The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Mark your calendars for the 2023 SART Planning Workshop!

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Animal Technical Rescue Trainings 2023*
- *Red Tide in Florida*
- *Refrigerator and Freezer Spring Cleaning*

2023 SART Planning Workshop Starts on June 6th in Daytona Beach

Don't delay, register now for the upcoming 2023 SART Planning Workshop! The workshop is by invite only to our county ESF 17 contacts and SART partner agencies. Kicking off the afternoon of Tuesday, June 6th, in Daytona Beach, Florida, the organizers say that "With new courses, workshops, and sessions, there will be plenty to learn and many opportunities for you to be a part of SART's future!"

The planning workshop sessions will take place at The Shores Resort and Spa. There will be no cost to attend, and there will be opportunities for hotel sponsorship. The workshop will familiarize participants with disaster situations and provide background information on animal and agricultural-related emergency management issues. Keep your eyes open for the full program details as those will be coming soon!

The SART website is complete with registration information and a fillable registration form for both the workshop registration and the opportunity for hotel sponsorship at FLSART.org.

For any workshop related questions, please contact Emily Nolen at Emily.Nolen@fdacs.gov or via phone at 850-756-1565.

"With new courses, workshops, and sessions, there will be plenty to learn and many opportunities for you to be a part of SART's future!"

— Emily Nolan
Government Analyst I
Division Of Animal Industry, FDACS

Animal Technical Rescue Trainings 2023

This past February and March, emergency personnel from across the state of Florida joined together in Ocala to learn more about Animal Technical Rescue. Animal Technical Rescue, or ATR, is defined as the rescue efforts for animals which require resources, equipment, and skill sets outside of standard emergency response capabilities.

The ATR trainings are comprised of a Level 1 Awareness course able to host 40 participants for an eight-hour training, and a Level 2 Operations course made up of 21 participants for a total of 24 hours of training. The 2023 participants were made up of Fire/Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Livestock Stakeholders, Animal Services, Veterinary Professionals, and Law Enforcement staff from over 22 counties in Florida.

ATR training and techniques have proven to be important as multiple animals over the recent months have gotten into situations requiring the expertise of trained personal to rescue them with no further injury. In January of 2023 a call was received by rescuers that a horse was found stuck in a swamp like area and had been there for several hours unable to free itself, with the knowledge gained from the December ATR awareness training two past participants were able to save this horse without further injury.

In March of 2023, the Pasco County Fire and Lakeland Fire departments were able to use ATR techniques to safely rescue a cow that had been stuck in a wetland area thick with mud.

The ATR Training program is funded through SART and provided by UF Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service and hosted by Florida State Fire College.

For more information, visit:
https://responseteam.vetmed.ufl.edu/training

Red Tide in Florida

What is Red Tide? According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), red tide "…is one type of harmful algal bloom." These blooms, "…are caused by microscopic algae that produce toxins that kill fish, make shellfish dangerous to eat…and can make the surrounding air difficult to breathe."

Unfortunately, Florida's Gulf Coast has at least one Red Tide occurrence every summer, but as of late "summer" is occurring in late spring.

Impacts of Florida's Red Tides can include:

- Toxic waters
- Marine life death
- Unusable beaches
- Marooning of sea turtles, manatees, and dolphins

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has an up-to-date web page titled, *Red Tide Current Status,* that can be accessed at: https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/statewide. This site is updated weekly (on Fridays), due to the rising number of Red Tide sightings already reported in Pinellas and Manatee counties and reported Fish Kills in Pinellas, Manatee, Sarasota, Lee, and Collier Counties.

FWC also has a page dedicated to Red Tide-Related Hotlines and Information Sources, that can be found at: Red Tide-Related Hotlines and Information Sources (myfwc.com). Please report any sightings, fish kills, wildlife effects, or human exposures.

Why is this happening in Florida?
We careen from having too much water during the rainy season to near-drought conditions during dry months. [And] despite our best efforts, Florida is plagued by frequent outbreaks of red tide and blue-green algae that can be toxic to sea life, animals, pets, and even humans. Toxic algae blooms have led to states of emergency that have closed beaches and restricted fishing over large sections of our east and west coasts. (7 Things to Know about South Florida's Water (evergladesfoundation.org)).

