The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

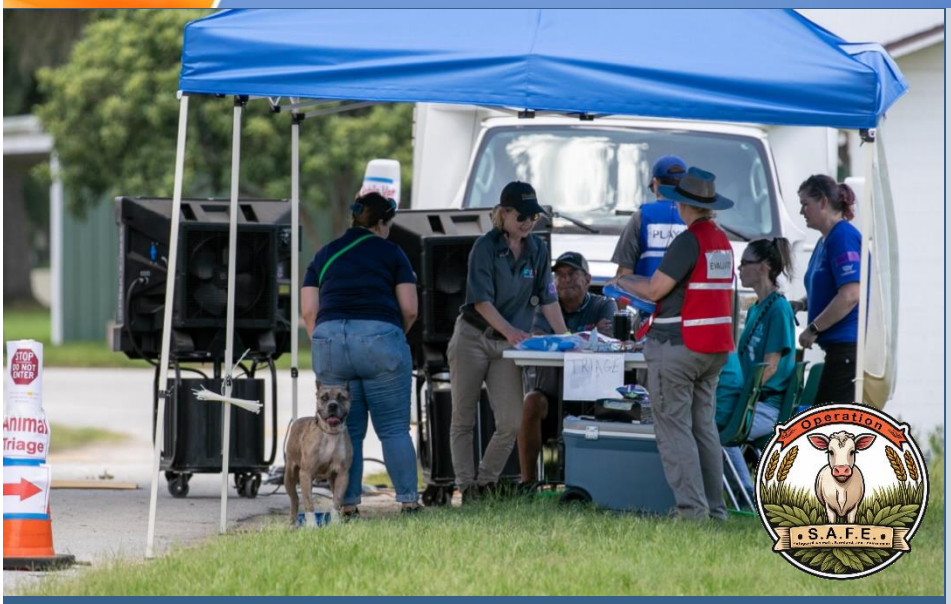

Photo credit: Alan Youngblood/352today

SPECIAL EDITION: Operation S.A.F.E: ESF 17 and Florida SART 2024 Full-Scale Exercise

Florida's Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 and Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) doesn't just prepare to respond to natural disasters like hurricanes, they also prepare for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive, and man-made disasters. Imagine in the heart of rural Florida, a dump truck gets stuck on a train track with a train carrying 12 train cars worth of ethanol heading right into the truck. Suddenly the train and the dump truck collide causing a toxic and hazardous chemical to spread through neighborhoods, fields, and pastures in the nearby area. Ethanol being very flammable then proceeds to start a wildfire running through those fields and pastures. After hearing this what next actions would you take?

ESF 17 and Florida SART thought this scenario would be the best practice for a chemical emergency for this year's Full-Scale Exercise named, "Operation Safeguard Animals, Farmland, and Environment." FDACS and Florida SART partnered with the Marion County Emergency Management to host and be a main player in this exercise scenario. Over 150 exercise players, observers, controllers, evaluators, and volunteers from over 20 organizations came together to set up a response effort at the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion in Ocala, Florida, on July 23-25, 2024. They were able to set up a Pet-Friendly Shelter, a Small-Animal Emergency Shelter, a Large Animal Shelter, and a Mobile Veterinary Hospital.

Continued, next page.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!*
- *Chronic Wasting Disease Detected in Florida*
- *Florida State Animal Response Coalition Update*

"While at the shelter we helped rescue three kittens!"

— Steve Carriere
Manager
Florida State Animal Response Coalition
Story on page 5.

SPECIAL EDITION: Operation S.A.F.E: ESF 17 and Florida SART 2024 Full-Scale Exercise

Day 1 was focused on sizing up the emergency, establishing a Unified Incident Management Team, mobilizing resources, and setting up all the sheltering locations to receive animals and humans evacuating from the incident. Day 2 actors arrived to simulate the process of receiving animals and humans for sheltering and decontamination from the chemical spill. The animals were all given profiles that described their injuries and level of exposure to the chemical.

