The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Here to Help! Florida SARC becomes part of SPCA Florida.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *FDACS Conducts an IMT and EMRS "Dry Run" Virtual Exercise*
- *USDA Continues Surveillance of African Swine Fever*
- *VIDEO: Florida Eradicates Giant African Land Snail*

SART Spotlight: Florida SARC Merges with SPCA Florida

The Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) would like to welcome SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) Florida to the SART family. The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) began a merger with SPCA Florida in September. The SPCA's goal is to carry on the professional standards set in place by SARC, and to expand the training of volunteers throughout the state for disaster response.

Message from Florida SARC's Consie Von Gontard

Florida SARC is moving and changing in big ways! Florida SARC will be merging with SPCA Florida beginning September 1st, 2021. This merger will bring with it, greater depth in the organization and an organization that is dedicated to growing Florida SARC and moving it forward to new heights.

It has been an amazing 10 years and we have accomplished goals beyond our expectations, but there is more to do, and Florida SPCA is the perfect organization to bring these goals to reality.

I will be stepping down from my position as the President of Florida SARC. Yes, it is time for me to retire! It has been an honor to work with our amazing team of volunteers. I will cherish the past 10 years working with you all and I thank you for your continued dedication to our organization.

I am very excited for the future of Florida SARC under the management of the amazing SPCA Florida. Here's to a new future for all of us!

See *Florida SARC – SPCA Florida Merger*, page 2.

"I am very excited for the future of Florida SARC under the management of the amazing SPCA Florida. Here's to a new future for all of us!"

— Consie von Gontard
Florida State Animal Response Coalition

Florida SARC – SPCA Florida Merger (continued)

SPCA Florida's Shelley Thayer on the Florida SARC Merger
SPCA Florida is expanding our reach of support for animals throughout the state of Florida who need care during emergency conditions. The merger of FL SARC into SPCA Florida is an honor, and a dedicated commitment. Our goal is to carry on the professional standards set in place by FL SARC, and to expand the training of volunteers throughout the state for disaster response.

In preparation to take over the 10-year-old, FEMA approved, volunteer training program, SPCA Florida will take the necessary time to plan and expand on the current curriculum. Full rollout is expected this year. In the meantime, SPCA Florida will maintain regular communication with volunteers and supporters.

We are committed to the additional support SPCA Florida will provide for animal welfare. The continuation and growth of FL SARC will not only add emergency response assistance to Polk County residents and animals, it will also expand support throughout the entire state of Florida.

SART Resources and Links

Large Animal Emergency Training from The University of Florida Emergency Treatment Services:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PleLye_xBkA&t=4s

Mental Health first Aid Certification: Mental Health First Aid

RVR Horse Rescue: Contact RVR – RVR Horse Rescue

Don't Move Firewood: Protect Trees From Bugs (dontmovefirewood.org)

Pet Disaster Preparedness Guide: https://betterpet.com/pet-disaster-preparedness

Ticks in Florida:
Ticks in Florida | Florida Department of Health (floridahealth.gov)
Ticks and Disease - UF/IFAS Extension (ufl.edu)

