The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Damage in Keaton Beach, Florida, following Hurricane Helene. (Florida National Guard)

Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Helene

On September 24th, 2024, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated to a level 1 in response to the storm system that would become Hurricane Helene. At that time this system was still forming in the lower part of the Caribbean just south of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Over the next 2 days the storm moved past Yucatan and Cuba making its way into a very warm Gulf of Mexico setting its sights on Florida. Spending another day and a half gaining strength and wind speed Hurricane Helene would make landfall in Taylor County as a category 4 hurricane.

Hours before landfall this storm would bring upwards of 10-15 feet of storm surge to the gulf coast counties of the Tampa Bay area and all the way North to the Jefferson County coast. This storm brought 125+ mph winds to the Big Bend Area of Florida starting at 7:30 pm on September 26th, and spending that night making its way out of Florida to South Georgia and the Carolinas by mid-day on September 27th. The immediate aftermath from Hurricane Helene left the Big Bend of Florida with major wind damage, power outages, and eventually flooding.

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 and your Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) begin response efforts on September 23rd, working with potentially impacted counties to stage equipment and supplies pre-landfall.

Continued, next page.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *FVMA Hurricane Relief Fund for Agriculture Now Open*
- *Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!*
- *Did You Know? SART Offers Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training*

This Special Edition focuses on response efforts by the Florida State Agricultural Response Team following two major hurricanes:

September 24 – Helene
October 9 – Milton

Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Helene

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) worked with all different types of agricultural producers to provide quick response efforts to an area that was already hit twice by devastating hurricanes within the last 13 months. Post landfall and after the roads had been cleared FDACS and SART Partners started response efforts for the agricultural communities of the Big Bend Area of Florida.

We were able to coordinate animal food donations from SART Partners like, Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), to be delivered directly to the impacted counties to aid in support of animal shelters and the pets of the impacted residents. Veterinary support was also provided to the hardest hit areas in Taylor County trough SART Partners HSUS, University of Florida (UF) College of Veterinary Medicine, and Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) volunteers. These organizations worked together to establish and operate a mobile veterinary unit able to provide treatment to animals in Taylor County.

Photo: Hurricane damage in the Big Bend

SART Partners also worked together to help livestock producers with fencing that had been damage from the storm. Florida Cattlemen's Association and Florida Farm Bureau Federation worked with the livestock producers of Suwannee, Madison, and Jefferson Counties to mend broken fencing keeping livestock off the roadways and secure for the producer. The FDACS Division of Animal Industry (DAI) Incident Management Team (IMT) also manned a livestock hotline, assessed animal facilities such as veterinary clinics and livestock producers, and delivered water to residents of the Big Bend Area without access to water for their animals. SART Partners, State agencies, and Local Emergency Managers worked together to support the needs of the impacted Florida farmers of Hurricane Helene, who are now moving into long term rebuilding and recovery projects

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Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Helene

Photo: Hurricane damage in the Big Bend

Hurricane Helene not only brought destruction to the Big Bend Area of Florida, but this storm also caused historic levels of damage to North Carolina. Major flooding in the Blue Ridge area caused washed out roadways and landslides that cut whole communities off from the rest of the world. Many residents of North Carolina had to rely on rescuers to help get them get to safety from their homes. Across the states of Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee more than 230 people have perished from this deadly storm. Many recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene are still in progress and will continue for the near future in these impacted areas.

Photo credit: Florida Farm Bureau Federation coordinating fencing supplies for needed repairs to fence containing livestock after Hurricane Helene.

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Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Helene

FVMA Hurricane Relief Fund for Agriculture Now Open

Florida VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) Foundation's Hurricane Relief & Recovery Fund is currently able to provide financial assistance to licensed veterinarians facing unreimbursed losses at their clinical facilities due to the storm. Veterinarians who assist in rescue, relief, and recovery efforts or provide emergency boarding to animals may also be eligible to receive funding.

Grant Limit
Up to $2,500 can be disbursed to any individual for out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of providing medical care, food, or shelter to animals affected by the storm, or for out-of-pocket clinic expenses resulting from damage from the storm.

