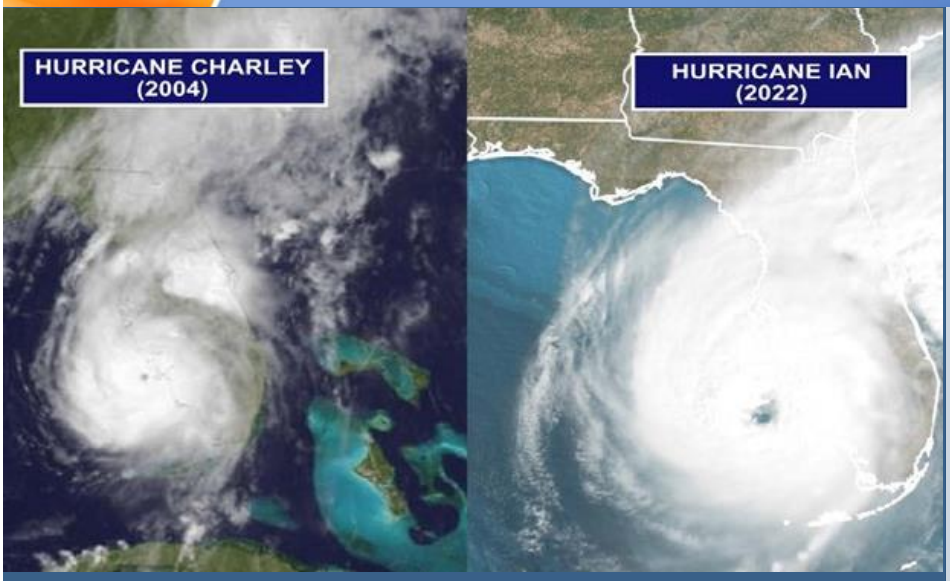
The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team



Satellite images of hurricanes Charley (2004) and Ian (2022) as they pass over Florida.

Severe Weather Information: What Media Can You Trust?

We are one month into the 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season, and we have already had a named storm develop in the Gulf of Mexico, and severe weather that resulted in flooding in South Florida. Floridians have their full attention on the weather as we try to be prepared before the next big storm to make landfall. With so many different media outlets showing potential weather forecasts, how can you choose the most accurate weather prediction? If you listen to the wrong source, you could be left unprepared when severe weather comes to your front door.

Florida SART recently had the opportunity to connect with Amy Godsey, Chief State Meteorologist with the State Watch Office, on the best resources for keeping you and your family informed of possible severe weather heading your way. For hurricane updates, Godsey recommends that you check the National Hurricane Center and Central Pacific Hurricane Center for updates on any potential tropical storm development and potentially impacted areas. For other severe weather information and alerts for warnings and watches in your area check out the State Watch Office page. This page is also located on the Florida Division of Emergency Management website and has some great information about all things Florida emergency preparedness, from how to make a plan for your family to recovery information for recent storms. Lastly, another trusted resource for severe weather information is your local news station. These news stations can give very detailed information that is tailored to your community.

It is never too early to prepare for the next storm system by finding the best way for you and your family to receive accurate weather forecasts! Now is a good time to sign up for alerts for severe weather in your area!

Special Features of this Issue:

- *ESF 17 and SART At the Desoto County's Hurricane Expo*
- *Severe Weather Information: What Media Can You Trust?*
- *Food Safety Before, During, and After a Power Outage*

"I recommend that you check the National Hurricane Center for updates on any potential tropical storm development and potentially impacted areas."

— Amy Godsey
State Meteorologist
Florida Division of Emergency Management

SART Activates in Response to Invest 90L South Florida Flooding

On June 13th, the Florida State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was activated in response to a large severe weather storm named Invest 90L, that brought heavy rainfall to the South Florida Area. In several parts of South Florida such as Lee, Collier, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties, there were up to 10+ inches of rainfall that caused flooding in residential areas. Many roadways to and from these areas such as I-95 were shut down due to flood waters for almost 7 hours leaving many Floridians unable to make their routine travels.

Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) was also activated to assess any critical or unmet needs for Animals and Agriculture in the South Florida areas that were impacted. While fields and pastures did experience flooding, both welcomed the water after experiencing a recent drought. Many of the normal field crops were in-between their normal production seasons and these rains helped to prepare the fields for future planting and harvesting of these crops.

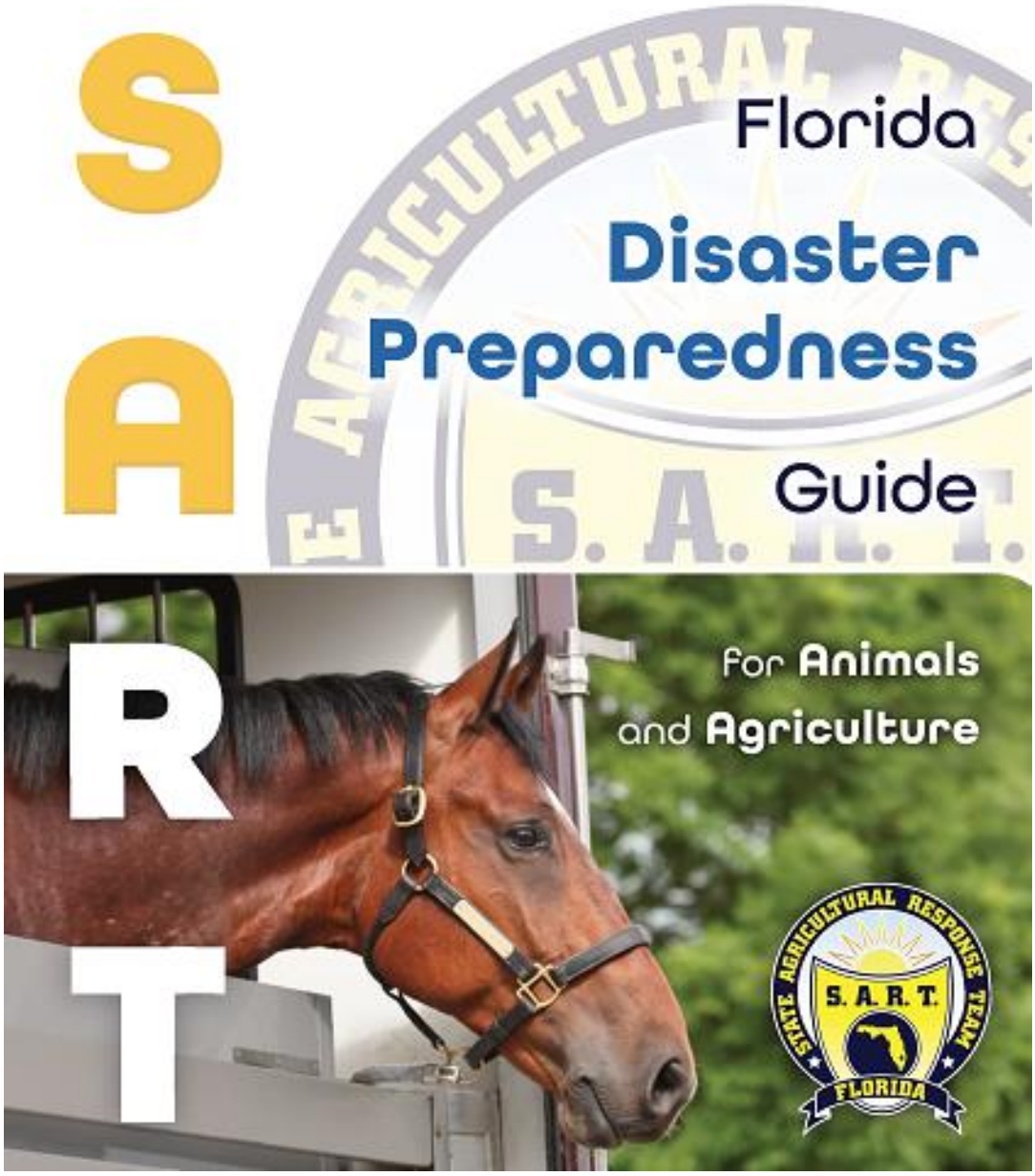
No major damage to animal facilities and no displaced animals were reported. Aquaculture reported five production sites that were temporarily closed for harvesting until further water testing could be conducted. While the road shutdowns affected the local residents it also affected the movement of milk to and from the McArthur Production Plant. However, within a few hours the water had drained enough for routine operations to continue.