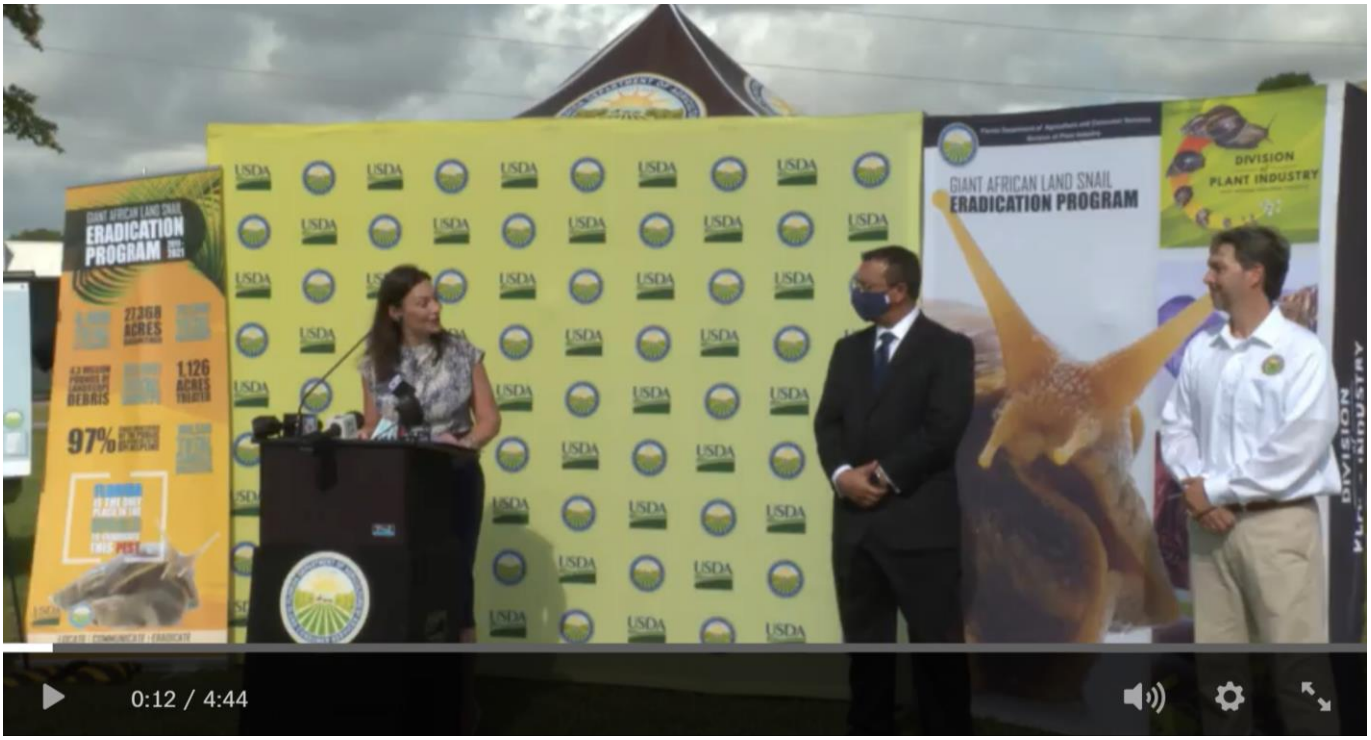
African Swine Fever Resources:
USDA APHIS | African Swine Fever (ASF)
Swine Health Information Center
Secure Pork Supply Plan

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.

VIDEO: Florida Eradicates Giant African Land Snail



Last month, Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Division of Plant Industry (DPI), along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), announced the eradication of the giant African land snail (GALS) from Broward and Miami-Dade counties. This eradication announcement marks only the second time this pest has been eradicated in the world, both in South Florida.

For the past 11 years, the FDACS Division of Plant Industry has worked toward eradication through multiple rounds of visual surveys and inspections, K-9 detector dog surveys and inspections, manual collection and treatment programs. In total, 168,538 snails were collected from 32 core population areas comprised of thousands of properties.

This program has not just been a collaboration of the USDA and FDACS, but also the community. Over the years, multiple community and cultural groups, homeowners' associations, green waste facilities, and homeowners themselves played strategic roles in disseminating the message of this invasive pest and the importance to report any sightings to the FDACS-DPI helpline. Because of this, 97 percent of the identified core population areas were reported by the public.

Richard Miranda, State Plant Health Director with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) noted that successful cooperation between State and Federal agencies and members of the public made it all possible. "We are pleased to play a role in this collaborative success by sharing technical expertise, providing financial support, training detector K-9s that played a key role in finding the snails, and working with FDACS on survey and research efforts," said Miranda. "Public involvement was also essential to this eradication, and we ask the public to remain vigilant by still keeping an eye out for the pest."

The giant African land snail is a highly invasive agricultural pest, known to feed on over 500 varieties of plants. They also pose a risk to humans and animals by carrying rat lung worm, a parasite that can cause meningitis in humans. Giant African land snail is a federally regulated pest and both the USDA and DPI will continue to remain vigilant in their commitments to safeguard American agriculture through surveys, early detection, and rapid response. The public should continue to watch for the snails and report suspects to the FDACS-DPI hotline at 1-888-397-1517.

