The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

ASF is a highly contagious and deadly viral disease affecting both domestic and feral swine of all ages.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *African Swine Fever: Facts and Resources*
- *SART Spotlight: UF IFAS Mental Health for First Aid Training*
- *Welcome to the National Forests in Florida*

UPDATE: African Swine Fever

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) submitted a dossier to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) detailing the actions taken to finalize a new African Swine Fever (ASF) protection zone in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The United States has long kept ASF out of the country, and this action, coupled with our existing, comprehensive import restrictions and safeguards will further strengthen our ability to protect the U.S. swine herd given recent findings of the disease in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

This is the first foreign animal disease protection zone established by the United States. In order to declare a protection zone, the OIE requires the declaring country to address the measures being implemented to prevent the introduction or spread of disease within the zone, including the implementation of biosecurity and sanitary measures within the zone, as well as intensified movement control and surveillance.

In its submission to the OIE, APHIS outlined existing measures in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, including:

- Training and awareness programs for producers, veterinarians, and the public;
- Active surveillance for ASF in the United States and its territories;
- Enhanced surveillance in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands;
- Laboratory capacity in the United States and its territories; and
- Examination of potential pathways of introduction of ASF into the United States.

See *ASF Update*, page 2.

"After hurricanes Irma and Michael, we were receiving requests from extension agents who recognized mental health impacts in their communities and did not know how to help."

— Dr. Angie Lindsey
Assistant Professor, University of Florida
Family, Youth and Community Sciences
Story on page 5.

ASF Update (continued)

Additionally, the dossier included information about the recent Federal Order suspending the interstate movement of all live swine, swine germplasm, swine products, and swine byproducts from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to the mainland United States until APHIS can establish sufficient mitigations to authorize such movement.

ASF has not been detected in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the USDA is committed to preventing its introduction into the United States and its territories. APHIS is taking this action out of an abundance of caution to further safeguard the U.S. swine herd and protect the interests and livelihoods of U.S. pork producers. The OIE permits the establishment of a protection zone within an area free of disease, as a temporary measure in response to an increased risk from a neighboring country or zone of different animal health status.

Now that the dossier has been submitted to the OIE to establish the protection zone, APHIS will work to confirm that individual countries recognize and accept the zone. APHIS is confident that its many existing preventive measures and mitigations, along with the protection zone, will protect our livestock industry from ASF and ensure the continued export of pork.

African Swine Fever: Facts and Resources

African Swine fever is a highly contagious and deadly viral disease affecting both domestic and feral swine of all ages. ASF is not a threat to human health and cannot be transmitted from pigs to humans. It is not a food safety issue.

ASF is found in countries around the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. More recently, it has spread through the Dominican Republic, China, Mongolia and Vietnam, as well as within parts of the European Union. It has never been found in the United States – and we want to keep it that way.

Why is African Swine Fever a Concern?
ASF is a devastating, deadly disease that would have a significant impact on U.S. livestock producers, their communities and the economy if it were found here. There is no treatment or vaccine available for this disease. The only way to stop this disease is to depopulate all affected or exposed swine herds. USDA is working closely with other federal and state agencies, the swine industry, and producers to take the necessary actions to protect our nation's pigs and keep this disease out. This group is also actively preparing to respond if ASF were ever detected in the U.S.

Story continues, next page.

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 Benjamin Motes at Benjamin.Motes@FDACS.gov or LeiAnna Tucker at LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov.

What Producers and Veterinarians Need to Know
Anyone who works with pigs should be familiar with the signs of ASF:

- High fever
- Decreased appetite and weakness
- Red, blotchy skin or skin lesions
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Coughing and difficulty breathing

Immediately report animals with any of these signs to state or federal animal health officials or call USDA's toll-free number at **1-866-536-7593** for appropriate testing and investigation. Timeliness is essential to preventing the spread of ASF.

On-farm biosecurity is crucial to preventing any animal disease from developing and spreading. All pig owners and anyone involved with pig operations should know and follow strict biosecurity practices to help protect U.S. pigs from ASF. Work with your veterinarian to assess your biosecurity plans and make improvements as needed.

What Travelers Need to Know
International travelers could unknowingly bring back this disease from an ASF-affected country, especially if they visit farms. Visit the APHIS traveler page to know which items you can bring back into the United States. Some food items may carry disease and threaten domestic agriculture and livestock. If you go to an ASF-affected country, do not bring back pork or pork products.