So, how can we help?

- Use natural mulches and composts to promote healthy soil.
- Go organic, by planting native and environment-suitable plants.
- Help clean the oceans and use ocean-friendly products.
- Buy sustainable seafood.
- Stop contributing to plastic pollution.

Red Tide in Florida

Red tide often affects the Gulf Coast of Florida during certain times of the year, like late summer. Not sure what that means for you, your family, and your pets? This video will teach you everything you need to know: what red tide is, red tide's affects on health, and how we track and monitor red tide.

Have You Seen the New FDACS and UF IFAS Partnership Video?

The Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) teamed up to create a new video on their disaster response partnership.

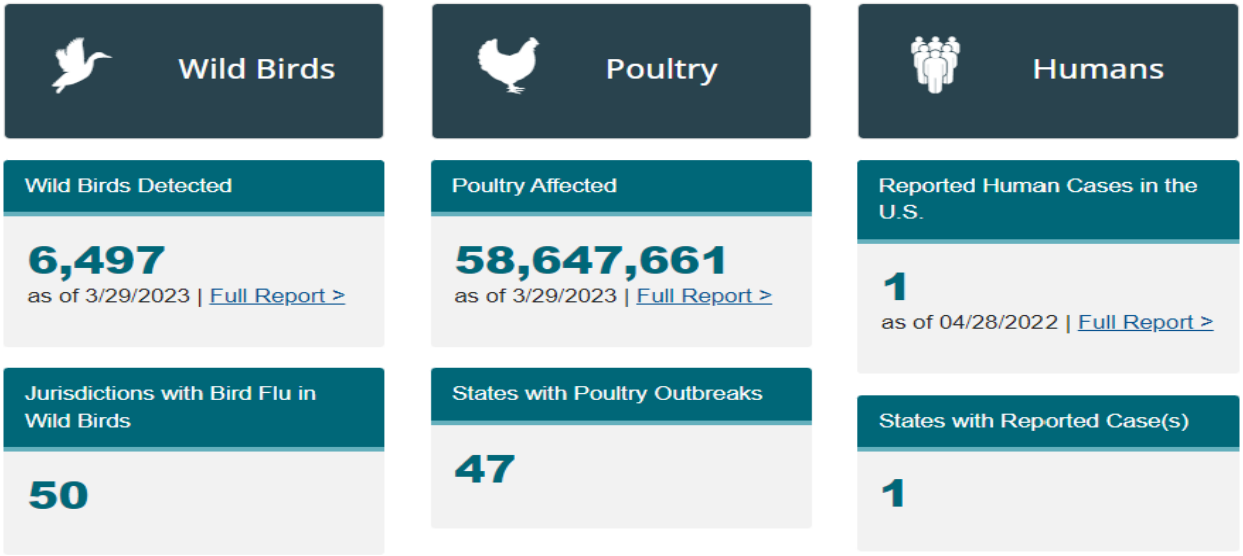
Published in December 2022 on YouTube, the video features interviews with LeiAnna Tucker (FDACS Emergency Programs Manager), Dr. Saqib Mukhtar (IF/IFAS Associate Dean for Extension, Agriculture, and Natural Resources), and Dr. Angie Lindsey (Extension Disaster Education Network [EDEN]).

EDEN is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is a collaborative multi-state effort by cooperative extension services across the country to improve the delivery of services to citizens affected by disasters.

Dr. Lindsey highlighted the important connection that agricultural extension agents have throughout the State of Florida. "We learn so much from our Extension agents and the work that they're already doing throughout the state and the work that they do within their own communities for disaster preparedness, recovery, and response," said Dr. Lindsey.

To view the video for yourself, and to like or comment, please visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI1Xsjd-FCw.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza



CDC: Bird Flu Current Situation Summary

Avian Influenza viruses are classified by proteins of the virus: "H" proteins, of which there are 16 (H1–H16), and "N" proteins, of which there are nine (N1–N9). Many different combinations of "H" and "N" proteins are possible. Like all influenza viruses, Avian Influenza viruses are known to easily re-assort and mutate (to change) into new Avian Influenza subtypes. They can even change in their ability to infect within a subtype. Only H7 and H5 subtypes have been found to change from Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) to HPAI.