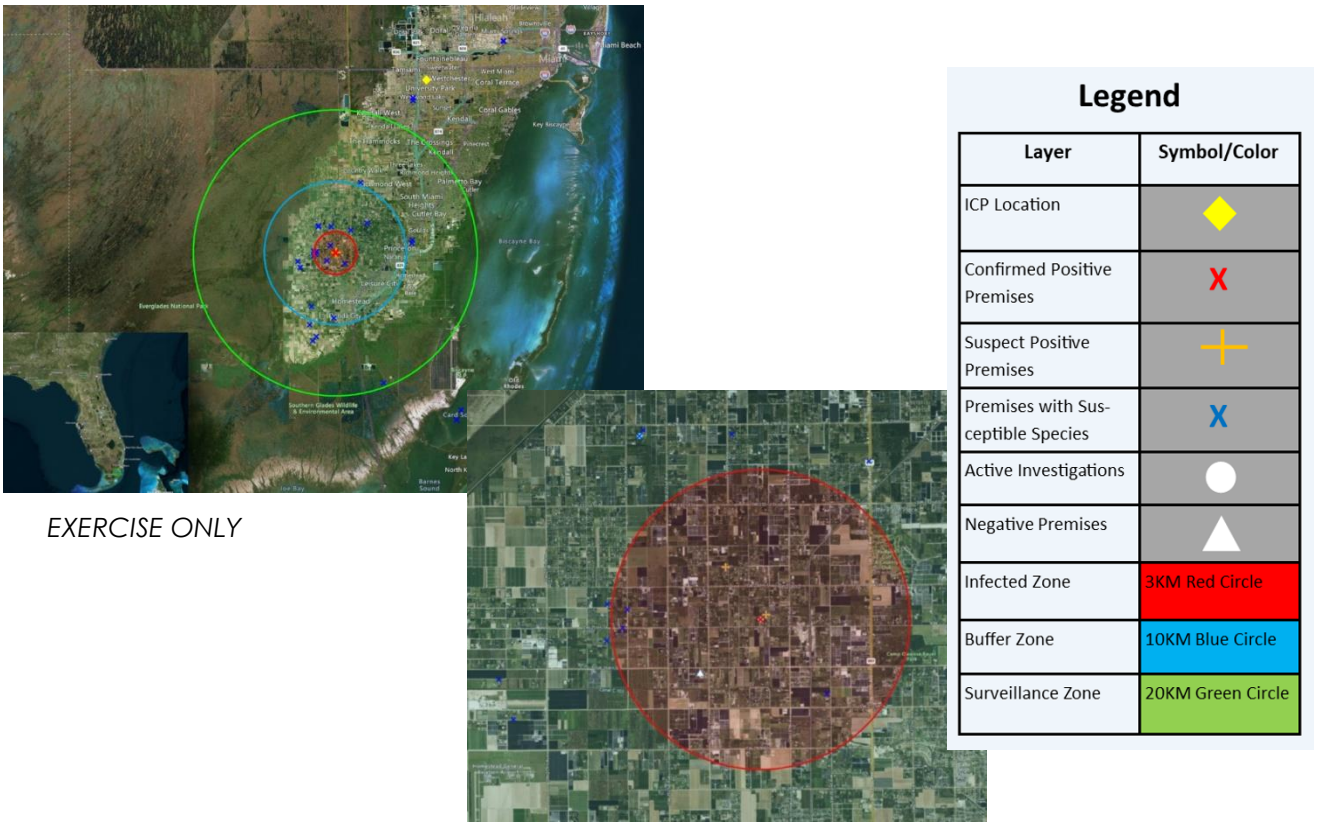
FDACS Conducts an IMT and EMRS "Dry Run" Virtual Exercise

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. 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 October 5-7, 2021, FDACS DAI conducted an Incident Management Team (IMT) and Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) "Dry Run" Virtual Exercise. This exercise was conducted by the Division of Animal Industry with EMRS facilitation provided by Dr. Loerzel from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The objective of this exercise is to build on previous training and exercises in EMRS. This scenario-based exercise is intended to provide an opportunity for an IMT to practice using multiple components of EMRS, as a team, to manage the work and information involved in an animal disease outbreak. The scenario guided participants through the first 24 hours upon receiving confirmation of a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in the state of Florida.