Declare any international farm visits to U.S. Customs and Border Protection when you return. Make sure you thoroughly clean and disinfect, or dispose of, any clothing or shoes that you wore around pigs, before returning to the U.S. Do not visit a farm, premises with pigs, livestock market, sale barn, zoo, circus, pet store with pot-bellied pigs, or any other animal facility with pigs for at least 5 days after you return.

African Swine Fever Surveillance in the United States
APHIS is furthering its overall African swine fever (ASF) preparedness efforts with the implementation of a surveillance plan. To make this program as effective and efficient as possible, USDA will add ASF testing to our existing classical swine fever (CSF) surveillance.

African Swine Fever Assessments
APHIS has developed three new resources related to African swine fever:

- A qualitative assessment of the likelihood of African swine fever virus entry to the United States.
- A non-animal origin feed ingredient risk evaluation framework.
- A literature review of non-animal origin feed ingredients and the transmission of viral pathogens of swine.

New Information and Resources

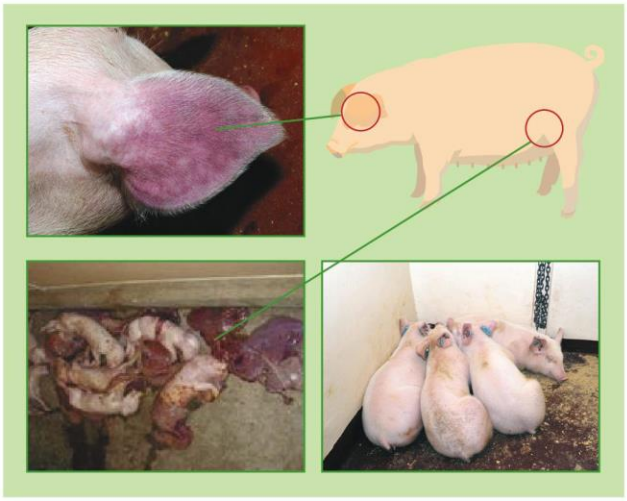
- USDA | APHIS African Swine Fever Disease Information
- Swine Health Information Center
- USDA and CFIA Establish Protocol to Minimize Trade Disruptions in the Event of an ASF Detection in Feral Swine
- Joint Statement from the Chief Veterinary Officers of Canada and the United States
- Secure Pork Supply Plan

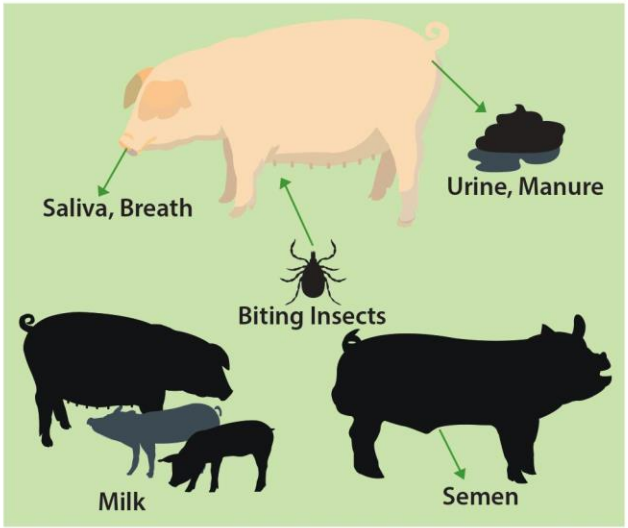
African Swine Fever

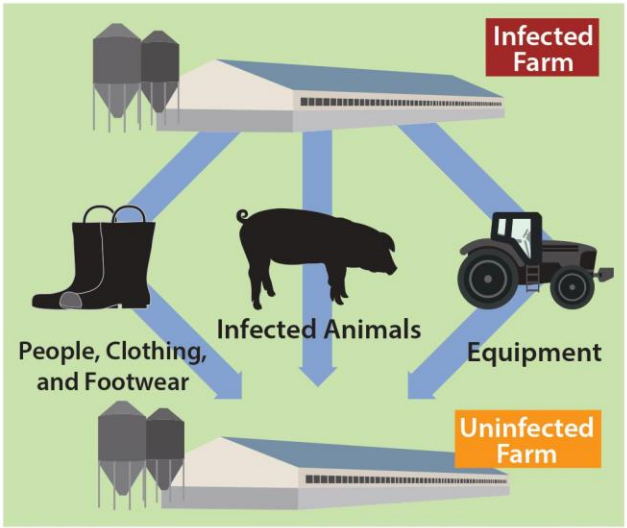
SPS SECURE PORK SUPPLY

What is African swine fever (ASF)?

