The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Tagline

Animal Technical Rescue in Lee County

By Brandi K. Philips

Last month, Lee County Sheriff's Office (SO) assisted Sarasota County and Collier County SOs with an animal cruelty case involving cattle. The SART Animal Technical Rescue (ATR) equipment was utilized to help a downed cow return to her feet.

The team was recently invited to deliver a 2-hour presentation at the Florida Agricultural Crimes Intelligence Unit (FACIU) Seminar, and several of Lee County SO's team members will be joining in for the upcoming operations training.

Although this ATR case did not involve fire service officials, several responders from North Collier Fire Department joined the team for a series of SART-sponsored ATR trainings at the Florida Fire College this past spring.

In other news, Hernando County officials recently provided mutual aid to Pasco County for a cow rescue (several from Hernando joined our most recent Awareness Training), and Broward County provided support for a horse rescue about a month after several of their folks participated in the March Operations training.

As we wrap up the spring training at the Florida State Fire College, I wanted you to see some of the impacts throughout the state in ATR. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to make more successes like these possible!

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Florida Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training - FREE REGISTRATION OPEN!*
- *COVID-19 Investigations of Big Cats at Zoos and Sanctuaries*
- *Cooler Safety for Picnics*

"As we wrap up spring training at the Florida State Fire College, I wanted you to see some of the impacts throughout the state in ATR [animal technical rescue]."

— Brandi K. Phillips, Director
Animal Technical Rescue Branch
UF Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service

ESF 17 Participates in Decontamination Training

On June 22, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 personnel from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) participated in a donning and doffing exercise, which included personnel decontamination procedures for animal disease events. Glo Germ was used to simulate contamination. This training and education event was performed with the following objectives:

- Practice donning personal protective equipment (PPE), personnel decontamination procedure, and doffing PPE;
- Identify additional supplies needed to be carried by inspectors and/or included in foreign animal disease (FAD) supplies; and
- Combine the listed instructions and the diagram specific to set up of the decontamination line, to make a one sheet (Just in Time "JIT" cheat sheet) to have available in the FAD response trailers.

A compressed version of a decontamination line was set up under the barn at the office. Staff viewed a donning and doffing training video, and then assembled at the barn to don PPE. Split into two groups, everyone had the opportunity to don/decontamination/doff and to be site management personnel. Any remaining contamination of the Glo Germ product was checked with a black light afterwards. While everyone had some contamination, it was very minimal. Using the after-action report from the 2019 Poultry Biosecurity and Depopulation Training, extra attention was given to two steps of the doffing process. To decrease shoulder contamination, inspectors chose PPE sizes that would easily allow the Tyvek suit to be removed from their shoulders. To decrease the "down the spine" contamination, the doffing assistant ensured the hood did not fall forward touching the back as the Tyvek suits were removed.

Afterwards, inspectors stocked up on PPE supplies for their vehicles and a PPE supply list was made. Input was provided for the JIT cheat sheet. Inspectors were also provided glove compartment sized laminated Virkon dilution measurements sheets.

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). This training is state-certified by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (Course Code FL-017).

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 state-certified 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 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 1 Courses

- August 14-15, Awareness (Level 1): Register Here
- September 13-15, Awareness (Level 1): Register Here

Operations Level 2 Courses (You must complete the awareness course before taking operations)

- July 24-25, Operations (Level 2): Register Here
- September 25-26: Operations (Level 2): Register Here

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

Swiftwater Technician & Boat Ops Training Held in June

Incidents that involve animals trapped in flood and Swiftwater require special considerations and knowledge. Last month, members from ESF 17 and SART participated in a Swiftwater technician and boat operations course in Plant City instructed by . The training provided both hands-on and classroom instruction.

Consie von Gontard of Florida SARC said, "Rescuing companion animals and large animals safely is a specialized skill set that requires coordination between multiple agencies and individuals. Trainings like this are critical to protect both our communities, their animals and our professional responders, whether this is your regular daily job or a volunteer responder."

