from Friday, May 28, through Sunday, June 6. The 2021 Florida Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday is a ten-day sales tax holiday for disaster preparedness supplies. Supplies that will be tax-free include flashlights, radios, tarps, batteries, and generators. Read More

A Firefighting Helicopter Crashed During Training, Killing The 4 People on Board
On May 25th, a firefighting helicopter carrying four people on a training exercise crashed into a marsh near Leesburg International Airport, killing all aboard. "We are deeply saddened by this tragedy within our wildland firefighting family," said Florida Forest Service director Erin Albury. "These firefighters put themselves on the line to serve and protect the lives of others." The FAA and National Transportation Safety Board issued separate news releases saying they will investigate. The aircraft belonged to Brainerd Helicopters Inc./Firehawk Helicopters, located at Leesburg International Airport, the police department release said. Read More

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.

Preparing for the 2021 Hurricane Season

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Food Safety would like to provide you with some useful information as we approach the 2021 Hurricane Season, which began on June 1st. This information will help you and your business prepare for a storm and for any situations you may encounter following a storm.

We strongly recommend all food establishments have an emergency action plan in place prior to hurricane season. This plan should emphasize amongst other things efforts to minimize contributions to a food borne illness following a power outage or other damage following a storm or other significant event. As part of this plan we recommend securing access to additional refuse capacity to properly dispose of any food waste. Please know that following a storm, and once the area is safe, the department's food safety inspectors will begin to conduct assessments in your area. These are not inspections, rather they are assessments to determine damage and needs in an impacted area as well as provide information to establishments affected by a storm or other event.

We also post information on our website (below) where you can obtain pre- and post-storm information such as the Damaged Food Guide, Boil Water Notice guidelines (from the Florida Department of Health), and information related to electrical power loss.
https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Health-and-Safety/Food-Emergencies-and-Disaster-Preparation.

You may also benefit from reporting your business status following a storm to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. This allows consumers to know if you are open and operating or if you are closed, which helps direct the public to available resources.
https://floridadisaster.biz/.

Lastly, if you have any questions you may contact us by phone at (850) 245-5520, emailing us at FoodSafetyResponseTeam@FDACS.gov or visit us at https://www.fdacs.gov

Damaged Food Guidance for Food Establishments

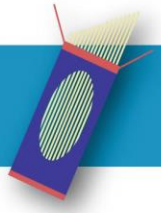
Power Outages, Floods, Fires, Sewage Backup, Transportation Accidents, Disasters

Food products can become contaminated or distressed from events including power outages, floods, sewage backup, fires, transportation accidents and disasters. Food establishments should have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) prior to an event which they can follow when these conditions occur to assist in preventing and reducing food-borne illness in situations that may affect food safety.

Food Product and Food Packaging to be evaluated which cannot be salvaged

- Exposed foods, bulk foods, fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and eggs;
- Paper or cellophane-wrapped foods which can collect filth or split at the seams making it virtually impossible to remove dirt or sanitize properly such as candies, cereals, bread, cakes, chewing gum, etc. This would include products in secondary packaging (cake mixes, cereals) which the outer package is of porous material;
- Any porous items that are used with food or that come in contact with the mouth including disposable flatware, plastic utensils, and paper, foam, or plastic dishware;
- Food products in containers with screw caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda bottles), twist caps, flip tops, snap open, and similar-type closures can have filth lodged under the cap lips, threads, lugs, crimps, and snap-rings, making them virtually impossible to detect and remove; and
- Cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted.

Food Products which can be salvaged must meet requirements of the regulatory authority



- Commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans or retort pouches; and
- Foods which have maintained refrigeration requirements of <41 degrees F or have maintained a solid frozen state.

Disposal of food

- Remove and secure damaged products to an isolated area to prevent contamination to the facility, other food items or the public.
- Clearly mark storage area and/or storage containers "NOT FOR SALE" if disposal is to be at a later time.
- Small volumes of food should be denatured (e.g. with bleach, a detergent or other cleaning product to render unusable), placed in sealed black plastic bags, and placed in a closed refuse container outside the facility.
- Large volumes of food should be stored in a closed and secured container in a secure location until disposed of by the refuse disposal company or transportation to the landfill.
- Landfills should be contacted prior to delivery of food from a private individual or carrier to insure acceptance.

In preparation for or immediately after an emergency the food establishment should assess needs and make immediate arrangements with contracted waste disposal companies to provide refuse containers which can be secured to hold large quantities of products which need to be transported to a landfill. Arrangements should also be made for transportation to the landfill as soon as the refuse container is filled.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Looking for Inspiration? Check out Pinellas County…

SURVIVING THE STORM… IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

PET PREPAREDNESS

Plan Ahead for Your Animals

Pinellas County has developed a Hurricane Preparedness/Pet Preparedness portal with resources and information to help the public plan for emergencies.

The website serves as a model for other jurisdictions, and includes information on:

- Pet Friendly Shelters
- Other Shelter Options
- Recommended Disaster Supply Kit for Pets
- Preparation Tips
- After a Storm Tips
- Post-Disaster Animal Collection Temporary Collection Sites
- Pet Friendly Enrollment Form

For more information please visit:
http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/petpreparedness.htm

Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center
Department of Emergency Management
(727) 464-3800
During an emergency activation, call the County Information Center at (727) 464-4333

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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