- Highly contagious virus of pigs (wild and domestic)
- Does NOT affect public health or food safety
  - Meat is safe for people to eat
- Causes fever, skin discoloration, diarrhea, and death
- Other signs may include piling, tiredness, and going off feed
- Sudden deaths or abortions may be the first sign of infection in a herd
- Animals may be infected 3-21 days before showing signs
- Highly contagious
  - Virus is shed in saliva, breath, milk, semen, urine and manure
- Can be spread directly between animals OR spread indirectly on clothing, footwear, vehicles, equipment, and wildlife
- Also spread by ticks, mosquitoes, and biting flies







Where is it?

- African swine fever is found in Africa and countries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East
- NOT in United States, Canada, Mexico, or Central America

How will African swine fever affect pork producers if it enters the U.S.?

- Movements on and off farms in a regulatory Control Area could be stopped by state and federal officials to try and stop disease spread
- Export markets close and prices drop
- When one animal on the farm becomes infected, the whole herd is likely to become sick

How can the Secure Pork Supply (SPS) Plan help protect your herd?

- It recommends biosecurity standards that pork producers can put in place to help protect their pigs
- It includes steps producers can take to show that their pigs can be moved without spreading disease
- It provides an opportunity for pork producers to keep their business running if their pigs remain uninfected

Photo credit: The USDA APHIS Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory and the Department of Homeland Security Visual Information Service at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center and Dr. Alex Ramirez, Iowa State University

SART Spotlight: SART and UF IFAS Partner to Develop Disaster and Mental Health First Aid Training

FYCS FAMILY, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SCIENCES
creating positive changes in our changing world

In response to the need for mental health training that focuses on disaster-related stress of our agriculture sector and responders, SART has partnered with University of Florida family, youth, and community sciences (FYCS) faculty members Angie Lindsey and Heidi Radunovich to provide free, online training on Disaster Mental Health. This online course will cover the unique mental health needs of individuals in the agricultural sector and the disaster responders who may help them. This resource aims to provide training for SART team members and partners, first responders, Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS) employees, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension faculty and staff, agricultural sector, and other community members active in disasters with the skills needed to address mental health needs and issues following disasters.

The self-paced curriculum was developed based upon previous in-person training sessions provided by Lindsey and Radunovich that were funded and made possible by SART.

"After hurricanes Irma and Michael, we were receiving requests from extension agents who recognized mental health impacts in their communities and did not know how to help," Lindsey said. "The success of previous trainings and requests to bring it to other areas has shown us this is a needed resource, and the new online curriculum will make it accessible to a much wider audience."

The course is divided into four parts, Disaster Stress & Mental Health, Community Recovery After Disasters, Coping & Providing Support After Disasters, and Disaster Stress & Mental Health Resources. It is self-paced, takes approximately 2.5 hours to complete over the course of a 7-day period, and when you successfully complete all four modules you will be provided with a certificate of completion.

The training, which launched this month, can be found at:
http://e-learning.ag/courses/disasters-mental-health

FYCS FAMILY, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SCIENCES the science of helping people. together.
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
Center for Public Issues Education

FDACS Conducts Foreign Animal Disease 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 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (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, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17, SART, and agriculture industry stakeholders for the FAD SAFE.

On September 14-16, 2021, FDACS DAI conducted a FAD Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Tabletop Exercise (TTX). The purpose of this event was to review and test Florida's FAD EOP by conducting a discussion-based tabletop exercise with a focused scenario and questions that drove policy discussions and resolutions for updating the plan. The scenario guided participants through a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak that began in Texas and eventually spread across the Southeast into Florida. Participants were presented facilitated questions throughout the many phases of the expanding foreign animal disease event. Participants referenced the FL FAD EOP as they worked through the exercise and provided suggested changes and additions.

The FL FAD EOP Virtual TTX was well-attended and engaged over 40 key stakeholders, including regulatory agencies such as FDACS and the United States Department of Agriculture, industry stakeholders such as the Florida Cattleman's Association, the Florida Association of Livestock Markets, and Southeast Milk, Inc., and law enforcement officials such as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and FDACS' Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement.

The exercise was evaluated by a multiagency team with representation from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the University of Florida Institute for Agricultural Science Extension Service, and FDACS.

The facilitated discussion, led by USDA and FDACS staff, and input from key stakeholders helped to the achieve the goal of the exercise, which was to identify gaps and/or areas for improvement in Florida's existing "Draft" Foreign Animal Disease EOP.