The Food Safety Team also conducted a large amount of phone assessments with little to no damages reported from food retail establishments. Thank you to all of our SART Partners for their coordination efforts during this severe weather event! Flooding in Florida can be a huge concern during this time of year with severe weather from the typical afternoon thunderstorm to a hurricane making landfall. It is never too late to check your family's or organization's emergency plans in case of a flood event in your area!

The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture

The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture was developed by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART). This guide explores the various animal and agricultural sectors in the state of Florida that are at risk from natural and man-made disasters, and what you can do to help prepare and protect animals and agriculture before a disaster strikes. The recommendations and resources in this guide are applicable to preparing for all hazards such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, disease introduction, hazardous material spills, and more.

This publication is available only to SART members. To access the Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture, visit the SART website at flsart.org, and navigate to the "Resources" tab. It may also be accessed directly at:
https://flsart.org/resource/DisasterPreparednessGuides/DisasterPreparednessGuides.jsp



ESF 17 and SART At the Desoto County's Hurricane Expo

From left to right: Marc Purvis (EM Coordinator), Chris Fankhauser (EM Specialist), Matt Devitt (WINK News), and Richard Christoff (EM director)

Desoto County kicked off the 2024 Hurricane Season with a preparedness expo to help residents learn more about how to be better prepared for Florida's next hurricane. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) very own Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 specialist, Melody Belanger, attended and distributed valuable SART preparedness resources for both animals and agriculture.

Animal checklists that can be found in the SART Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture were given to the attendees to aid in their family preparedness plan efforts. More information about SART training was also provided to the local Desoto County residents. To connect pet owners with local resources, Desoto County Animal Services gave a presentation about pet preparedness for the upcoming severe weather. The last bit of information that was discussed was what pet supplies should be purchased during the tax-free holidays.

Melody Belanger (FDACS) providing SART and ESF 17 information to the residents of Desoto County.

Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!

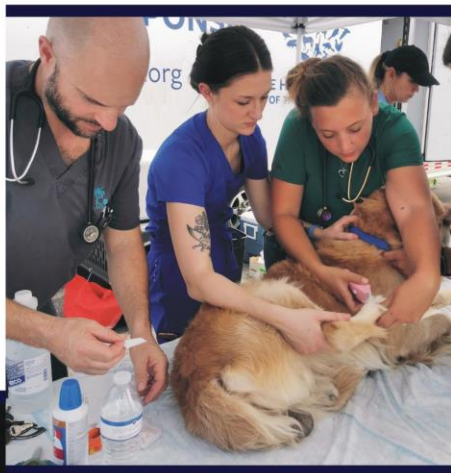
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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.