"We need these trainings and professional relationships to do our jobs safely and effectively. Our community, our responders and our animals benefit from ongoing collaboration and training," said von Gontard.

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

COVID-19 Investigations of Big Cats at Zoos and Sanctuaries

Background

In the United States, several big cats, including tigers, lions, snow leopards, and cougars, have become infected with SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19 in people) in zoos and sanctuaries after being exposed to people with COVID-19. Investigating these instances can help experts understand why and how these big cats are becoming infected. This will help experts to set up prevention and control measures to protect the health and safety of these cats and their caretakers.

Purpose of this fact sheet

This fact sheet is intended for owners and operators of sanctuaries and zoos with big cats. Its purpose is to provide information about SARS-CoV-2 outbreak investigations including who to contact, and how to participate if big cats are affected by SARS-CoV-2 at your facility.

Purpose of an investigation

Outbreak investigations of big cats with SARS-CoV-2 involves a remote or in-person consultation by health officials to determine how and why big cats became infected. An investigation helps caretakers, scientists, and health officials better understand how the virus spread between people and animals and the best ways to prevent exposure and spread. This knowledge is critical in protecting the health and welfare of the animals and animal care staff who may have close contact with the animals.

Reporting animals with SARS-CoV-2 to state health officials also helps your veterinarians and animal care staff take steps to prevent more animals becoming infected, which might be beneficial to animal care and welfare at your facility.

By participating in these investigations, you are helping to protect your big cats and contributing to knowledge that can help protect big cats in other facilities.

How investigation helps protect your facility and others

Outbreak investigations of big cats at zoos or sanctuaries help to:

- Take action to prevent further spread at the facility and prevent future cases from occurring.
- Understand how and why these infections happened.
- Guide the care for sick animals
- Determine if infected animals are able to spread the virus to animal care staff.
- Protect the health of animals at all zoos and sanctuaries housing big cats.

Understanding the actions you might be asked to take during an investigation:

- Follow guidance from state health officials on whether animal testing and investigation are warranted.
  - In general, testing is recommended when:
    - Animals have clinical signs suspicious of SARS-CoV-2
      - » These clinical signs include fever, coughing, trouble breathing or shortness of breath, lethargy, sneezing, nasal discharge, eye discharge, vomiting, and diarrhea.

AND

    - Animals have been exposed to person(s) with COVID-19 (based on SARS-CoV-2 positive test).

cdc.gov/coronavirus

CS 324600-A 05/26/2021

- Tell health officials in your state when you think or know big cats at your facility are infected with SARS-CoV-2. Health officials to notify include:
  - State Public Health Veterinarians
  - State Animal Health Officials
- Allow experienced health investigators to interview animal care staff and volunteers to understand as follows: a) if they have recently felt sick or tested positive for COVID-19; and b) their duties and activities at the facility. These interviews will help determine how the animals may have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2.
  - The information collected will be used to help develop procedures to prevent future spread of the virus; it is not intended to find fault in practices or behaviors.
- Allow animal care staff and volunteers to be tested for COVID-19 to help determine how the animals might have been exposed to the virus. Information on staff or caretaker identities and test results will be kept confidential.
- Help investigators collect appropriate samples from animals at the facility. Testing these samples will show how many animals might have been infected with the virus.
  - Fecal samples are easy to collect and can tell us if the animal is currently infected.
  - Nasal and oral swabs and blood samples are helpful to collect if there are already plans to sedate animals for other procedures, or if animals are trained to tolerate sampling while they are awake. Like fecal samples, nasal and oral swabs samples can tell us if the animal is currently infected, while blood samples can be used to detect antibodies from a past infection.
  - Environmental swabs from the animals' habitats and other areas might also be collected to determine if there is potential contamination of the virus.
- Work with investigators to develop or implement quarantine or isolation plans, as well as any additional action plans needed (for example, procedures for treating and feeding sick animals, protocols to clean enclosures) to prevent further spread at the facility.
- You might be asked to help with an on-site investigation to help health officials better understand current facility operations and practices that can be changed to protect animals and their caretakers.