Eligibility Criteria
- Must be an actively licensed veterinarian at the time of disaster. Preference may be given to FVMA members in cases of equal need, but all Florida veterinarians affected by the disaster are eligible to apply and receive funds.
- The clinic must be located in the afflicted disaster areas, or the veterinarians must be able to prove they provided veterinary medical care for animals in disaster areas.
- Grants are awarded per veterinarian. If a clinic has multiple veterinarians, they may all apply, but subsequent applications from one clinic may be given diminished consideration based on already-granted funds to that clinic. If a veterinarian owns multiple clinics, they may submit one application per clinic.
- Individuals must not have previously received reimbursement from the FVMA Foundation for the same disaster or be the recipient of a grant from another organization for the same disaster.

The final decision regarding the number, timing and amount of grants awarded through this program is at the sole discretion of the FVMA Foundation Executive Board.

Procedure
Applicants should fill out the application and submit any relevant documents or receipts to maximize their likelihood of receiving a grant. If you are awarded a grant, you are required to send photos and information of how the financial aid has helped you, and grant permission to publicize these materials to the FVMA and its affiliates.

Deadline
Completed applications (with all applicable materials) must be received within one (1) year following a disaster.

YOU CAN HELP.... DONATE TODAY

We are now accepting donations for hurricane relief! If you are looking for ways to contribute, consider donating to the FVMA Foundation's Hurricane Helene Relief & Recovery Fund. Your generous donation will go a long way in supporting veterinary professionals and animals affected by the storm. The fund's contributions will help facilitate relief and recovery initiatives across Florida. Y our support can make a significant difference during this challenging time. **Donate Now**: http://bit.ly/4eJhr1t

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Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Helene

FFBF Hurricane Helene Relief Fund for Agriculture Now Open

Hurricane Helene significantly impacted Florida agriculture throughout Florida's Big Bend. To support relief efforts, the Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF) Hurricane Relief Fund for Agriculture is now open for donations and/or applications until December 6, 2024. The relief fund was created for those interested in contributing to farmers and ranchers in need. Donations can be made via check or online through the Hurricane Helene Relief Fund.

Funds can be mailed to:
Florida Farm Bureau Women's Fund
Memo: Hurricane Helene Relief Fund
P.O. Box 147030
Gainesville, FL 32614

Please make checks payable to: Florida Farm Bureau Women's Fund.

Photo credit: Florida National Guard

UF/IFAS Hurricane Helene Agricultural Damage and Loss Assessment

We need your input! The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) researchers are studying the agricultural losses and damages resulting from Hurricane Helene. Visit https://go.ufl.edu/heleneagimpacts to share information about impacts experienced at your farm, ranch, or aquaculture operation. Please read the flyer on the following page for additional details.

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Agricultural Losses and Damages from Hurricane Helene

The purpose of this research study is to rapidly estimate the agricultural impacts resulting from Hurricane Helene in the state of Florida. Survey results will be combined with a detailed baseline database on agricultural assets in Florida to estimate and communicate production losses in support of informed local, state, and federal decision-making processes related to disaster declaration, response, and relief.

How do producers access the survey?

Use the web link or QR code at the bottom of this flyer or contact your local UF/IFAS Extension county office to report by phone, receive a paper copy, or request an in-person assessment, where available.

What does the survey ask for?

The disaster assessment survey requests the general location of the operation (county/ZIP code), commodity-specific details including total acreage, affected acreage, and estimated production losses. In addition, there is an option to supply additional information on infrastructural assets, stored products, or stored agricultural inputs that might have been damaged or destroyed. Respondents are also able to share additional experiences and photos, if they desire.

How does this effort benefit producers and the agricultural industry in Florida?

This assessment supports informed decision-making at the local, state, and federal levels related to disaster declaration, response, and recovery. More specifically, survey responses and subsequent analyses provide data and insights to industry associations, government agencies, policy makers, and emergency management personnel.

Other agencies and organizations collect this kind of information. Should producers still complete the UF/IFAS survey along with the others?

Yes. Several agencies and organizations collect much of the same information, but each is using it for a different purpose. The different agencies and organizations often do share insights from the data they are collecting to support the various efforts related to disaster declaration, response, and relief. These efforts are seen as complementary.

See go.ufl.edu/damage-assessment-faqs for more FAQs.