Since July 2022, there have been multiple backyard flocks in Florida confirmed with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). In addition, HPAI has been detected in wild birds in multiple states along the eastern seaboard, including Florida. For more information on avian influenza and the current situation, visit the USDA website at USDA avian influenza.

Approximately two-thirds of the states in the United States, have at least one confirmed domestic poultry flock infected with HPAI during the 2021-2022 outbreak, however, some of the affected states have been released from additional movement requirements. For the current list of affected states, please visit: USDA APHIS Confirmations of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Commercial and Backyard Flocks.

Due to the recent Avian Influenza detection, it is recommended that Florida poultry producers and enthusiasts (commercial and backyard) take the following precautions to minimize the risk of introduction of influenza into our Florida poultry flocks. For more information regarding avian health please visit: USDA APHIS | Avian Health.

If you have any questions, please contact the FDACS, Division of Animal Industry, at (850) 410- 0900. Please visit our website for additional information regarding Avian Influenza and the requirements for moving poultry into the state at www.FDACS.gov/AvianInfluenza.

Resources

- www.FDACS.gov/AI
- Influenza | Florida Department of Health (floridahealth.gov)
- www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/
- How Infected Backyard Poultry Could Spread Bird Flu to People (cdc.gov)
- Frequently Asked Questions about Avian Influenza | Avian Influenza (Flu) (cdc.gov)
- United States Geological Survey, National Wildlife Health Center
- Recent Bird Flu Infections in U.S. Wild Birds and Poultry Pose a Low Risk to the Public
- Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission: Avian Influenza | FWC (myfwc.com)

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Checklist: Tips To Help Keep Your Flocks Healthy

This checklist is a general guide to practicing good biosecurity, but if you have a site-specific biosecurity plan, please follow it. Commercial growers should be sure their site-specific plans follow the National Poultry Improvement Plan biosecurity principles.

- ☐ **Wear personal protective equipment** or clothing and shoes that you only use when caring for your poultry. This includes boot covers or boots that can be disinfected. Change into fresh protective gear between poultry houses or coops.
- ☐ **Enclosures must be empty for a thorough cleaning.** If you have a poultry house, wait until the house is empty to start the cleaning process. If you have a coop or other type of enclosure, move the birds to a separate area before cleaning.
- ☐ **Remove all litter, manure, and other debris.**
- ☐ **"Dry" clean all areas**—brush, scrape, and shovel off manure, feathers, and other materials. Disinfectant will not penetrate organic matter or caked-on dirt.
- ☐ **"Wet" clean all surfaces**—scrub with water and detergent. Work from top to bottom and back to front.
- ☐ **Rinse all surfaces carefully with water.**
- ☐ **Apply disinfectant** according to the directions on the label. Be sure to use a disinfectant that is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and indicates that it is effective against avian influenza and other poultry diseases.
- ☐ **Leave the enclosure empty** until it is completely dry. Use fans and/or open doors and windows to help speed the drying process. Wet surfaces can be harmful to poultry.
- ☐ **When you're done, remove and discard** your protective gear. If using dedicated clothing and boots, change clothing and clean and disinfect your boots.
- ☐ **Wash your hands thoroughly** with soap and water. Wash and dry your dedicated clothing.

For more information about how to keep your flocks healthy, follow **Defend the Flock** on **Facebook** and **Twitter** and visit **www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock.**

DEFEND THE FLOCK
BIOSECURITY
Let's keep our poultry healthy together

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Program Aid No. 2235-1 • Issued November 2018

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

African Swine Fever Update

In 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the detection of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Dominican Republic (Announcement below). ASF is a foreign animal disease. Increased biosecurity and vigilance is warranted. Please report any sick swine with clinical signs consistent with ASF to the State Veterinarian's Office through the e-mail address RAD@FDACS.gov, or by calling (850) 410-0900 (during office hours) or 1-800-342-5869 (after hours). You can also file a report online.

Clinical signs of ASF in swine can include reddening of the skin, listlessness, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, conjunctivitis, lack of an escape response, trembling, complete loss of hind leg functioning, and high death loss.