Players of this exercise were able to assess on a case-by-case basis the level of urgency with which these animals needed medical attention. Some animals were reported to the players to have severe injuries and others were reported to be unharmed. At the end of day 2, the players were able to shelter over 40 dogs, 20 cats, 4 pocket pets, 5 horses, and 10 cows, all while providing medical care for "injuries" and simulating decontamination protocols. Day 3 of the exercise focused on the demobilization of persons and equipment, making sure that the equipment itself was cleaned and disinfected, restocked, and returned to the proper location. After all this hard work the players were successful in activating the appropriate response for this type of incident.

After years of hurricane response efforts, it was time to think about how other types of disasters would affect animals and agriculture. ESF 17 and Florida SART are required to respond to both man-made and natural disasters. Thank you to all of the SART Partners, Marion County, and Advanced Planning Consultants for coming together to execute this year's Full–Scale Exercise!

Photo caption: Practicing animal decontamination (left); Operations Section staff meeting on the tactical plan for day 1. Photo credit: LeiAnna Moorhead, FDACS

Featured in the Local News 352 Today! Read more at 352 Today:
https://352today.com/news/257752-simulation-helps-marion-county-emergency-responders-prepare-for-large-scale-disaster-involving-livestock-and-domestic-animals-photos

View more photos in our SART Photo Gallery! Visit:
https://flsart.org/NewsMedia/media/photogallery/index.jsp

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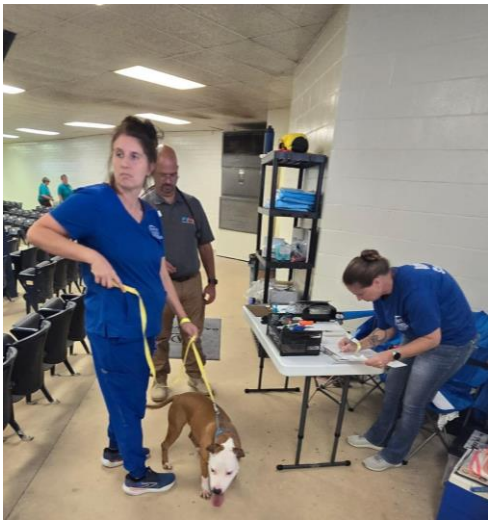
SPECIAL EDITION: Operation S.A.F.E: ESF 17 and Florida SART 2024 Full-Scale Exercise

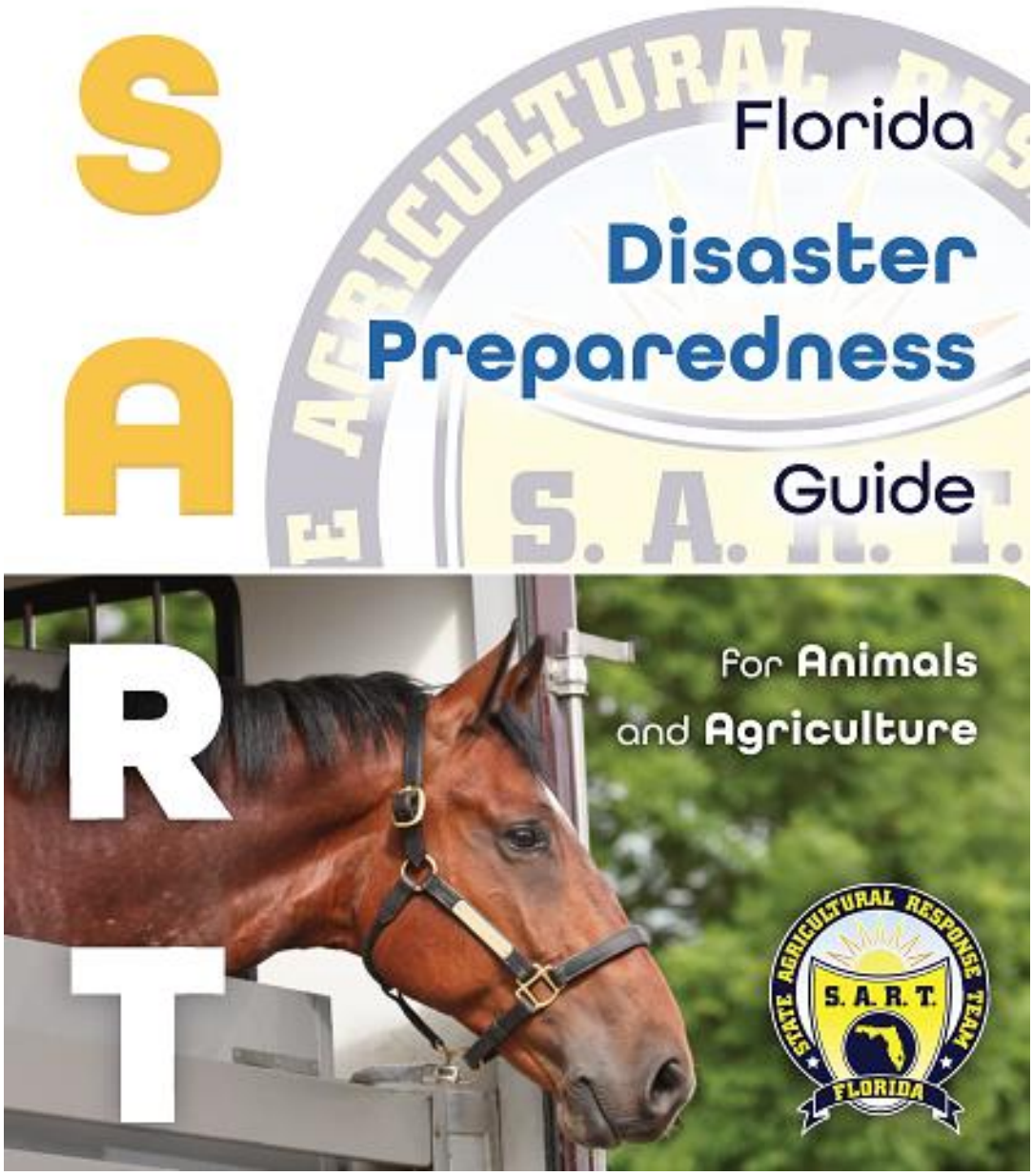
Photo: The exercise Director, Controllers, and Evaluators pose for a photo on the last day.



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



Florida State Animal Response Coalition Update

Story by Steve Carriere

On July 1, the Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC), a Florida SART partner agency, deployed three volunteers to the Jasper Animal Rescue Mission in Ridgeland, SC. Last November, SARC and other local shelter leaders were asked to tour the facility after numerous complaints and media stories arose of poor, unsanitary conditions for over 150 dogs and cats on property. Despite some improvements, the shelter underwent a massive personnel turnover in June, necessitating the need for our help. Thanks to generous financial support from the BISSELL Foundation, our team was able to provide proper care, training, and oversight for the remaining staff and volunteers on site for seven days.

Additionally, SARC coordinated volunteer organization support for facilities cleaning and improvements with Team Rubicon for the first weekend in August. The request was so well received by Team Rubicon that they've decided to pursue scheduling monthly service projects at the shelter facility to help them with grounds maintenance and upkeep for their kennels. Some of the work accomplished at the shelter included:

- Deep cleaned all kennels on site.
- Deep cleaned cat holding room.
- Dugout and cleaned sludge from back kennel clogged for over a year. Cause of clog: Tennis ball
- Removed and threw out over 20 damaged or contaminated igloo housing units and pet beds.
- Trained volunteers and staff on proper cleaning protocols and animal handling for kennel cleaning.
- Provided daily care cards for all kennels and cat holding units.
- Helped set up isolation space for 8 puppies infected or exposed to Parvo.
- Partnering with Team Rubicon to help with grounds cleanup and instituted a monthly community service day for the program to help the shelter.

Kim and Carol deep cleaning.

One of many housing units thrown away

Back kennel drain clogged due to lack of preventative maintenance

Plans for the shelter include updating and replacing all of the kennel drain systems, replacing kennel run fencing, installing additional kennels, remodeling some of the interior spaces, painting, and helping improve some of the adoption and trap-neuter-return (TNR) processes.

Continued, next page.

Florida State Animal Response Coalition Update (continued)

While at the shelter we helped rescue 3 kittens! One was brought in on death's door, very lethargic and weak. We immediately began feeding him some kitten milk replacement (KMR) and warmed him up, within two-three hours he took in over 15 ml of KMR. The next morning, he was back at the shelter full of energy and vocal!! We named him Rocky because he is a fighter! We also rescued Jasper and Jake, two male, 8-week-old kittens who were very friendly and will be adopted out! Two additional dogs were brought in from an abandonment case where they were found in a vacated apartment for over three weeks without food or water. They were seen by a local vet and will recover from this situation.

Rocky at intake:

Rocky the next day -- Alive and kicking!

Jasper and Jake!

One of two dogs brought in from abandomment case.

On July 5th, SARC completed the purchase of a brand new disaster response trailer! Thanks to a very generous grant opportunity from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), SARC purchased an 8 ½' x 20' cargo trailer, large enough to hold much of the stored response equipment for local or state emergency and disaster response! We are beginning the outfitting process – installing shelving, packing, inventorying, and storing equipment, and installing additional equipment holding capability. When ready, it will support response for pet-friendly or local emergency pet sheltering needs.

Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!

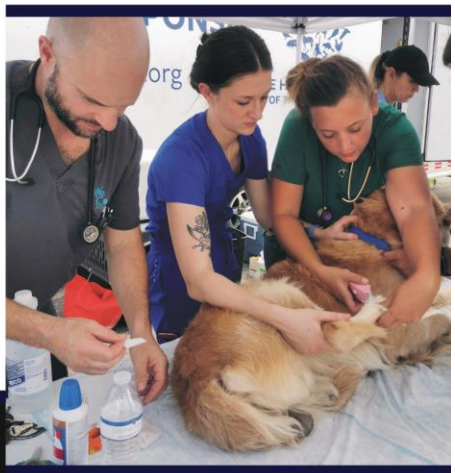
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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**

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

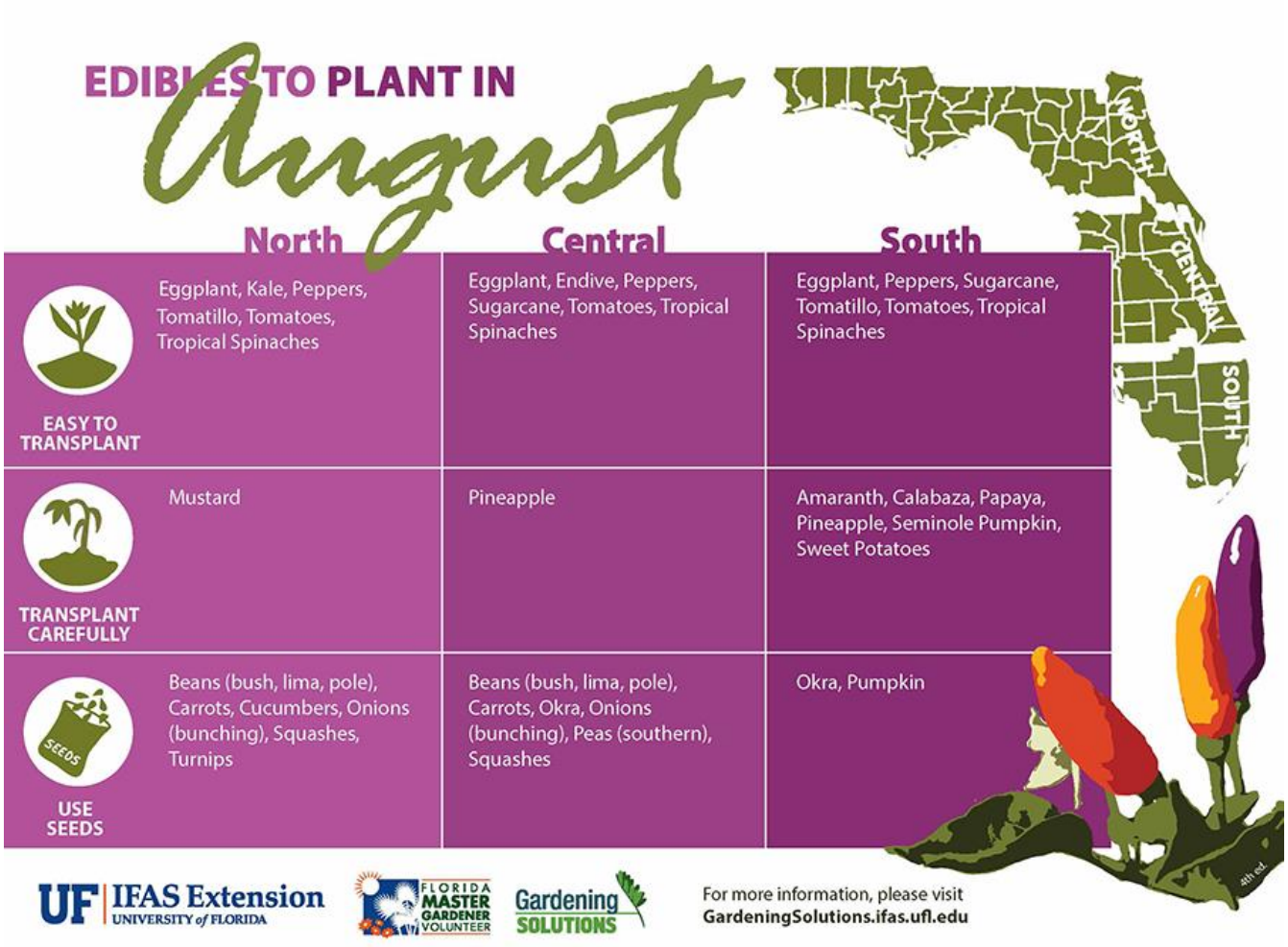
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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 August - 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
• August 7, 2024 • August 20, 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.