FDACS has now completed two tabletop exercises in preparation FAD SAFE, which is taking place next month. The feedback provided by these preparatory events is being used to improve Florida's FAD planning documents for use during FAD SAFE and future FAD responses.

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

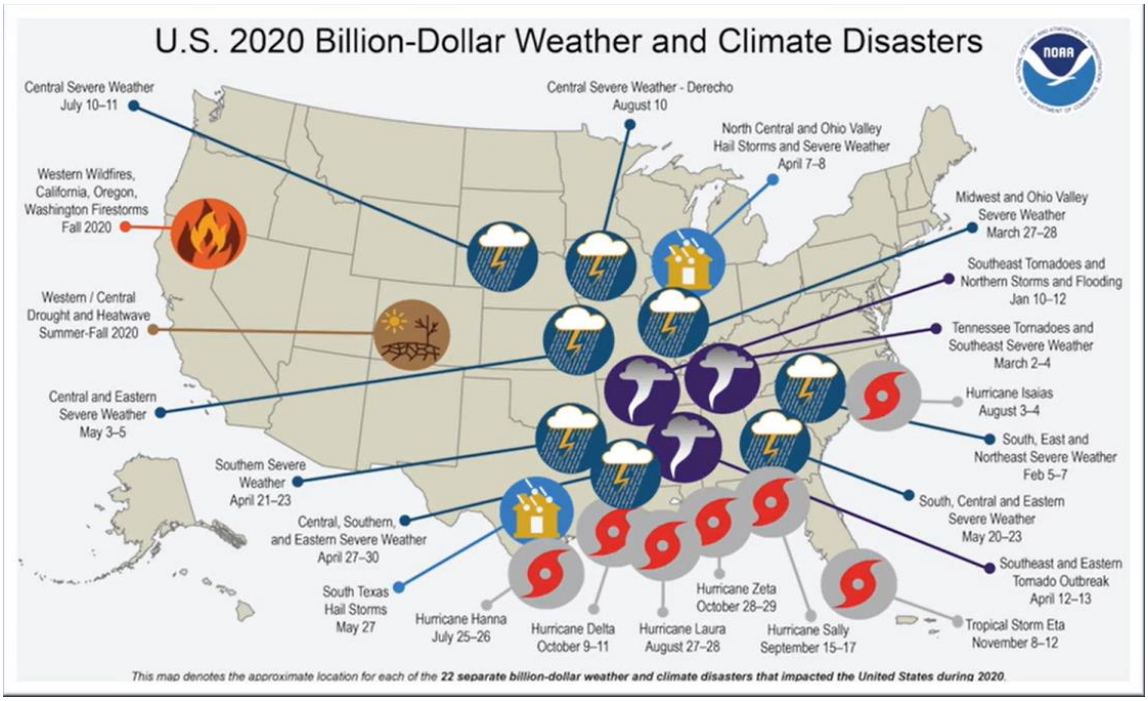
- FDA COVID-19 Food Safety Webpage: https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19
- The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) has released COVID-19 resources for Florida's shellfish growers: http://shellfish.ifas.ufl.edu/news/covid-19-resources-for-shellfish-growers/
- 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

In the News

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



Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 Detected In Minnesota

A deadly and highly-contagious rabbit disease was detected last month for the first time in Minnesota. The Minnesota Board of Animal Health says that two rabbits died suddenly in Ramsey County in September. Samples from their bodies sent to the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories confirmed they had Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2). Read More

Asian Longhorned Tick Identified in Georgia

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) Animal Health Division has confirmed the presence of the Haemaphysalis longicornis tick (otherwise known as the Asian Longhorned tick) affecting a cow in Pickens County, GA. This is the first case of the invasive tick identified in Georgia and the investigation is ongoing to determine the extent of the tick's presence in the area. The Asian Longhorned tick is native to eastern Asia, and in 2017, the USDA confirmed that the tick was present in the United States. Subsequently, it's been identified in several states in the eastern United States. Read More:

- USDA information regarding the Asian Longhorned Tick
- Ticks in Florida | Florida Department of Health (floridahealth.gov)
- Ticks and Disease - UF/IFAS Extension (ufl.edu)

African Swine Fever Action Week- September 13-17, 2021

USDA APHIS Hosted African Swine Fever Action Week September 13-17. Their goal was to bring attention to the importance of ASF planning and prevention and highlight the extensive work being done by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service as well as state partners and industry to keep the disease out of the United States. If you missed a webinar or one of the daily messages, below is a recap of all of the Action Week webinar recordings.