Photo Credit: USDA APHIS Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center

It is important to note that Classical Swine Fever has been present in Haiti and the Dominican Republic for many years and, therefore, the U.S. does not receive pork products or live swine imports from either country. The highest risk of ASF introduction into the U.S. is from pork products brought in by international travelers via sea or air. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection has increased inspections of products and personal items brought into the U.S from affected countries.

More information regarding ASF can be found on the USDA website.
Click here for the FDACS Announcement on ASF.

In the News…

- Giant African Land Snail Update (FDACS)
- FWC and DEP Visit Southwest Florida to Survey Red Tide Conditions and Ensure Local Needs Are Being Met (My FWC)

UF/IFAS Florida Gardening Calendars

The Gardening Calendar publications on the UF/IFAS Solutions for Your Life website gives Florida gardeners a monthly guide for what to plant and do in their gardens and includes links to useful gardening websites, all based on University of Florida research and expertise. Three different editions of the calendar provide specific tips for each of Florida's climate zones—North, Central, and South.

What to Plant in February - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (ufl.edu)

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.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Small Animal Emergency Sheltering Training

Florida State Animal Response Coalition (FLSARC) provides Small Animal Emergency Sheltering training for Florida 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 animal cruelty cases. These courses were created and designed by experts from many organizations including Florida SART, University of Florida Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service (VETS) Team, and leadership of FLSARC. This training is state-certified by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Awareness Level	Operations Level
• April 15, 2023 • May 26, 2023	• April 22-23, 2023 • June 10-11, 2023

To register, visit: https://flsarc.org/training

15th Annual Dr. Harvey Rubin Memorial Food Animal Veterinary Medical Conference

The Dr. Harvey Rubin Memorial Food Animal Veterinary Conference is returning for its 15th year! Join us April 1-2, 2023, to get 15 hours of continuing education (CE) through quality food animal lectures.

- Earn 15 CE hours
- Swine bleeding wet lab—earn 2 additional CE hours
- Includes 3-part course on dispensing legend drugs and the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine

This year's conference will be held simultaneously in two locations:

NEWBERRY, FL	BARTOW, FL
Alachua County Institute of Food and Agricultural Services	FDACS - Bartow Service Center
22712 W. Newberry Rd. Newberry FL 32669	170 Century Blvd. Bartow, FL 33830

For more information, visit:
https://web.cvent.com/event/43c8cbb3-66c8-4d71-990e-75ac90ced824/summary

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Update

On June 29, 2022, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) was notified that a single rabbit residing in Orange County tested positive for Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus, Type 2 (RHDV-2). The premises had no other animals. This is the fourth confirmed case of RHDV-2 in domestic rabbits in Florida. There have been no detections in wild rabbits in the state. Veterinary clinics throughout Florida now have access to RHDV-2 vaccine, and FDACS encourages discussion with your veterinarian regarding vaccination of pet rabbits.

Prior positive RHDV-2 cases were detected in Palm Beach, St. Johns and Lake Counties on May 7, 2022, October 19, 2021, and December 30, 2020, respectively. There is currently no evidence that the virus has spread to domestic or wild rabbits from the four positive detections. Rabbit owners should continue to take prudent biosecurity measures, including not purchasing hay or other commodities originating in RHDV-2 affected states.

European rabbit with ocular jaundice

Affected states currently include Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming. Cuba is also affected. The USDA experimentally approved Medgene vaccine which targets the U.S. strain of RHDV-2 is being approved for use by FDACS. In addition, importation approval of the European RHDV vaccines by licensed, accredited veterinarians began in July 2021.

Rabbit producers should contact their veterinarian regarding vaccinating their rabbits for RHDV-2. Veterinarians should follow the step-by-step process for FDACS and USDA approval as instructed in the RHDV-2 Vaccine Order Instructions. For additional information, please visit: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease FAQs.

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.

Read more: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Update (fdacs.gov)

Pet-Friendly Sheltering
Online Training (FL-017)

The Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) has published an online, state-certified training on pet-friendly sheltering—the first of its kind to be offered in Florida. The online training provides 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.