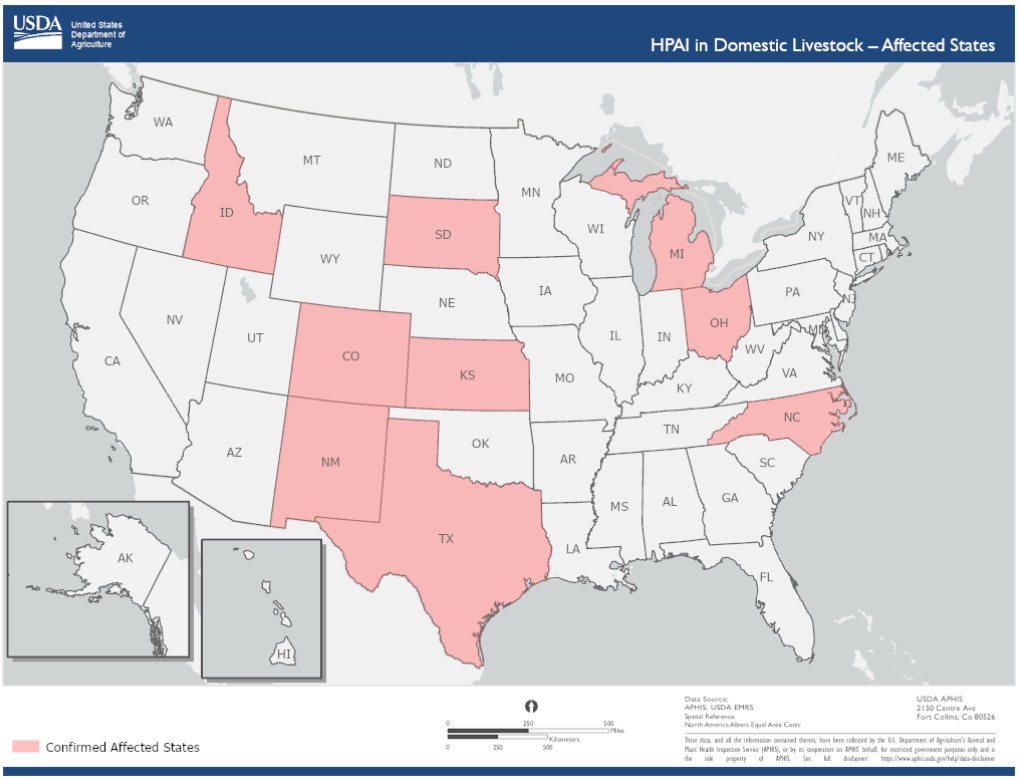
In the News…

- 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 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.