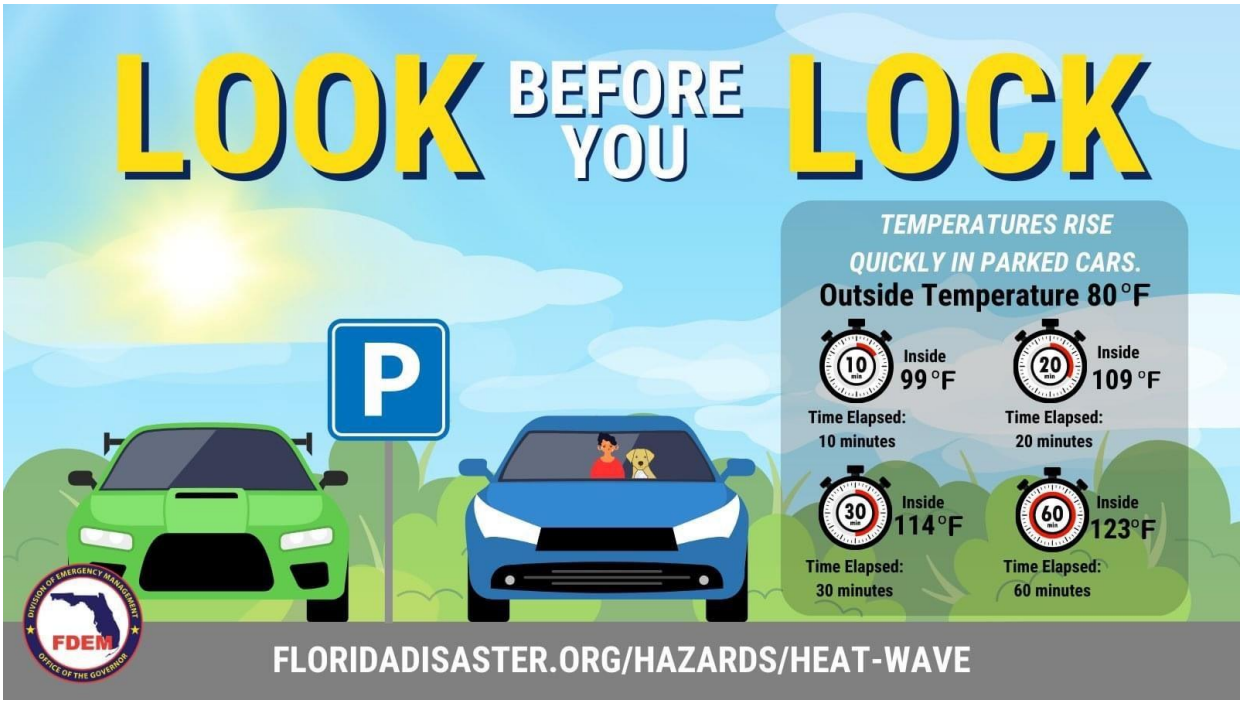
Rationale

- 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**

Welcome to Summer!



It's that time of the year again, the annual baking of our nation – summertime! While the season has officially *just* begun, the National Weather Service has issued heat advisories for our state over the last several days. According to HEAT.gov - National Integrated Heat Health Information System, there are approximately 61.5 million people that are currently under a heat alert. During these warmer temperatures, it's a good idea to brush up on ways to keep yourself, coworkers, and animals safe. A good reference chart for recommended work/rest cycles can be found on the CDC Heat Stress website. Unlike most charts, this one includes the humidity and cloud cover factor.

Our animals–pets and livestock–are also at risk for heat illness during these high temperatures.

- ✓ Make sure you **monitor your animals** while they are out in the heat.
- ✓ Animals should always have **access to clean and drinkable water**.
- ✓ **Shaded areas** such as a barn or covered pole barn are recommended to be accessible to large animals to get a **break from the sun**.
- ✓ Use caution when using working animals, give them **ample breaks**, and reduce physical exercise when possible.
- ✓ **Don't leave pets in cars unattended.**
- ✓ **Avoid walking pets on the sidewalk or asphalt** roadways as those areas can become very hot and potentially burn the paw pads of your pet.
- ✓ Become familiar with the signs of **heat exhaustion and heat stroke**. You may be surprised they are very similar to the human signs and symptoms, but do not discount the differences. Even the treatment methods bear some similarities – move to the shade, apply ice packs or cold towels to the body and head, and immediately seek medical aid. When in doubt always contact your veterinarian to have your animal examined for possible heat-related injuries or illnesses. The Humane Society website has a very informative page with tips and tricks to keep your animals safe.

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.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

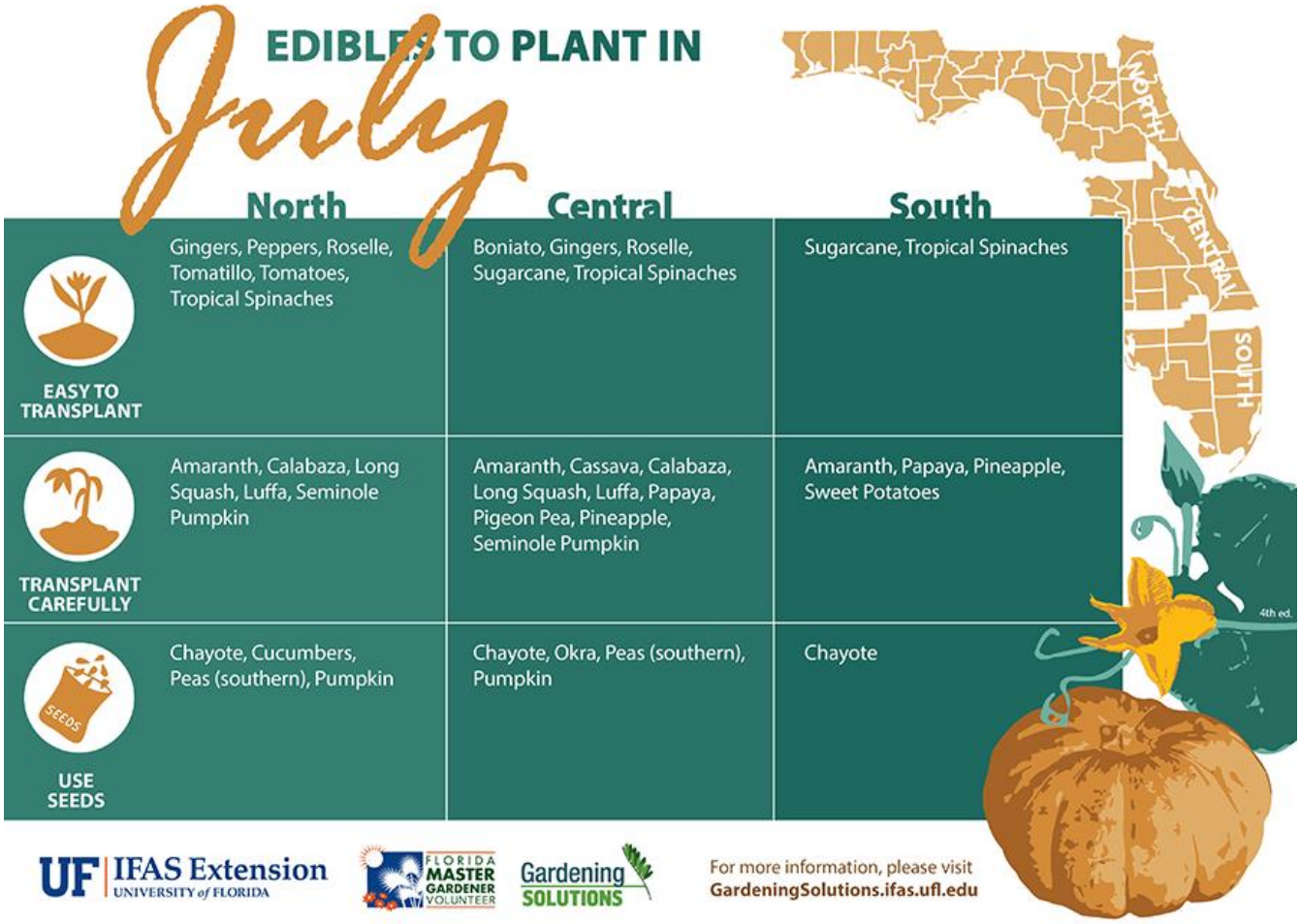
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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



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 July - 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
• July 13, 2024 • July 17, 2024 • July 20, 2024 • July 27, 2024 • August 7, 2024 • August 28-29, 2024	• August 17-18, 2024 • August 24-25, 2024

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

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 – August 21, 2024, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. EST.
- Quarterly In-Person Meeting – September 25th, at 10:30 a.m.