- Monday, September 13 – Where ASF Exists and What's at Stake
- Tuesday, September 14 - Steps the US is Taking to Prevent and Prepare for ASF
- Wednesday, September 15 - ASF and the Benefits of Biosecurity
- Thursday, September 16 - What to Expect in an ASF Outbreak
- Friday, September 17 – ASF and the Feral Swine Factor

African swine fever is a virus that affects both domestic and wild pigs. It spreads very quickly and kills most pigs that get it. This disease has never been found in the United States. It is not a threat to human health. It is not a food safety issue.

People cannot get African swine fever, but they can carry it on clothing, shoes, and equipment. An outbreak in the United States would have devastating economic effects on the swine industry.

Help keep U.S. pigs free of this deadly disease!

Understand how the virus spreads, and do your part to protect against it.

More info:
www.aphis.usda.gov

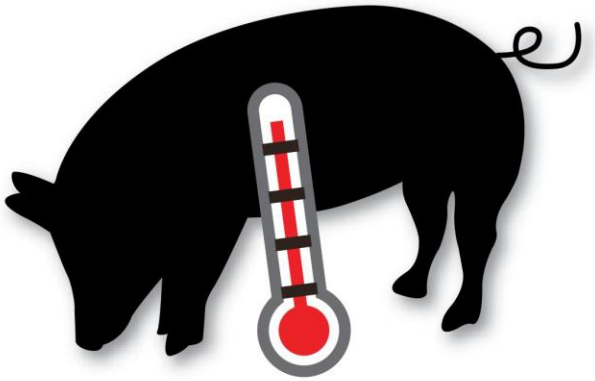
African Swine Fever

Know the Signs and Symptoms

There is **no treatment or vaccine** for African swine fever. Protect your herd by knowing the signs and immediately reporting any sick pigs.

What To Look For

- High fever
- Loss of appetite
- Depression
- Weakness
- Red, blotchy skin or skin lesions
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Coughing or difficulty breathing
- Abortions
- Sudden death



How To Report

If your pigs show any of these signs, report it immediately to your veterinarian or animal health officials for appropriate testing and investigation. Quick detection is essential to prevent the spread of African swine fever.

Program Aid No. 2237-2 | Revised July 2021
The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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.

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.

With Halloween right around the corner, learning more about Halloween food safety could help prevent illness with your family or friends. Visit the Division of Food Safety's Consumer Resources and Outreach website to view information relevant to you, including our interactive Halloween Food Safety Flyer to help you check off the important items for the big night!

Welcome to the National Forests in Florida

If you're anywhere near Florida, you'll want to take the time to explore your national forests.

Apalachicola National Forest
The Apalachicola National Forest, just outside Tallahassee, is home to some of the most unique animal and plant species in the world. Here, visitors can enjoy safe, family-friendly activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking and trail-riding while surrounded by tranquil, diverse ecosystems.

Ocala National Forest
Nestled between well-known theme parks and white, sandy beaches, the jewels of the Ocala National Forest attract visitors from around the world. A travel destination in its own right, the Ocala features more than 600 lakes and rivers where visitors enjoy swimming, fishing, snorkeling, canoeing and boating.

From migratory birds and playful manatees to delicate freshwater springs and some of the world's rarest plants, the Ocala is a haven for people (and animals) to escape to one of Florida's remaining wild places. Here, opportunities abound for all to bask in the wonders of Mother Nature 365 days a year.

Osceola National Forest
The Osceola National Forest, west of Jacksonville, is a peaceful place where people come to escape their busy lives and reconnect with the land. Flatwoods and swamps transport visitors back in time and provide a tranquil setting for first-rate hunting, fishing and swimming opportunities.

Florida National Scenic Trail
The National Forests in Florida also manages the 1,300-mile Florida National Scenic Trail, one of 11 national scenic trails in the United States.

For more information, visit: https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/florida/home.

ASPCA Grant Opportunity

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is inviting proposals for funding from authorized disaster response agencies providing direct support to companion animals, equines, and their owners in communities currently or recently impacted by or at high risk for catastrophic natural disasters. We would love for qualifies organizations to apply for this grant!

Applicants may request funding to cover direct expenses related to a current or recent disaster and/or for capacity-building and preparedness for future natural disasters.

For more information or to apply for funding, please visit: https://hubs.la/H0Y4qdD0

If you have questions or would like any assistance with the grant process, contact: Tim Perciful: tim.perciful@aspca.org

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.

Editor: Turner Network, LLC under contract with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: flsart@turnernetwork.com

Associate Editor: LeiAnna Tucker, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov