The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

ESF 17 and Florida SART are assisting with evacuations from Haiti.

Floridian Evacuations from Haiti – ESF 17 and Florida SART Assisting

As has been reported over the past few weeks, the crisis in Haiti has been at the forefront of the news cycles. Governments across the globe have been scrambling to evacuate their citizens from Haiti. This ongoing crisis has, unfortunately, had a direct impact on many Floridians with Haitian ties. With seemingly no end in sight, vast amounts of resources have been mobilized to help bring Americans, their families, and their pets back home.

Governor Ron DeSantis has declared a state of emergency in the State of Florida to support the evacuation of Floridians and other Americans who were otherwise unable to return home due to the ongoing political crisis in Haiti. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) will lead flights to evacuate citizens from Haiti and reunite them with their families. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) is supporting the cause by monitoring for agricultural waste and prepare for personal animals that may be accompanying evacuees on the flights into the Orlando international airports. Working with county, state, and federal partners, personnel are providing veterinarian support at the airport. As the passengers deplaned, any animals that arrive with evacuees are medically screened and may be vaccinated/boosted for rabies, and/or quarantined as necessary.

County, state, and federal agencies will continue to monitor any incoming flights and provide aid to Floridians arriving from Haiti.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *FEMA Training at FVMA Annual Conference*
- *SARG Conducts Wildfire Tabletop and Functional Exercise*
- *Welcome to the ESF 17 SART Team, Josh Wells!*

"I have spent just over 20 years in the Army where my last 10 years or so were focused a lot on emergency management and disaster relief efforts."

— Josh Wells
Government Analyst I
Division of Animal Industry, FDACS
Story on page 12.

FEMA Training at FVMA Annual Conference

We're thrilled to offer an exclusive opportunity to enhance your readiness and impact. During the upcoming FVMA Annual Conference, you'll have a unique opportunity to complete your essential FEMA training modules in person!

Whether you're starting fresh or finishing up, you have the option to complete all four (4) Incident Command System (ICS) training modules during the conference:

- IS-100.C: Introduction to Incident Command System
- IS-200.C: Basic ICS for Initial Response
- IS-700.B: National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
- IS-800.D: National Response Framework, an Introduction

Plus, each course is valid for one CE when taken at FVMA Annual Conference!

Florida Veterinary Corps

Safeguarding Animal and Public Health in Florida

About the ICS Training
To become a full-fledged member of the Florida Veterinary Corps (The Corps), you must complete the four (4) Incident Command System (ICS) training modules mentioned above. FEMA also provides these four Independent Study courses online, free of charge. To take the courses in person, you will need to purchase a conference pass for FVMA Annual Conference.

Format
The curriculum for each class will be abbreviated and tailored to the target audience to give students the info they need to successfully pass the exam for each training and prepare them for ICS in the field as a veterinary emergency volunteer responder for the State Emergency Response Team.

Exam & Certification
An exam is required for each training to receive the FEMA certificate for that training. Students have the option to take the exam at the end of each training (highly recommended).

For more information, please visit: https://fvma.org/ac2024

Sarasota Agricultural Recovery Group (SARG) – Wildfire Tabletop and Functional Exercise

This past February, Florida SART and Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 personnel were able to observe and participate in the recent Sarasota Agricultural Recovery Group (SARG) Wildfire tabletop and functional exercises. SARG is a volunteer group of ranchers, farmers, industry groups, and ham radio operators that respond to incidents that involve all types of agriculture.

Perspective from Chuck Johnson, SARG Founder

The "Myakka Complex 24" was a multi-day exercise that started with the City of North Port Emergency Management conduction. A LEVEL ONE activation in their Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for simulated wildfire events adjacent to the city. SARG received guidance from the FDACS ESF 17 district specialist on how livestock evacuations and sheltering might take place in a large-scale event of this type. Two days later, on Saturday, February 17th, a "Boots on the ground" exercise took place in eastern Sarasota County in the area of State Road 72. SARG volunteers established a communication hub at the Myakka Valley Fire Station. Myakka Valley is a large 5 to 10-acre community with numerous horses, cows, and other types of livestock. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) from local law enforcement had been doing land navigation and night operations on an adjacent ranch the night before.

The story continues on the next page.

SARG – Wildfire Tabletop and Functional Exercise (continued)

They folded into the wildfire drill and performed search and rescue operations in the wilderness area. ERT had a total of 36 personnel active. Other groups and agencies involved in the Saturday exercise included: the FDACS ESF 17 district specialist, Amateur Radio teams from West Central Florida, DeSoto County Emergency Management, Myakka River State Park, USA Up Star logistics support, and the US Weather Service of Ruskin, FL.

Perspective from Melody Belanger, FDACS District 5 ESF 17 Specialist
Wednesday, March 13th, I sat in on SARG's After Action Report (AAR) discussions and preparation for the AAR presentation to surrounding counties. The detail of the preparations for the full–scale exercise, execution, and follow-up was a learning experience. This exercise went very smoothly per the ones involved with this AAR. As SARG drills every six months, issues that were identified in past drills and deployments have been addressed and overcome in the exercise. Last-minute changes were built into this drill so there were new challenges and opportunities for growth for responders. One, for example, brought up that it is the position, not the person. Common and consistent terminology was another issue responders encountered. The achievements and challenges discussed were very similar to ones experienced by Division of Animal Industry responders. It was a different response type, but it showed how Incident Command System (ICS) works across all types of incidents.

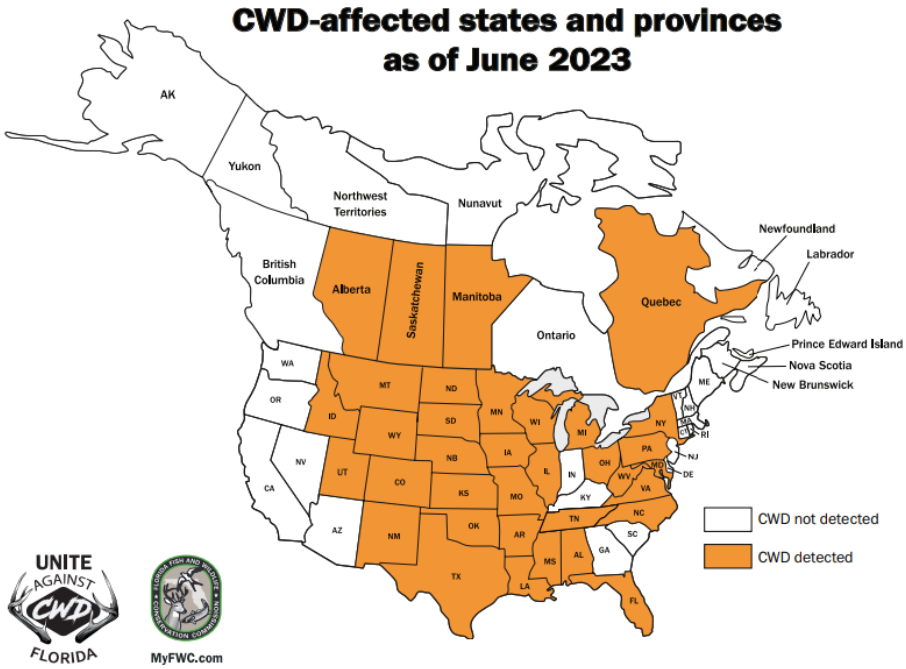
Source Material:
Rancher and Disaster Response Veteran Chuck Johnston Coordinates Help in Ag Emergencies - Florida Farm & Family (floridafarmfamily.com)

Chronic Wasting Disease Detected in Florida

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has confirmed that a road-killed 4.5 year-old female white-tailed deer in Holmes County sampled during routine surveillance activities has tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). It is the first known case of CWD in Florida. CWD is a contagious disease of the brain and central nervous system that is always fatal to deer. FWC and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) have implemented response and management actions to protect against the possible spread of CWD.

On September 8, 2023, the FWC issued a new executive order outlining regulations designed to increase sampling and slow the spread of CWD in Florida deer. Existing regulations pertaining to the establishment of the zone, baiting and feeding restrictions, prohibition of rehabilitating or releasing injured or orphaned deer and export of high-risk parts remain in effect.
If you are a permitted captive Cervidae premises and have any questions regarding CWD, please reach out to the FDACS Division of Animal Industry, at (850) 410-0900.

Visit the FWC CWD website for more information, updates, and resources.



Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!

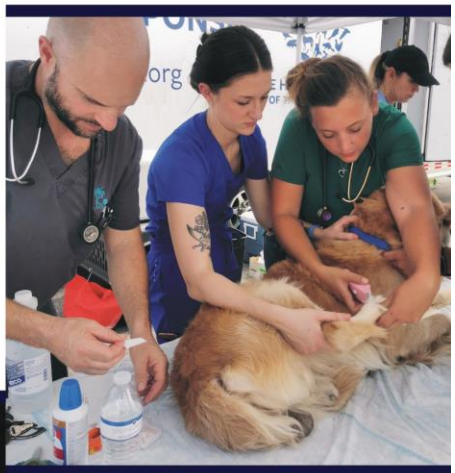
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

Become A Volunteer

To apply to the Florida Veterinary Corps, visit **www.FLSART.org**

Florida Veterinary Corps

Safeguarding Animal and Public Health in Florida



A cooperative effort of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team and its Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Veterinary Medical Association, and University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.

Florida Veterinary Corps

What is the Florida Veterinary Corps?

- The Florida Veterinary Corps (The Corps) is a component of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART), established within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and a cooperative effort with the Florida Veterinary Medical Association and the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine.
- The Corps has been established to enlist veterinarians and veterinary technicians who are willing to volunteer their services in responding to animal emergencies in the state of Florida.
- During activation, Corps volunteers will work within an Incident Command System structure under state Emergency Support Function 17 as part of the State Emergency Response Team.
- Corps volunteers will be kept informed as to the status of emergencies and the need for volunteers depending upon the specific emergency.
- Volunteers may serve in veterinary infrastructure assessment teams, triage or emergency animal treatment teams, and animal disease surveillance or control teams under an Incident Command System structure.

Obligation of Corps Volunteers

- Corps volunteers will serve only when activated within an Incident Command System structure under state Emergency Support Function 17 as part of the State Emergency Response Team and adhere to all state regulations and rules.
- Complete the following four Incident Command System trainings to apply for The Corps. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides the independent study courses online, free of charge. The training is required for credentialing of emergency responders by the Department of Homeland Security. The courses are critical to train a professional volunteer Corps capable of responding as part of the state Emergency Support Function 17 and State Emergency Response Team.
  - IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)
  - IS-200.C: Basic ICS for Initial Response
  - IS-700.B: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
  - IS-800.D: National Response Framework, An Introduction
- Corps volunteers will only be activated in response to specific emergency situations and may decline service at any time.

Rationale

- Protecting animal agriculture and household pets in Florida begins locally and requires cooperation, participation, and partnership.
- Federal or other outside assistance to deal with an animal disease emergency may not be available for hours or days.
- Animal agriculture in Florida is highly vulnerable to severe disruption and financial loss through natural disasters and exotic or zoonotic diseases.
- Counties and state agencies must be prepared to respond to animal disasters through planning and identification of human and material resources.
- Natural disasters are unpredictable and cannot be prevented.
- Florida has a high risk for introduction of a foreign animal disease.

Become a Volunteer

To apply to the Florida Veterinary Corps, visit **www.FLSART.org**

Update from the Florida State Animal Response Coalition

SARC Asked to Train – in Alaska!
The Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) has trained in many locations throughout Florida and the U.S. over the years. Recently we were contacted by animal control staff in Valdez, Alaska inquiring about our sheltering training and how it could help the community when disasters strike. Alaska is prone to many disasters unheard of in Florida. Given many communities are in remote locations, pet sheltering resource access for the communities and public is very scarce. The need for pet friendly sheltering and support is even more important to keeping families and pets together.

We've put together a proposal which will hopefully bring our Level 1 Awareness and Level 2 Operations courses to Anchorage in September 2024! This will be the farthest location SARC has ever brought our FEMA approved, and Florida state certified, courses.

Florida Animal Control Association
SARC recently participated in the 2024 Florida Animal Control Association (FACA) Conference in Orlando last month. In addition to being an exhibitor for the 3-day event, we had the opportunity to present our Level 1 Awareness course to eight students from all over Florida. Many thanks to FACA for making this opportunity available to us and to attendees!

Train the Trainer Course in Polk County
SARC held our first Train the Trainer course in nearly two years at the Polk County Emergency Operations Center in January. Six students spent the weekend understanding the importance of student learning styles, instructor presentation skills, course administration, and also had the opportunity to practice delivering various modules of our course to other students and instructors. Thanks to: Paul Womble, Polk County Emergency Management Director for allowing us the use of their facilities; Pamela Moreman (asst. Instructor) for helping train our new instructors, and to new instructors John Porche, Carol Summerville, Paula McPhaul, Jessica Dalton, Adam Jackson, and Desiree Bauman-Smith for attending stepping into a very valuable SARC leadership role!

For more information about Florda SARC, please visit: www.flsarc.org

Be Sure to Check Out the 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 Moorhead (FDACS Emergency Programs Manager), Dr. Saqib Mukhtar (UF/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

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 deadly pig disease that spreads rapidly and affects domestic and wild swine. While not a threat to human health, the virus could devastate America's swine, pork industry, and food supply. Whatever pigs mean to you—your livelihood or a pet—we're all in it together. Protect our swine and keep the disease out of the United States. 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…

- Can I Bring It? - Don't Pack a Pest! Travelers Campaign (FDACS/DPI)

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 April - 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 Moorhead at LeiAnna.Moorhead@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 1	Operations Level 2
• April 6, 2024 • May 4, 2024 • June 1, 2024	• April 27 & 28, 2024 • May 18 & 19, 2024

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

Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference

The Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference (GHC) is May 12-17, 2024, at the Palm Beach County Convention Center & Hilton West Palm Beach. This year, ESF 17 and Florida SART partners, LeiAnna Moorhead (FDACS) and Dr. Angie Lindsey (UF/IFAS), will present a workshop on *Identifying Recovery Resources for Florida's Agricultural Communities.* This workshop will focus on disaster recovery efforts and resources at the UF/IFAS and Florida Cooperative Extension System as well as past, present, and future collaboration efforts with local, state, and federal agencies and agriculture-focused industry organizations. Workshop presenters will include representatives from UF/IFAS, state and federal agencies involved in disaster response, and agriculture-focused industry groups.

Panel-style discussion with workshop presenters will cover coordination and collaboration on recovery efforts after recent hurricanes. The workshop will also provide details on the existence and ongoing improvements to the UF/IFAS Agricultural Damage and Loss Assessment framework including how this tool is distributed to impacted stakeholders, how these results are used, and how results are shared with decision-makers. Lastly, the workshop will identify best practices for accessing recovery resources and contact information. As registration spots and hotel rooms will fill up quickly, we encourage you to get the upcoming Governors Hurricane Conference on your calendar. For more information, visit: https://flghc.org

SART Partners Meeting

The following meeting is by invitation only to primary representatives of SART partner agencies and are not open to the public:

- Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting – April 17, 2024, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. EST.

9th Annual Florida Agricultural Policy and Outlook Conference

Florida Agricultural Policy
Outlook Conference
UF/IFAS FOOD AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

Hosted by the UF/IFAS Food and Resource Economics Department, the 9th Annual Florida Agricultural Policy and Outlook Conference on Wednesday, April 17th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST at the UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center in Wimauma, FL and online via Zoom. This conference will examine critical policy issues facing Florida agribusiness leaders such as Disease Detection & Solutions, Damage Assessment Research, Water Policy Research, and USDA Research Strategy. It will also provide valuable economic insights that will be helpful for making informed business and policy decisions. Speakers include many experts across the field of agriculture, including researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. Keynote speaker will be State Senator Jay Collins, Chair of the Florida Senate Ag. Committee.

To register, visit https://bit.ly/2024AgPolicyConference.

Welcome to the ESF 17 SART Team, Josh Wells!

Hi, I'm Josh Wells, the newest Government Analyst I for the Division of Animal Industry and ESF 17. I am originally from North Carolina but have a fair amount of family here in Florida, so it's not a completely new scene for me. I have spent just over 20 years in the Army where my last 10 years or so were focused a lot on emergency management and disaster relief efforts. After I retired, I worked for Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Forest Fire Protection. I have also worked for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency where I was the State Training Officer. Academically speaking, I am currently working on a graduate certificate in Agriculture Defense and Bio Security from Penn State.

Between my wife and I, we have a total of five children from the ages of 24 years old to five years old. We also have two dogs, a Dutch Shepherd and a Boston Terrier, and four chickens that came with our house. I love to fish, regardless of how terrible I am at it, gardening, and watching college football. I am incredibly excited about this opportunity with the Division of Animal Industry and hope that what I bring to the table is value-added!

Did You Know? SART Offers Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training

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.

This training includes 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 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.

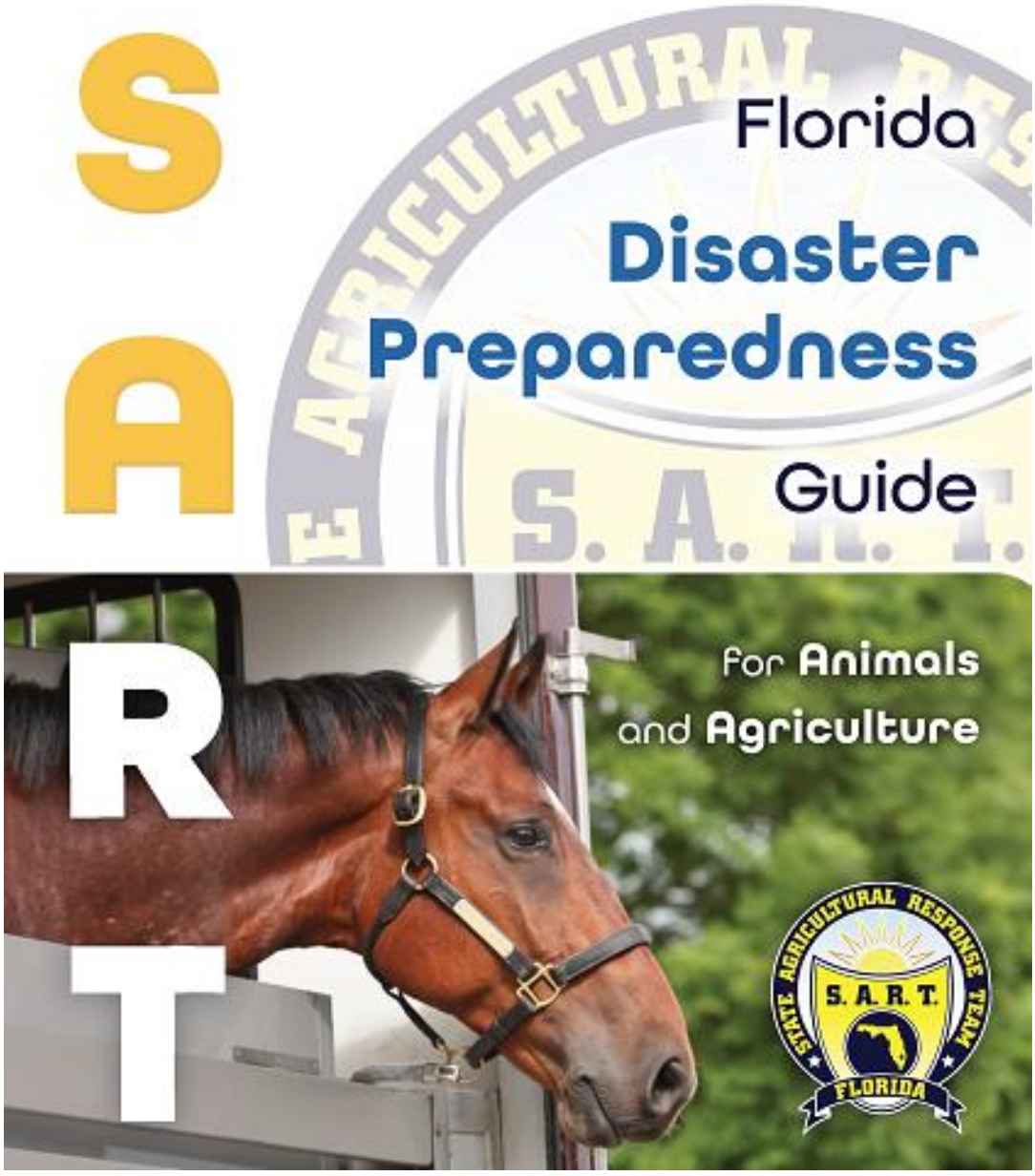
The four-hour course is designed for emergency managers, county employees, veterinary and animal services, and shelter volunteers. There is no charge for this 100% online course. For more information, please visit www.FLSART.org.

SART Publishes Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture

The SART Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture developed by the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) and Emergency Support Function 17 (ESF 17) is published on the SART website at 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.