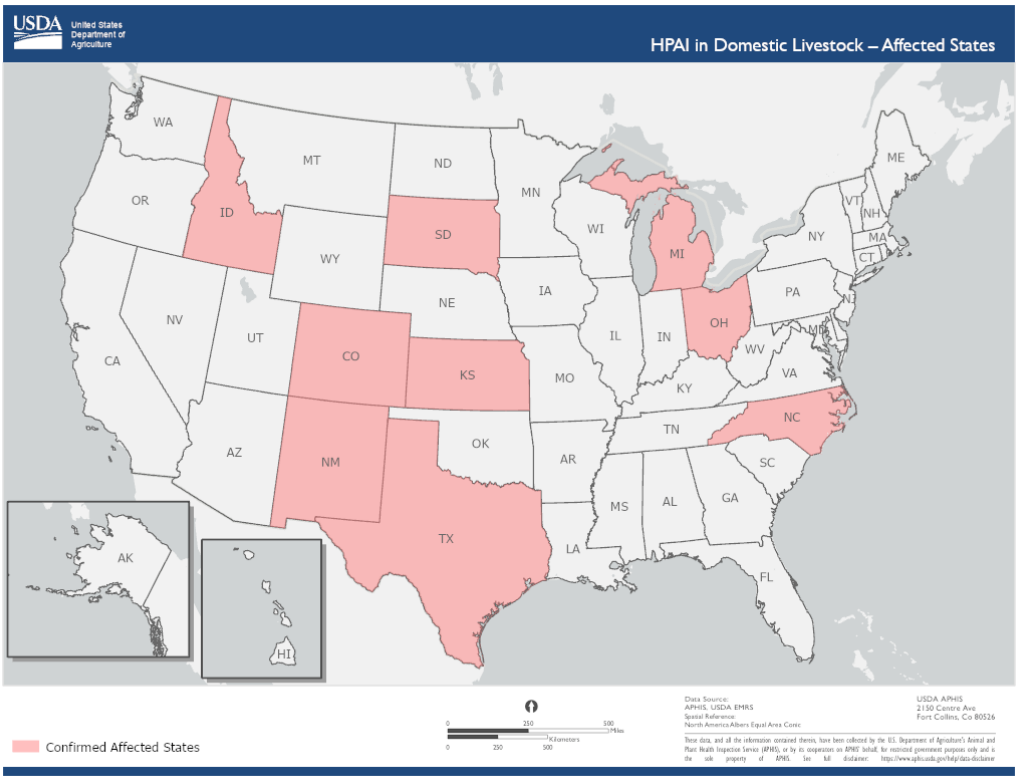
In the News…

- Florida Forest Service Opens Applications for Southern Pine Beetle Assistance and Prevention Program (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Issues Emergency Rule to Further Protect Florida Livestock from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (FDACS)
- Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Livestock (USDA/APHIS)
- Fair season is here, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published the following resources for fair organizers and animal exhibitors.
  - Considerations and Information for Fair Exhibitors to Help Prevent Influenza
  - Considerations and Information for Fair Organizers to Help Prevent Influenza

USDA: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detections in Livestock

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and State veterinary and public health officials are investigating an illness among dairy cows. Beginning in March, USDA confirmed the detection Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) amongst some domestic dairy herds.

HPAI is a disease that is highly contagious and often deadly in poultry, caused by highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5) and A (H7) viruses; it is also known as bird or avian flu. HPAI viruses can be transmitted by wild birds to domestic poultry and other bird and animal species. Although bird flu viruses do not normally infect humans, sporadic human infections have occurred. It is important to note that "highly pathogenic" refers to severe impact in birds, not necessarily in humans.