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

go.ufl.edu/heleneagimpacts

Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Helene

Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson Launches Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program for Florida Farmers Impacted by Hurricane Helene

On September 29th, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson announced that Florida farmers, ranchers, and growers impacted by Hurricane Helene can now apply for interest-free loans through the Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program. Loans can be used by eligible agriculture and aquaculture producers to restore, repair, or replace essential physical property — including fences, equipment, greenhouses, and other buildings — or to remove vegetative debris.

"Providing immediate support to Florida's agricultural producers in the aftermath of a natural disaster, especially in a region that's still recovering from Idalia and Debby, is essential to safeguarding our food supply and our state and nation's food security," said Commissioner Wilton Simpson. "Through the state funded and administered Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program, we're providing an immediate and efficient gap financing until additional federal resources are available to impacted producers, and we're ensuring that Florida's agriculture community continues to thrive."

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Impacted producers are encouraged to take photos of any property damage sustained from Hurricane Helene and to save all receipts for recovery efforts and supplies. Specific details on the application process are available on the program's webpage.

Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Natural Disaster Recovery Loan Program

- Interest-free loans up to $500,000 for eligible agriculture and aquaculture producers that have experienced damage or destruction from Hurricane Helene.
- Loans may be used to restore, repair, or replace essential physical property, including fences, equipment, greenhouses, and other buildings, or to remove vegetative debris.
- Interested producers can learn more or apply here.

Producers that were previously awarded funds for damages sustained from Hurricane Debby may be eligible to apply for damage sustained from this disaster. An applicant may not receive more than one loan per storm, more than two loans per year, or more than five loans in any three-year period.

During a special legislative session in November of 2023, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1-C, which provided $75 million to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for a revolving loan fund to support impacted agriculture and aquaculture producers recover from natural disasters.

Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Milton

Photo: Satellite image of Hurricane Milton pre-landfall. (NOAA)

Before landfall, a herculean effort was made to secure homes, producer facilities, and animals within the impact area. Across central Florida, State Agriculture Response Team (SART) Partners and Emergency Support Function 17 (ESF 17) personnel went into action to evacuate animal shelters in nearly every endangered county and set up livestock shelter points. Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) units were deployed throughout the peninsula and northern Florida to augment pet-friendly shelters, and establish other small animal shelters in safer areas. After Milton had passed, the real work began and continues as the impacted areas move into the recovery phase.

Animal Search and Rescue teams were deployed to the most impacted areas and conducted animal water rescues. The Florida Cattleman's Association went back into action with repairing fences, providing fencing materials to meet public safety needs, and continued "cut and toss" operations to help producers gain access to their facilities. Other SART Partners like the Humane Society of the United States, Florida State Animal Response Coalition, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals all stepped up to help secure truck load after truck load of critical animal supplies. These supplies ranged from pet crates, dog food, cat food/litter, pharmaceuticals, hay, and other feed for large animals.

Photo credit: Dr. George Fernandez (FDACS), Florida Cattlemen's Association arriving to the donation staging area with hay and fencing supplies.

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Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Milton

Photo credit: Meghan Garcia (FDACS), livestock supplies (all stock feed and hay) delivered to the donation staging area from HSUS.

Like a marathon, recovery from a hurricane is a long arduous event. Add back-to-back hurricanes to the equation and the recovery time significantly increases. The immediate problems of restoring power cede to longer term problems like mosquito control. Fortunately, SART Partners and ESF-17 personnel are still hard at work contributing to the recovery effort. While these efforts are still ongoing, we here at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and ESF-17, are incredibly grateful for our SART Partners and their amazing efforts to get Floridians on the road to recovery.

Photo credit: Meghan Garcia (FDACS), Florida Cattlemen's Association staff and FDACS staff coordinating and organizing livestock supply donations at the donation staging area.

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Special Edition: SART Response to Hurricane Milton

Florida State Animal Response Coalition Update
Story by Andy Bass, Logistics and Volunteer Support

It's been an active few weeks for the Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) as we supported sheltering efforts across the state. More than 30 volunteers from SARC, Best Friends, IFAW, RedRover as well as other state and local rescue groups assisted with a Special Needs shelter in Pasco County and a Pet-friendly shelter in Columbia County, which was assigned as a mission request from ESF-17.