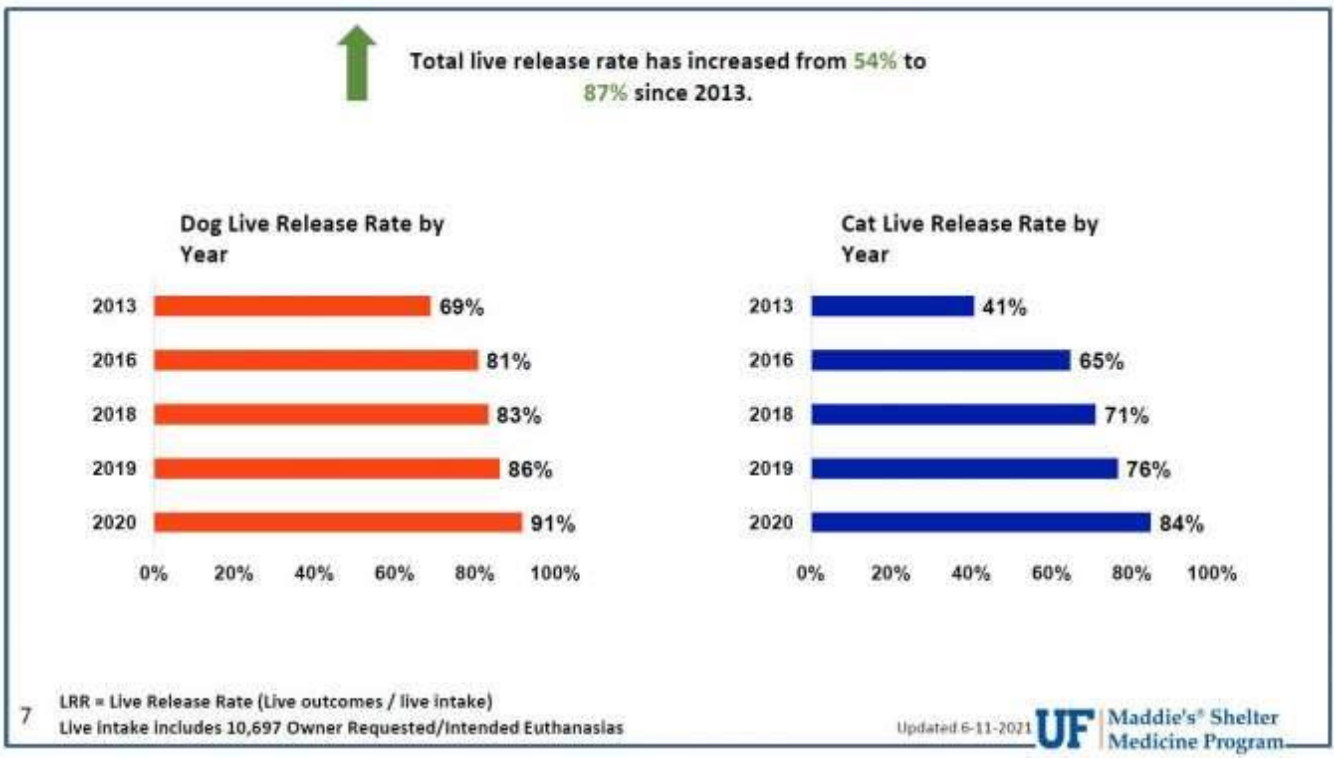
Understanding the actions health officials will take in an investigation:

- Keep information on staff or caretaker identities and test results confidential both during and after the investigation.
- Partner with you to reduce disruptions or impacts to daily facility operations.
- If requested, provide facility staff with infection prevention training and resources, as well as instruction on how to safely use personal protective equipment.
- More information about investigations can be found at One Health Toolkit for Health Officials Managing Companion Animals with SARS-CoV-2.