This is a developing story. The USDA has opened a webpage and federal order with forthcoming guidance pertaining to the situation. Please visit https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/livestock for the latest details.

Further, FDA states confidence that pasteurization does effectively inactivate HPAI in milk. However, "the FDA continues to advise strongly against the consumption of raw milk and recommends that industry does not manufacture or sell raw milk or raw milk products." For more information, please visit https://www.fda.gov/food/alerts-advisories-safety-information/updates-highly-pathogenic-avian-influenza-hpai.

In Florida, Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson issued Emergency Rule 5CER24-4. The Emergency Rule imposes specific restrictions on the importation of cattle into Florida to prevent the spread of HPAI. There have been no detections of HPAI in any livestock in Florida. For more information, please visit https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2024-Press-Releases/Commissioner-Wilton-Simpson-Issues-Emergency-Rule-to-Further-Protect-Florida-Livestock-from-Highly-Pathogenic-Avian-Influenza. View the FDACS Emerging Disease in Dairy Cattle announcement at: https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/115892/file/2024-HPAI-Dairy-Cattle-Announcement.pdf

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 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.

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.

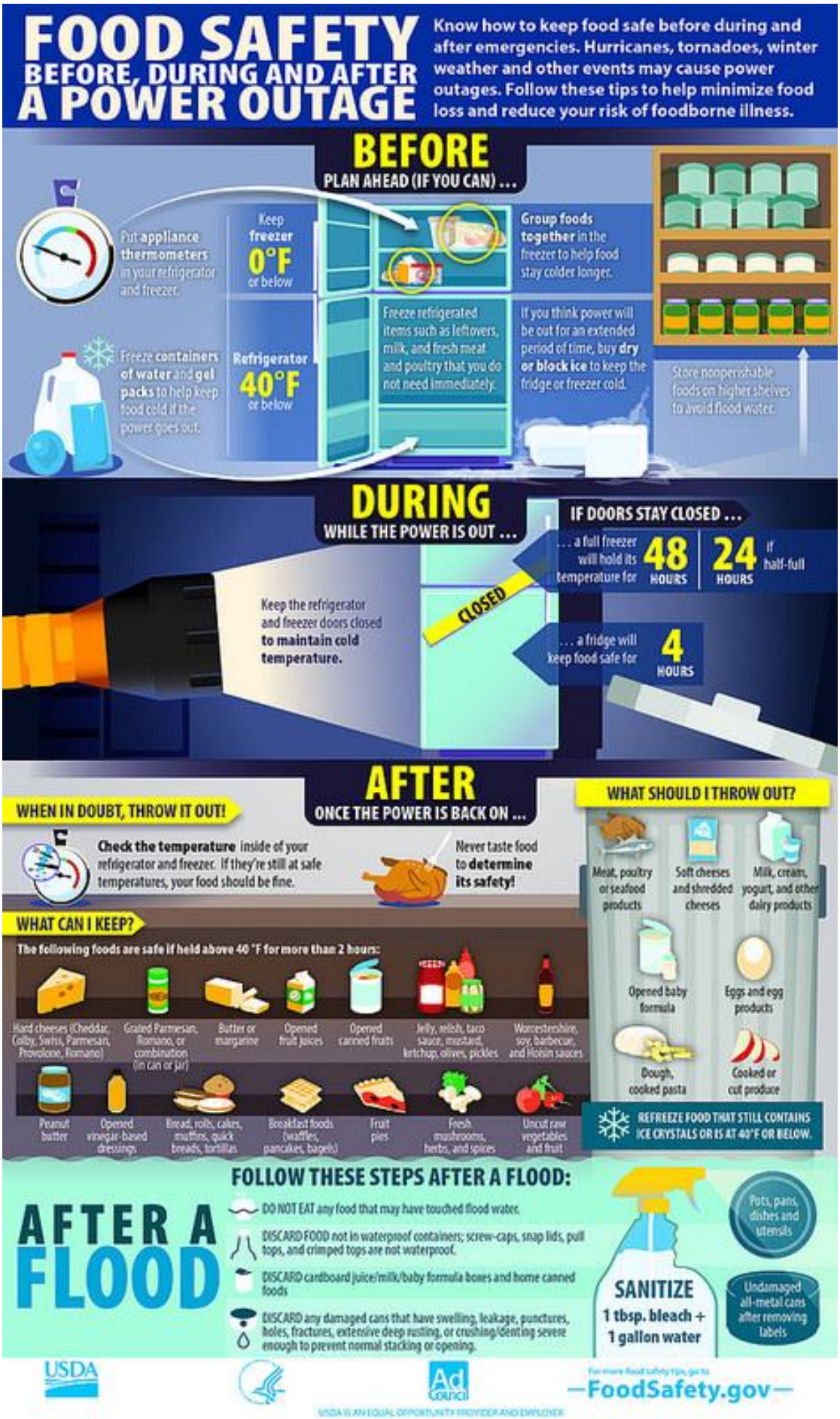
On September 8, 2023, the FWC issued a new executive order outlining regulations designed to increase sampling and slow the spread of CWD in Florida deer. Existing regulations pertaining to the establishment of the zone, baiting and feeding restrictions, prohibition of rehabilitating or releasing injured 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.