Currently these volunteers are providing ongoing support at the Temporary Emergency Shelter at Alaqua Animal Refuge in Walton County for Shelter pets evacuated by air and land from the impacted counties. Daily care and feeding continues for approximately 60 dogs. Shelter to shelter transports are being coordinated with partners both in and out of state to move these dogs in adoption programs. Wings of Rescue has already completed an Outbound Airlift of 30 dogs and cats from our group and others from the Alaqua shelter to a North Texas shelter for adoption.

SARC has also helped to coordinate food and supply deliveries to PODs to support relief efforts of those in need.

Photo credit: Florida SARC

Please visit us at https://flsarc.org to learn more on what we do, how you can help and how SARC can help your agency when disaster strikes. Because the ENTIRE family matters!

Agricultural Losses and Damages from Hurricane Milton

The purpose of this research study is to rapidly estimate the agricultural impacts resulting from Hurricane Milton in the state of Florida. Survey results will be combined with a detailed baseline database on agricultural assets in Florida to estimate and communicate production losses in support of informed local, state, and federal decision-making processes related to disaster declaration, response, and relief.

How do producers access the survey?

Use the web link or QR code at the bottom of this flyer or contact your local UF/IFAS Extension county office to report by phone, receive a paper copy, or request an in-person assessment, where available.

What if my operation was also impacted by Hurricane Debby and/or Hurricane Helene?

If your operation was previously impacted by Hurricane Debby and/or Hurricane Helene and is also impacted by Hurricane Milton, please be sure to that your responses reflect the operation's baseline characteristics after the previous storm and just before Hurricane Milton and report losses and damages specific to Hurricane Milton. Agricultural impacts of Hurricane Debby can be reported at **go.ufl.edu/debbyagimpacts** and agricultural impacts of Hurricane Helene can be reported at **go.ufl.edu/heleneagimpacts**.

What does the survey ask for?

The disaster assessment survey requests the general location of the operation (county/ZIP code), commodity-specific details including total acreage, affected acreage, and estimated production losses. In addition, there is an option to supply additional information on infrastructural assets, stored products, or stored agricultural inputs that might have been damaged or destroyed. Respondents are also able to share additional experiences and photos, if they desire.

How does this effort benefit producers and the agricultural industry in Florida?

This assessment supports informed decision-making at the local, state, and federal levels related to disaster declaration, response, and recovery. More specifically, survey responses and subsequent analyses provide data and insights to industry associations, government agencies, policy makers, and emergency management personnel.

Other agencies and organizations collect this kind of information. Should producers still complete the UF/IFAS survey along with the others?

Yes. Several agencies and organizations collect much of the same information, but each is using it for a different purpose. The different agencies and organizations often do share insights from the data they are collecting to support the various efforts related to disaster declaration, response, and relief. These efforts are seen as complementary.

See go.ufl.edu/damage-assessment-faqs for more FAQs.