The exercise was designed to test the "Appendix I: SOP for the First 72 Hours" of the FAD Emergency Operations Plan by performing the critical activities in the first 24 hours upon receiving confirmation of a FMD outbreak in the state of Florida. The exercise further set out to test the State's ability to establish a virtual and functional Division of Animal Industry Incident Management Team (IMT) within 24 hours upon receiving confirmation of a FMD outbreak in the state and manage resources and response-related information in EMRS (using assigned IMT roles) and other state systems, as necessary.

The map below illustrates the exercise infected premises and shows the infected zone, buffer zone and the surveillance zone. The map further illustrates how a response to FMD would look by marking the confirmed positive premises and suspected positive premises. The map is used in determining control zones and disease surveillance to minimize the potential impacts of FMD in the state of Florida. This map is for exercise purposes only.



EXERCISE ONLY

FDACS Division of Animal Industry Salutes Our Veterans

In honor of Veterans Day, the DAI would like to share some resources that might assist veterans in the Agricultural Community. These benefits are available through FDACS. Florida is home to over 1.5 million veterans to include 219,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The State has the third largest veteran population in the nation.

FDACS is proud to provide special benefits and considerations to service members and veterans to thank them for their military service. Below is a listing of the benefits that FDACS provides to service members and veterans:

Operation Outdoor Freedom
Operated under the Florida Forest Service, Operation Outdoor Freedom provides recreational and rehabilitative opportunities to wounded veterans on state forests, agricultural lands, and private lands throughout Florida at no cost. Learn more about Operation Outdoor Freedom. Interested veterans can register for Operation Outdoor Freedom events on the Operation Outdoor Freedom Event Registration webpage. To be eligible, applicants must be honorably discharged military veterans who are Purple Heart recipients or who have a service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or greater from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Discounted Campground Fees
The Florida Forest Service provides fee discounts for campground usage for active duty service members and honorably discharged veterans. For more information on these discounted fees, see the Fees on Florida Forest Service Managed Lands.

Expedited Concealed Weapons License Applications
The FDACS Division of Licensing expedites Florida concealed weapon or firearm license applications submitted by active military members and veterans.

Licensing Fee Waivers for Military, Veterans and Spouses/Surviving Spouses
Active duty military, honorably discharged veterans, military spouses or surviving spouses may be eligible for a waiver of the initial or renewal registration fees of some FDACS licensing programs such as pawnbroking, motor vehicle repair, and heath studio licensing, among others.

Veterans Preference for Career Service Positions
Veterans preference is provided to applicants for career service positions within Florida state government, including FDACS. Learn about current employment opportunities at FDACS.

In the News

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

Deadly Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Detected in Mississippi

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Type 2 (RHDV2), a highly contagious strain of a fatal disease that can ravage wild and domestic rabbit populations, has been confirmed in domestic rabbits in Mississippi. Officials with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (DWFP) and the Mississippi Board of Animal Health confirmed that it was discovered in 20 rabbits in Rankin County, according to *The Natchez Democrat*. Wildlife officials across the country have been on alert for more than a year and cases have already been confirmed in Washington, Colorado, California, New Mexico, Texas, Ohio, and New York. (Field & Stream)

Soliciting Feedback on the SART Website

The SART website needs updating on the members page, and we would like to solicit feedback from those that stand to benefit the most from changes to this portion of the webpage. The goal is to add features that only members have access to in order to incentivize new members and to benefit existing members. Email suggestions to Benjamin.Motes@fdacs.gov

Farewell Summer!

Summer Williams served as the Division of Food Safety's Emergency Response Coordinator for several years. As Summer moves on to new challenges, we want to wish her the very best. She has done an amazing job as our Emergency Response Coordinator and will be very missed! Best of luck in your new endeavors, Summer!

USDA Continues Surveillance of African Swine Fever

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.