For more information about this disease in animals see:
COVID-19 and Animals (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/animals.html and Cases of SARS-CoV-2 in Animals in the United States (https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/sa_one_health/sars-cov-2-animals-us)

cdc.gov/coronavirus

Florida Animal Shelters Set Lifesaving Record in 2020 Amid Pandemic



A new study by Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program (MSMP) at the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine has revealed that Florida animal shelters set a new lifesaving record in 2020. In 2020, nine out of 10 animals who came into the care of a Florida animal shelter were saved. That is a jump from 81 percent in 2019 and 54 percent since MSMP first began collecting shelter data in 2013.

Bringing more cause for celebration is the fact that this new record was set during the COVID-19 Pandemic, which had a large effect – both positive and negative – on animal shelters in Florida and across the country. According to MSMP, aggressive spay and neuter campaigns, community engagement, and state-wide collaboration among animal shelters and rescue groups has brought down shelter intake and euthanasia rates in recent years.

To read more about this amazing feat and to view more supporting data, visit:
https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/research-studies/current-studies/florida-animal-sheltering

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Update

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) was notified that a single premise in Georgia had confirmed cases of RHDV-2 in domestic rabbits. The investigations are ongoing and FDACS is monitoring the situation closely. In addition, the country of Cuba has reported multiple locations with rabbit mortality related to Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2. Due to the proximity of these new outbreaks, FDACS will be approving the importation of RHDV vaccine by licensed, accredited veterinarians for use in our rabbit population on a case-by-case basis. Rabbit producers should contact their veterinarian.

Please visit Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease FAQs. Veterinarians should follow the step-by-step process for FDACS and USDA approval as instructed in the RHDV-2 Vaccine Order Instructions.

Read more at: https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Animal-Industry

In the News

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

FDACS Encourages Reporting in Response to Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease
FDACS encourages continued assistance with reporting mortalities, which are submitted for surveillance testing as warranted. Sick or dead wild rabbits should be reported to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Wildlife Health Hotline: (866) 293-9282 or wildlifehealth@myFWC.com. Sick or dead domestic rabbits should be reported to the Division of Animal Industry at RAD@FDACS.gov or calling (850) 410-0900.

For a map of affected states visit the USDA website at:
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/SA-Epidemiology-AnimalHealth-CEAH/Risk+Identification

FDACS to Host Florida Livestock Movement Standstill Virtual Tabletop Exercise
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. The FDACS Division of Animal Industry (DAI) will lead the FAD SAFE for Florida's response.

In preparation for the exercise taking place on November 15-18, 2021, a series of trainings, exercises and meetings will be conducted to prepare FDACS, ESF 17, SART, and agriculture industry stakeholders for the FAD SAFE. In July, the FDACS Division of Animal Industry will host a Florida Livestock Movement Standstill Virtual Tabletop Exercise with industry and government stakeholders to discuss the logistics and effects of a 72-hour livestock movement standstill as a result of a foreign animal disease outbreak in Florida. Stay tuned to *The Sentinel* for the latest information!

China Reports First Human Case of H10N3 Bird Flu
As reported by Reuters, a 41-year-old man in China's eastern province of Jiangsu has been confirmed as the first human case of infection with a rare strain of bird flu known as H10N3. Many different strains of bird flu are present in China and some sporadically infect people, usually those working with poultry. There is no indication that H10N3 can spread easily in humans. (Reuters) Read More