Students will receive a downloadable **Tool Kit** that offers guidance and plan templates, and a **state-certified Certificate of Completion** approved by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

COURSE DATE
August 2020

COURSE LENGTH
4 hours

COURSE FEE
Free

COURSE MODE
100% online at
www.FLSART.org

PRIMARY AUDIENCE
Emergency Managers
County Employees
Veterinary/Animal Services
Shelter Volunteers

PROVIDED BY
Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART)

CERTIFICATE
State-Certified
Course Code FL-017

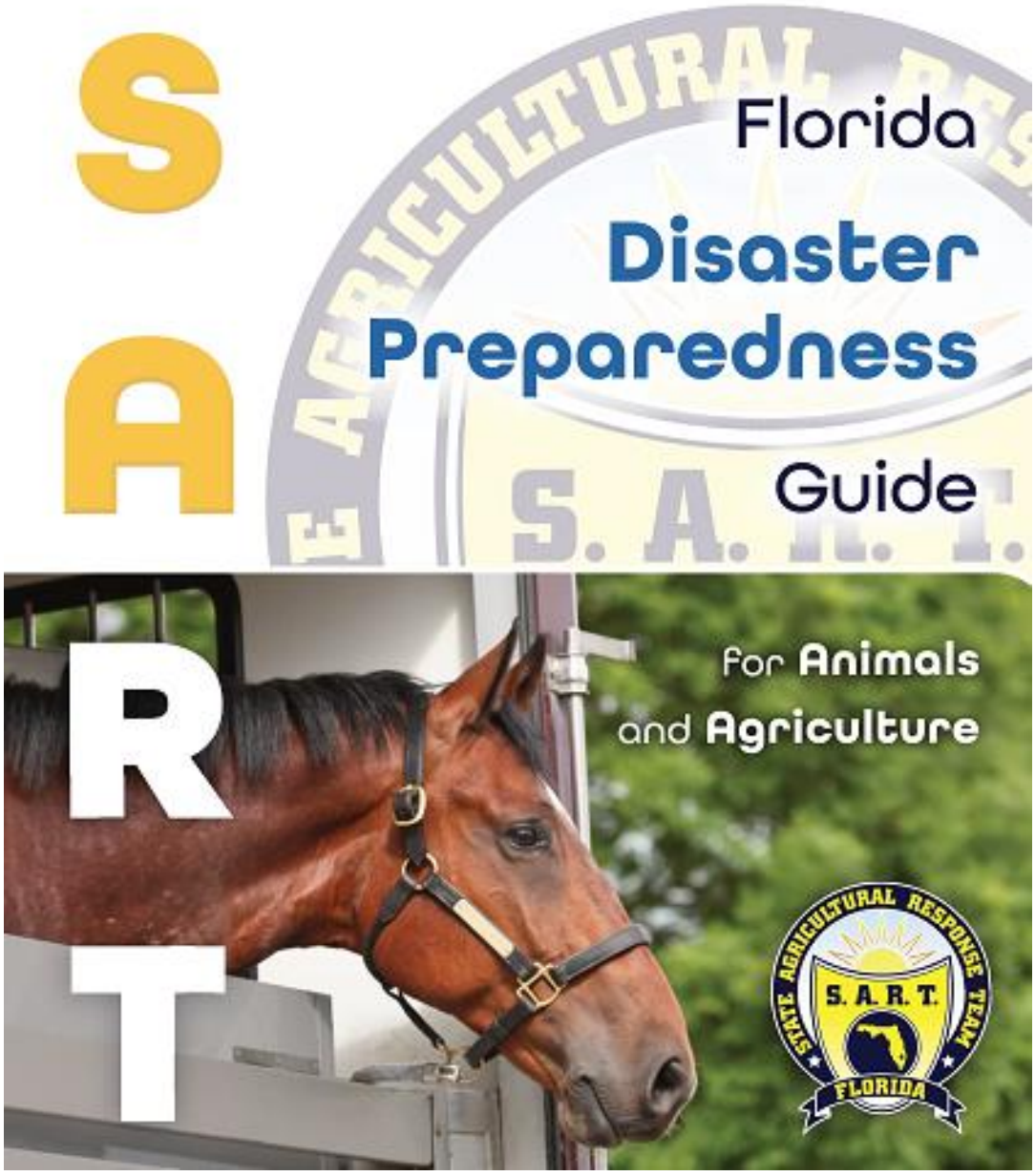
POINT OF CONTACT
LeiAnna Tucker
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
(850) 410-0920
LeiAnna.Tucker@FDACS.gov

SART Publishes Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture

The FDACS Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture developed by the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) and Emergency Support Function 17 (ESF 17) has been complete and posted to the SART website, flsart.org under the "Resources" tab.