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 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

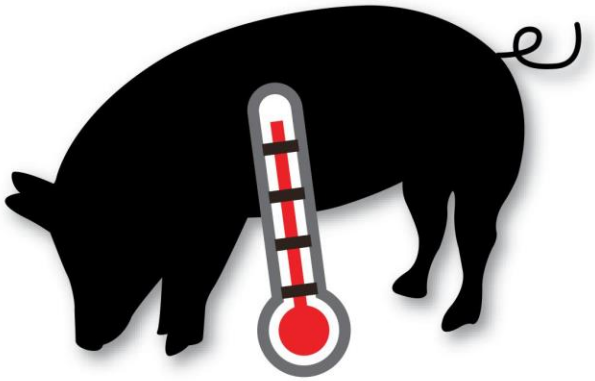
African Swine Fever

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. FDACS developed this training collaboratively with Florida 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

Disasters and Mental Health Online Training

Over the course of four modules, this 2.5-hour training sponsored by Florida SART and carried out by University of Florida Family, Youth, and Community Sciences (FYCS) faculty members Drs. Heidi Radunovich and Angie Lindsey provides focused information on mental health stress and disaster recovery within the agricultural sector. It is geared towards:

- Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) members and partners
- UF/IFAS Extension faculty and staff
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services employees
- Farmers, ranchers and their families
- Agricultural workers
- First responders
- Organizations providing services within agricultural communities
- Any community members who are active during disaster response

Training can be accessed at https://e-learning.ag/courses/disasters-mental-health/

1 Disaster Stress & Mental Health

45 min. content + 15 min. activity

- The unique impacts disasters have on agriculture
- Stress and the impacts it has on the body
- Disaster stress
- Coping skills to manage stress
- The differences between stress & trauma
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Case study activity

2 Community Recovery After Disasters

30 min. content + 15 min. activity

- The four phases of community response
- Factors impacting individual recovery
- Long-term problems in disaster recovery
- Factors impacting community recovery
- How different types of disasters impact recovery
- Ways in which a community can plan for a successful recovery
- Case study activity

3 Coping & Providing Support After Disasters

30 min. content + 10 min. activity

- Ways to manage stress
- Specific physical and mental coping techniques
- Providing support after disasters
- Best practices in supporting children
- Self care key practices for first responders
- Resources for additional help and referrals
- Knowledge Check Quiz

4 Disaster Stress & Mental Health Resources

15 min. content

- The final module discusses special programs for disaster health & mental health resources, resources for producers and farmworkers, and resources for the general public. It also includes a Mental Health Resource guide which can be downloaded.

Free, self-paced training with certification!

Access training through QR code

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA · Center for Public Issues Education · FYCS FAMILY, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SCIENCES the science of helping people. together. · FLORIDA EDEN EXTENSION DISASTER EDUCATION NETWORK