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. 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.

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.


FOOD SAFETY
BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A POWER OUTAGE
Know how to keep food safe before during and after emergencies. Hurricanes, tornadoes, winter weather and other events may cause power outages. Follow these tips to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of foodborne illness.
BEFORE
PLAN AHEAD (IF YOU CAN) ...
Put appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer.
Keep freezer 0°F or below
Refrigerator 40°F or below
Freeze containers of water and gel packs to help keep food cold if the power goes out.
Group foods together in the freezer to help food stay colder longer.
Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you do not need immediately.
If you think power will be out for an extended period of time, buy dry or block ice to keep the fridge or freezer cold.
Store nonperishable foods on higher shelves to avoid flood water.
DURING
WHILE THE POWER IS OUT ...
Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed to maintain cold temperature.
IF DOORS STAY CLOSED ...
... a full freezer will hold its temperature for 48 HOURS
24 HOURS if half-full
CLOSED
... a fridge will keep food safe for 4 HOURS
AFTER
ONCE THE POWER IS BACK ON ...
WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!
Check the temperature inside of your refrigerator and freezer. If they're still at safe temperatures, your food should be fine.
Never taste food to determine its safety!
WHAT CAN I KEEP?
The following foods are safe if held above 40 °F for more than 2 hours:
Hard cheeses (Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, Provolone, Romano)
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)
Butter or margarine
Opened fruit juices
Opened canned fruits
Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, pickles
Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, and Hoisin sauces
Peanut butter
Opened vinegar-based dressings
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas
Breakfast foods (waffles, pancakes, bagels)
Fruit pies
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, and spices
Uncut raw vegetables and fruit
WHAT SHOULD I THROW OUT?
Meat, poultry or seafood products
Soft cheeses and shredded cheeses
Milk, cream, yogurt, and other dairy products
Opened baby formula
Eggs and egg products
Dough, cooked pasta
Cooked or cut produce
REFREEZE FOOD THAT STILL CONTAINS ICE CRYSTALS OR IS AT 40°F OR BELOW.
AFTER A FLOOD
FOLLOW THESE STEPS AFTER A FLOOD:
DO NOT EAT any food that may have touched flood water.
DISCARD FOOD not in waterproof containers; screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped tops are not waterproof.
DISCARD cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned foods
DISCARD any damaged cans that have swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening.
SANITIZE
1 tbsp. bleach + 1 gallon water
Pots, pans, dishes and utensils
Undamaged all-metal cans after removing labels
USDA
Ad Council
For more food safety tips, go to
—FoodSafety.gov—
USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

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

Ready Business Power Outage Toolkit
https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/79712/file/Power_Outage_Ready_Business_Toolkit_Interactive_Final_508.pdf

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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