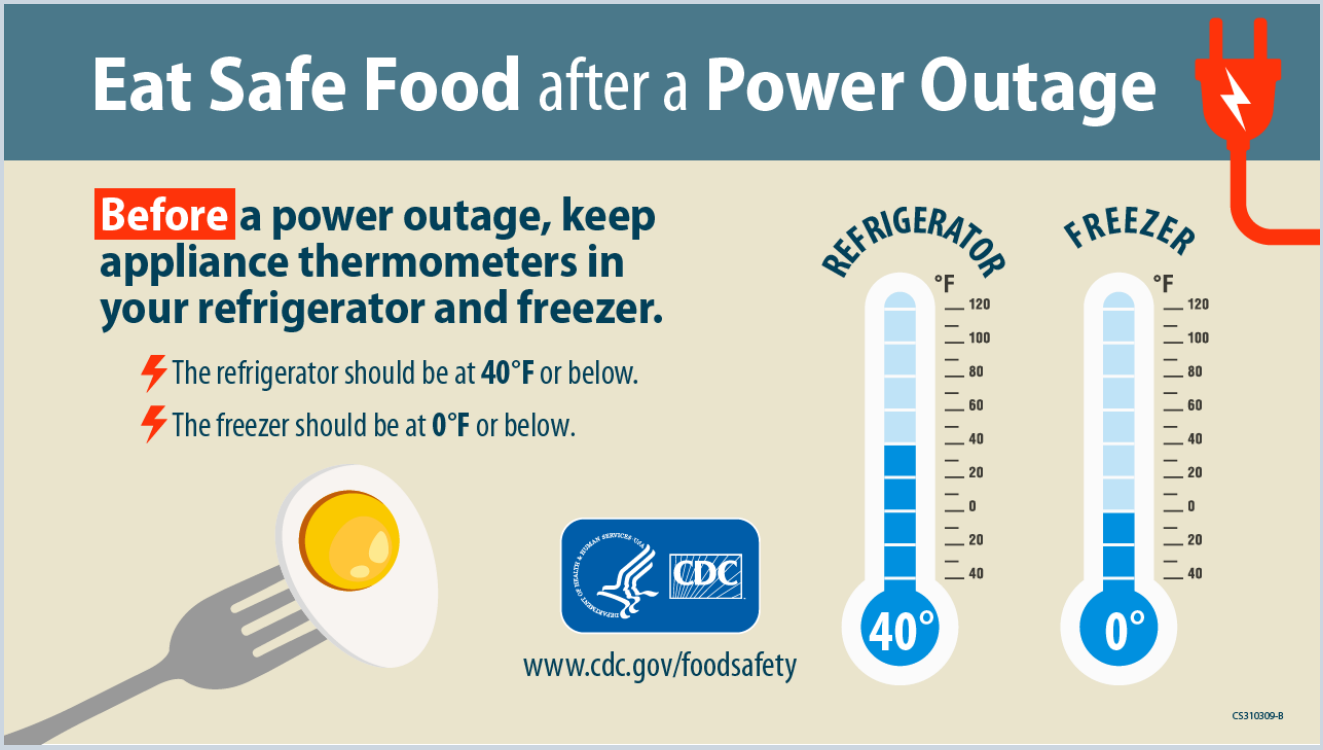
CDC: Keep Food Safe After a Disaster or Emergency

Foods may be unsafe to eat after a disaster or emergency. To prevent foodborne illness, prepare for emergencies and take key steps during and after power outages, floods, and other emergencies.

If you are in a disaster or emergency, it's important that you take steps to prevent illness from unsafe food. Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after the loss of power. Food that may have had contact with floodwater or storm water may also be unsafe to eat. Find out what you can do to keep food safe in the case of an emergency or disaster.

Prepare for Emergencies:

- Keep appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer. The refrigerator should be at 40°F or below. The freezer should be at 0°F or below.
- Freeze containers of water and gel packs to help keep your food at 40°F or below.
- Have a cooler and frozen gel packs handy in case you must remove your food from the refrigerator to keep it cold.
- Buy dry ice or block ice to keep your food cold in the refrigerator, if you think the power will be out for a long time.



For more information, please visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/foods/keep-food-safe-after-emergency.html

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

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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