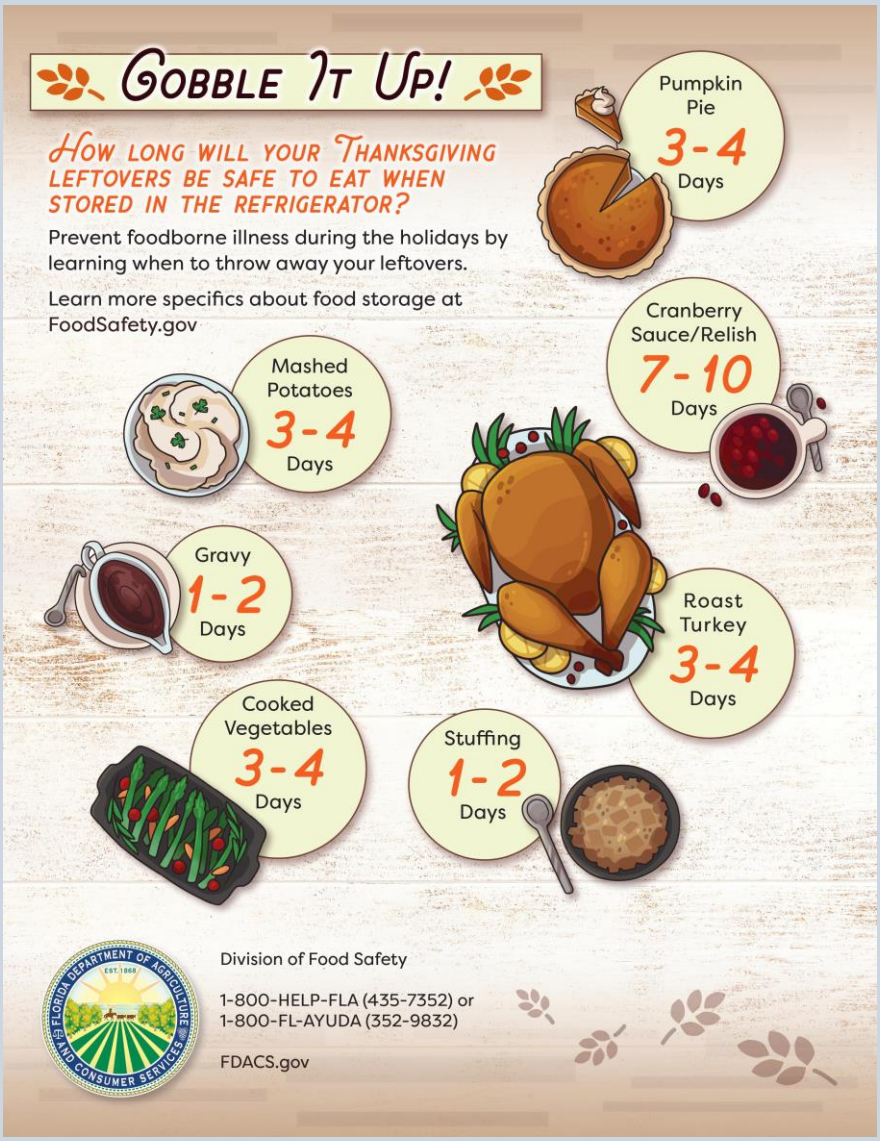
Food Safety and Food Defense Report

A special section dedicated to feed and food emergency planning and response.

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.

Stay Food Safe with your Holiday Feast

Stay safe from foodborne illness this holiday season by handling your turkey properly and cooking it to a safe temperature. Follow the tips on Turkey (Poultry) Safety from the Division of Food Safety's Consumer Resources and Outreach website. This website offers information on how to handle your turkey (poultry) properly, how long to store your holiday leftovers, a Fresh from Florida Osceola Turkey with Citrus Brine recipe, and video on practicing turkey safety among other resources. You may also access Food Safety Tips for Your Holiday Turkey from the Centers for Disease Control website here.



Assessing Veterinary Practice and Practitioner Preparedness for Natural and Man-Made Disasters, Including COVID-19

By Lawrence N. Garcia, Candice Stefanou, Carla L. Huston, Sarah A. Bell

Natural and man-made disasters lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in economic losses annually worldwide. Veterinarians are most qualified to support local, state, national, and international efforts in emergency management. However, they may lack the knowledge and advanced training to most effectively plan, prepare, and respond. Currently, only two colleges offer training embedded in their core veterinary curriculum. In this study, a survey was conducted to gain an understanding of veterinary practice and practitioner preparedness for natural and man-made disasters in the United States and Canada, with questions assessing pandemic preparedness.

The participants graduated from 28 American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)–accredited veterinary colleges globally and 2 non-accredited veterinary colleges, represent a diverse set of veterinary practice types, and have an average of 26 years' practice experience. Overall, 63.5% of veterinary respondents had experienced a natural disaster, while only 9.6% had experienced a man-made disaster. Approximately 66% report having a practice disaster

Our findings indicate that additional training in the veterinary curriculum, as well as continuing education, would help veterinarians and practices be better prepared for natural and man-made disasters.

Read more at: https://doi.org/10.3138/jvme-2021-0066

Editor's note: Lawrence N. Garcia, MS, DVM, is Clinical Assistant Professor in Shelter Medicine and Surgery, and Medical Director Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service Team, University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine

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** 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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