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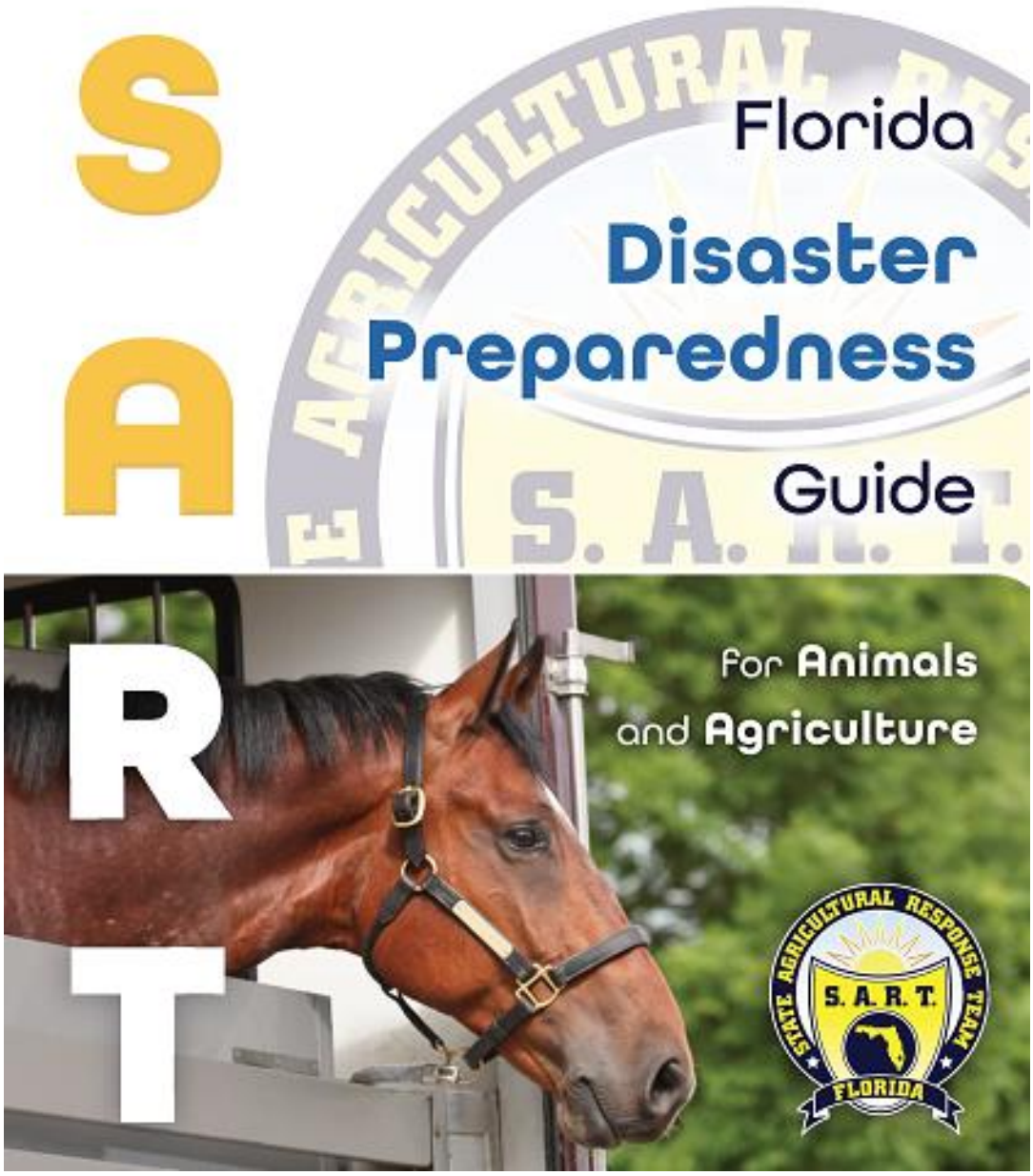
go.ufl.edu/miltonagimpacts

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



Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!

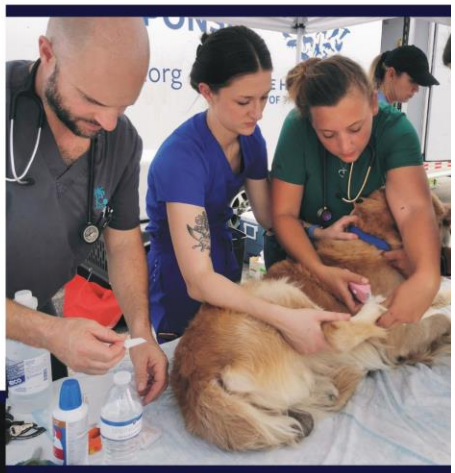
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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