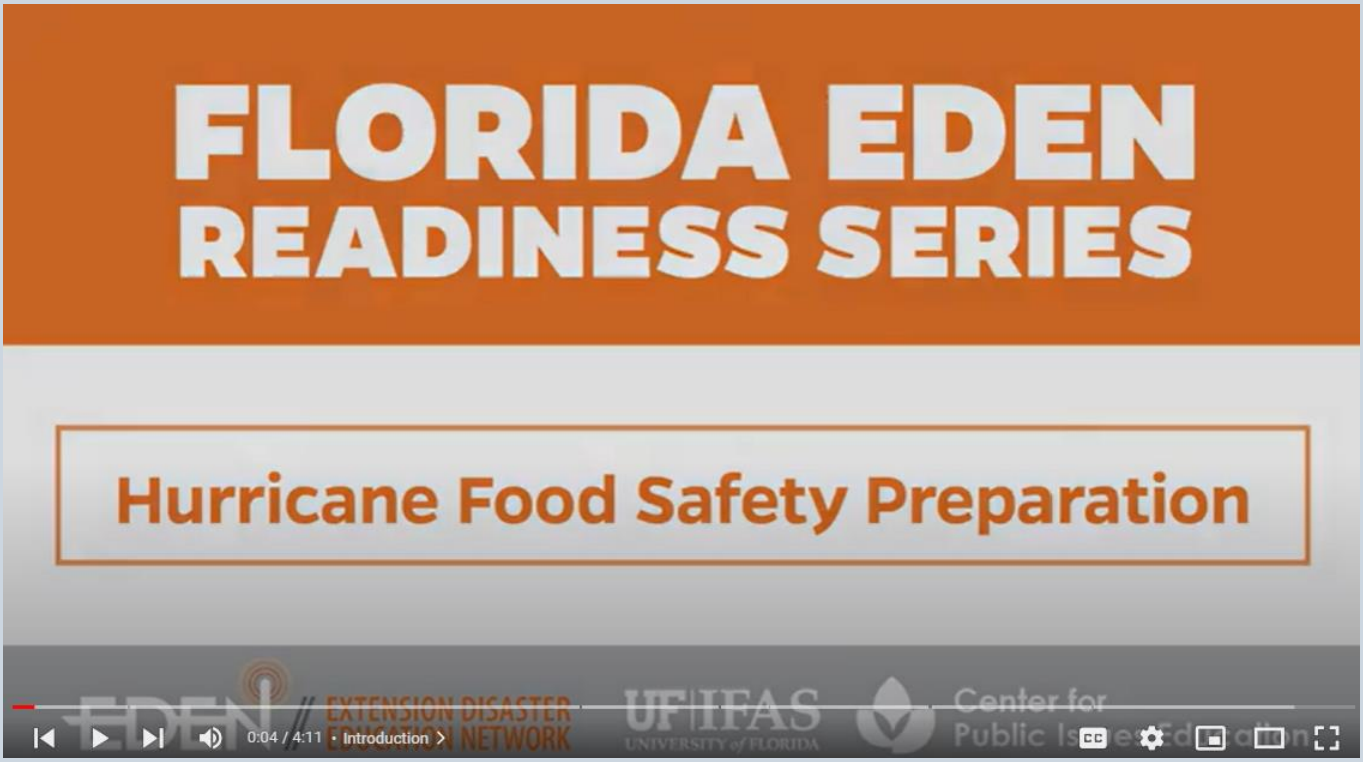
Food Safety and Food Defense Report

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.

Food Safety During a Natural Disaster

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education has created a hurricane preparedness video series in order to help viewers prepare for a natural disaster. In this video, Dr. Amy Simonne discusses steps that you can take in order to ensure access to safe food and clean drinking water during and after a hurricane.



Hurricane Tips for Food Safety

Food Temperature

- Thermometers in refrigerators can stop working if there is a power outage, so it is important to purchase a separate appliance thermometer.
- Once a perishable food has thawed out to over 40 degrees farenheit for two or more hours, it can become unsafe to eat and should be discarded.
- Organize your freezer by grouping meat and poultry on one side or on separate trays so that, in the event of thawing, their juices will not contaminate each other or other foods.

Shelf-Stable Food

- Make sure your pantry is stocked with non-perishable foods before a storm arrives. Some examples include nuts, canned foods, and cereal.
- A variety of freeze dried food items are also available at camping supply stores. These stores may also stock "self-cooking" food items and other innovations.

Water

- Be aware of local boil water notices in your area. During a boil water notice, water must be boiled for at least five minutes in order to make it safe for consumption. Certain health advisories may require you to boil water for longer, depending on the expected contaminant.

For More Information

- For more information regarding food safety during a natural disaster, visit **www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu**
- To download a natural disaster preparation checklist, visit **www.piecenter.com/resources/natural-disaster-resources/**

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA | Center for Public Issues Education | EDEN EXTENSION DISASTER EDUCATION NETWORK

SART Resources and Links

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – USDA APHIS Flock Defender
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/outbreak-illness/outbreak-illness

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.

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