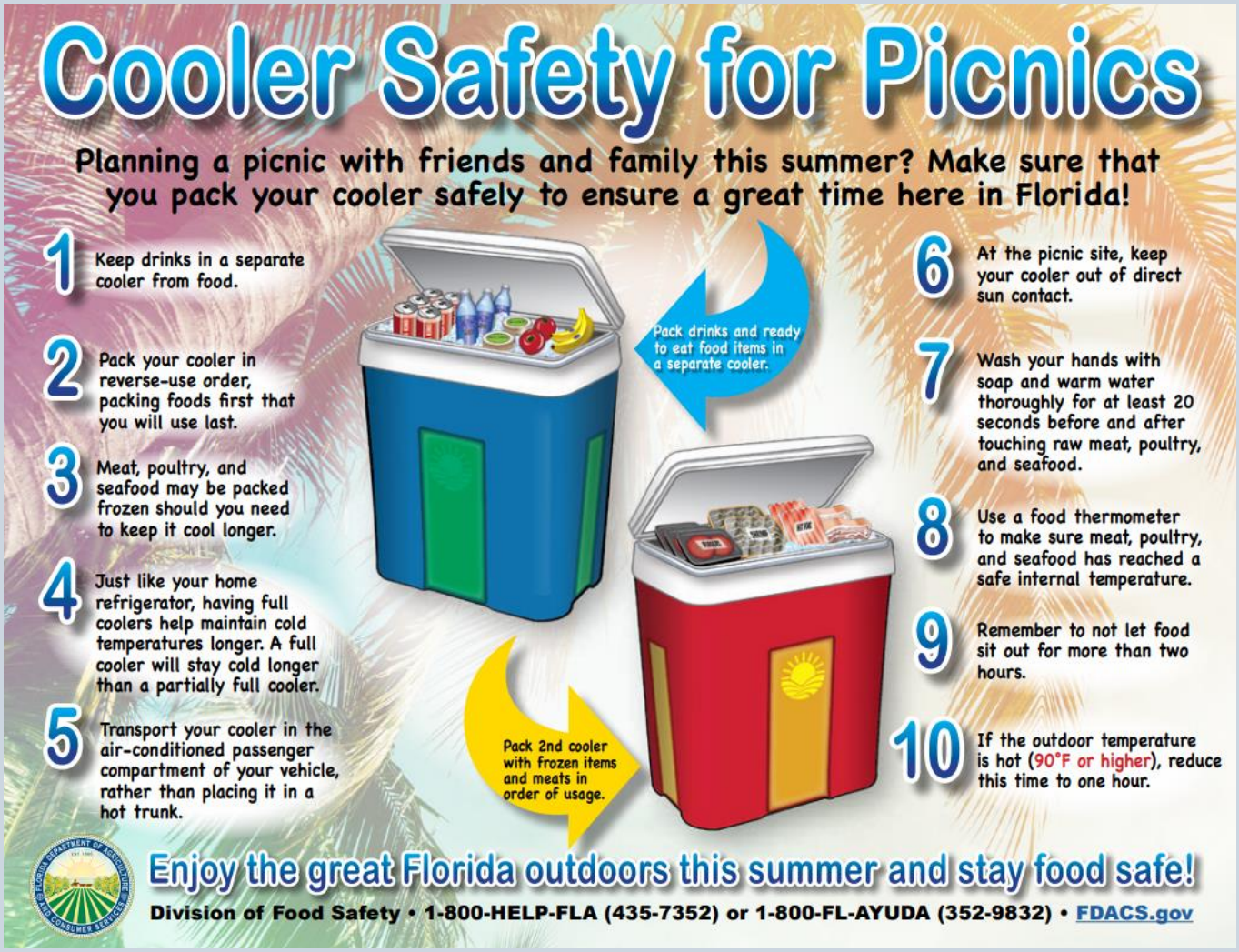
Food Safety and Food Defense Report

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.

Celebrate National Grilling Month by Staying Food Safe

This summer remember the most important grill master tool of all—a food thermometer! Ensure a safe and healthy BBQ for your friends and family by cooking foods thoroughly to their safe internal temperatures. Visit the Division of Food Safety's Consumer Resources and Outreach website to learn safe internal temperatures, grill safety, how to pack a cooler safely, and 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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Podcast: Disaster Preparedness Tips for Pet Owners

Living in Florida, cohosts Dr. Jen the vet and Dr. Jason Chatfield have learned a bit about disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Join them on their latest podcast, *Disaster Preparedness Tips for Pet Owners*, as they share their top tips for horse, pig, goat, dog, cat, and an array of other species.

While it's true that natural disasters can be devastating events, these twin veterinarians inject a bit of humor into a heavy topic while covering some actual, real-world, applicable guidance. Even the most seasoned, disaster-weary pet lover will likely glean a pearl or two of information from this entertaining discussion of real-world experiences.

Check out this episode at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkpnoPqv0U8&t=34s

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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