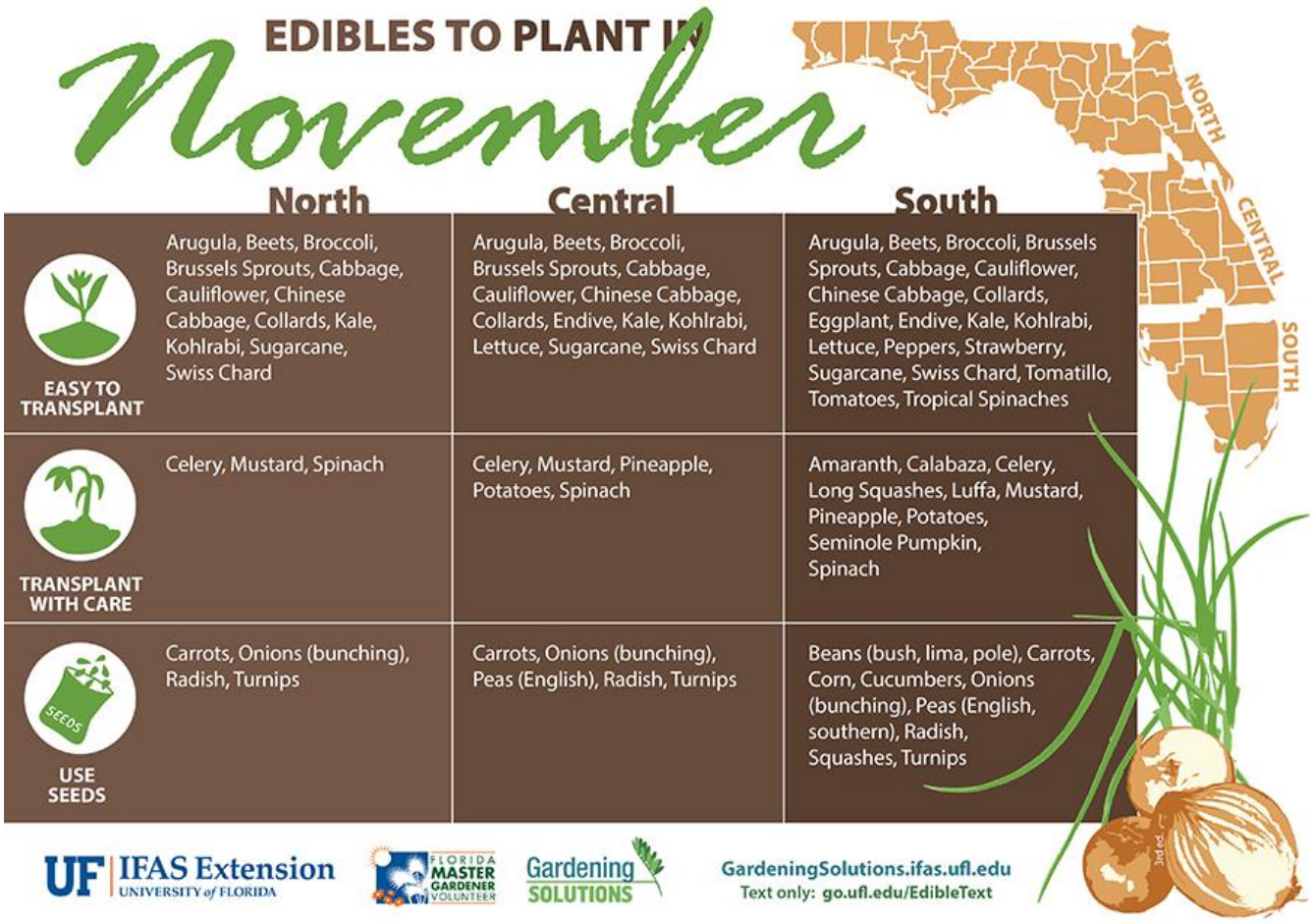
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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 September - 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) continues a heavy summer courseload for communities throughout the state of Florida, offering our Level 1 and Level 2 Awareness and Operations courses for individuals wanting to learn more about temporary and emergency sheltering operations, AND to become FL SARC disaster responders! These courses are crucial to local and statewide sheltering support when disasters and emergencies strike. To date we've completed 23 classes this year, with over 200 students successfully graduating.

To become a SARC responder, you must have completed at least Level 1 Awareness, completed ICS 100, and have a current tetanus vaccination. To learn more about current course offerings and becoming a disaster responder, go to www.flsarc.org/training and www.flsarc.org/volunteers

More classes will be scheduled into summer 2025, so stay tuned!

SART Partners Meeting

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

- Monthly Virtual Meeting – November 20th, at 10:00 a.m.