This Guide has been developed to help County Emergency Managers respond to disasters that impact animals and agriculture within the state of Florida. Please use the link provided to take you directly to the new Florida SART Disaster Preparedness Guide.

This Guide was developed with the collaboration of the Florida SART partners from across Florida. Many Florida SART partner agencies and FDACS staff contributed to this Guide through their expertise, editing and review. These Florida SART partners are recognized throughout the Guide by their logos.



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

Food Safety and Food Defense Report

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

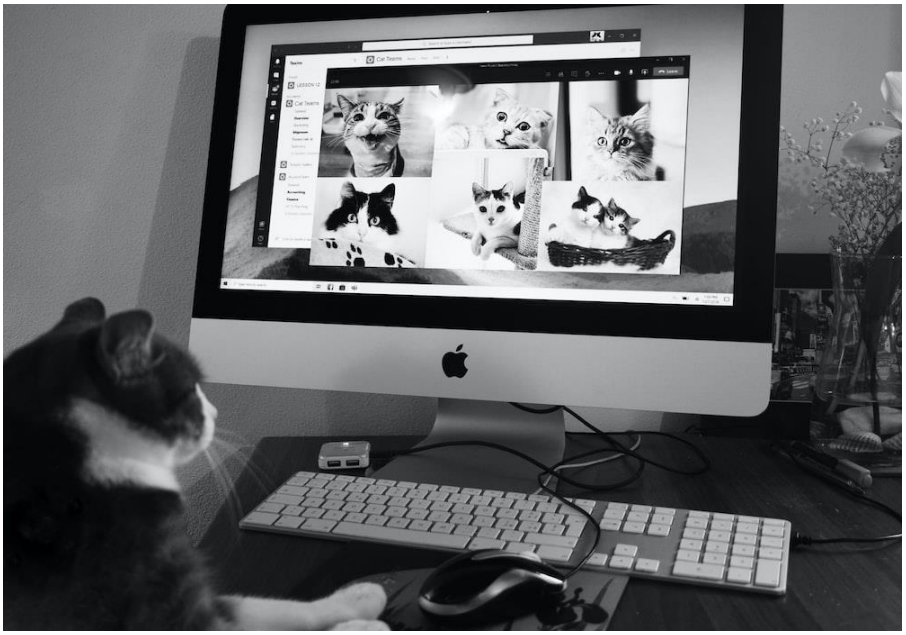
FDACS Division of Food Safety is responsible for assuring the public of a safe, wholesome, and properly represented food supply through permitting and inspection of food establishments, inspection of food products, and performance of specialized laboratory analysis on a variety of food products sold 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.

Refrigerator and Freezer Spring Cleaning

It's that time of year again—time for spring cleaning! Get your spring season off to a fresh start with these helpful refrigerator and freezer tips.

- Throw away any expired food from your refrigerator first.
- Next, remove all food and drinks from your refrigerator while you clean and sanitize it. Use hot soapy water to clean the sides, doors, door seals, ceiling and back of your refrigerator. Then, use a clean cloth and disinfectant to wipe down all surfaces of the refrigerator.
- Make sure all items in the fridge have adequate air flow around them so that your food stays fresher, longer. Packing your refrigerator to the brim means some food will become too cold, while other food will not be cold enough. On the other hand, keep in mind that your freezer is most efficient when it is full.
- Check the internal temperature of your fridge and freezer by using a thermometer to make sure your fridge is at least 40 degrees, and your freezer is at least 0 degrees.

SART Resources and Links



Large Animal Incident Response Plan Template
https://flsart.org/resource/TLAER

Pet Sheltering Resources
https://flsart.org/resource/petshelter

Ask IFAS: Disaster Preparedness and Recovery
https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/entity/topic/disaster_preparedness_and_recovery

Get Involved! Florida Veterinary Corps
https://flsart.org/getInvolved/vetcorps.jsp

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** 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.

Editing Services: The 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