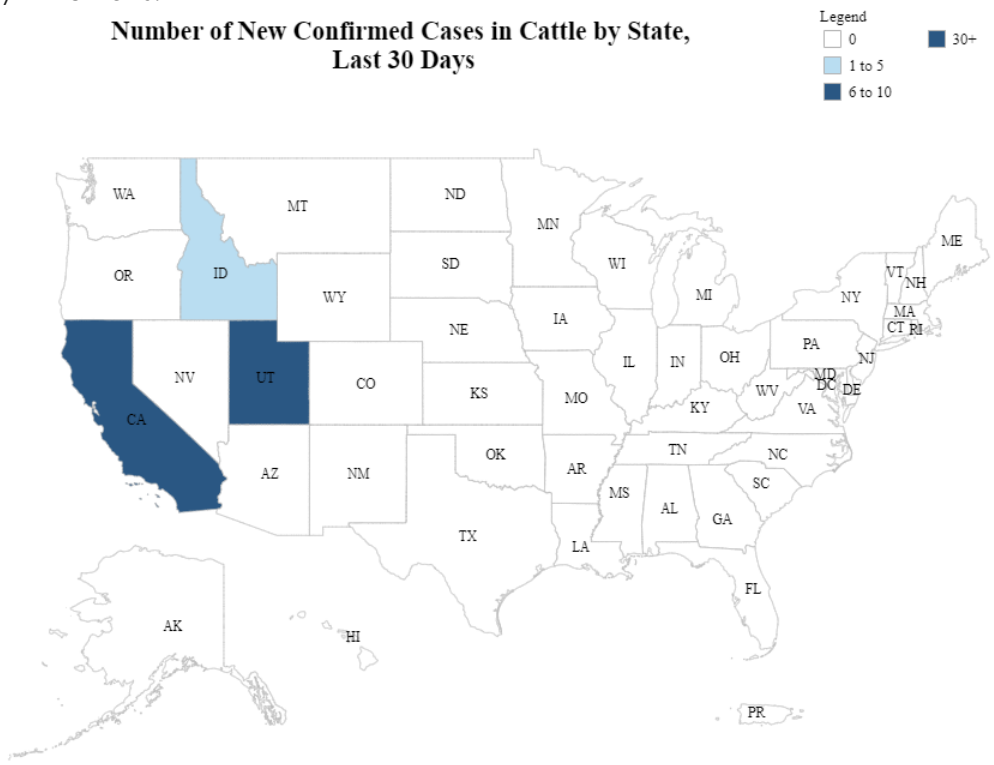
In the News…

- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Announces Approval of First Loan for Hurricane Helene Impacted Florida Farmer (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Launches Loan Program for Florida Farmers Impacted by Hurricane Milton (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Urges USDA to Issue Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Milton Agricultural Damage (FDACS)
- 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.



Source: USDA APHIS

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.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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.

Ready Business Hurricane Toolkit

Why Should Organizations Care About Hurricane Risk?
Significant portions of the United States are at risk for the effects of tropical storms and hurricanes. It is important that organizations throughout the country, including associations, businesses, and community groups, understand the risks and potential impacts and prepare accordingly.

The *Ready Business Program* for Hurricane and the Preparedness and Mitigation Project Plan allow users to take action to protect employees, protect customers, and help ensure business continuity.

Organizations can achieve six levels for recognition through the Ready Business Program. The levels include **STAFF, SURROUNDINGS, SPACE, SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE,** and **SERVICE.** The first five levels can be achieved either independently or as a group. The **SERVICE** level is achieved by completing requirements **for STAFF, SURROUNDINGS, SPACE, SYSTEMS**, and **STRUCTURE** levels in addition to the **SERVICE** requirements

Benefits

Peace of mind that your organization is prepared not only for hurricanes, but for other business interruptions and natural disasters.

Ready Business **window cling** to announce to your customers or clients and employees that you have taken steps to prepare your STAFF, SURROUNDINGS, SPACE, SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE, and are prepared to be of SERVICE after an event.

Ready Business **recognition certificate.**

Ready Business **web badge** to display on your organization's website.

Organization listing on Ready Business website.

Sample **news release** to recognize and acknowledge your organization's participation in the ***Ready Business Program.***

Gain tips for **media placement.**

Inspire others to take steps to improve community resiliency.

For more information, please visit:
https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/79714/file/Hurricane_Ready_Business_Toolkit_Interactive_Final_508.pdf

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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