The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

The Sentinel reviews important work and accomplishments achieved in 2024.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Federal Assistance to Help Farmers, Foresters, and Communities Impacted by Hurricane Helene*
- *Hurricane Helene Preliminary Damage Report*
- *Food Safety and Food Defense Report*

"Our job is to try to keep farms viable and operational, to help rural communities remain resilient, and at the end of the day to get as much help as quickly as possible to as many people as possible."

— Tom Vilsack
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
Read more on Page 8.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review

Thanks to our many State Agricultural Response Team (SART) Partners, 2024 was a marked success in terms of training, equipping, coordination, and response. Below are some of the highlights we've reported on this past year.

Q1: January – March

Horse Rescue in Pasco County
After a recent Animal Technical Rescue (ATR) training, Pasco County first responders received a call that a local horse had become stuck in a mud put and was unable to get himself out.

Finding the horse down in the mud, the team was able to move the horse to a more stable location via the recue glide, then used the a-frame to encourage the horse to stand. Once the horse was warmed and rested, he was able to stand on his own. Pasco County first responders did a great job working together to rescue this horse from the dangerous situation he was in!
(January 2024)

Continued, next page.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

Celebrating Florida Agriculture at the State Capitol: Florida Farm Bureau Day Holds the *Taste of Florida Agriculture* Evening Reception

On January 16, 2024, the Florida Capitol hosted the Annual Florida Farm Bureau Day and Taste of Florida Agriculture event. Agricultural producers of all commodities from across the state joined for a full day of meeting with public officials, food, and music. FDACS also sported booths and tables showing off the hard work from almost every division.
(February 2024)

K9 Handler First Responder Training Sponsored By SART

On February 9- 10, a variety of K9 handlers from multiple jurisdictions including local, state, and federal law enforcement and regulatory agencies participated in the fifth offering of the K9 First Responder and Tactical Combat Casualty Care Training in-person training at Camp Blanding. Topics covered in this training ranged from safe K9 handling and comprehensive vital assessments to treating the most common emergencies such as heat stroke and bloat/Gastric Dilation-Volvulus (GDV), along with tactical injuries such as gunshot wounds. Select handlers were able to bring their K9 partner to participate in the hands-on training and mock emergency scenarios. "Great balance of lecture and practical teaching with enthusiastic instruction," commented one participant.
(March 2024)

Continued, next page.

2024 Year-in-Review

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

Q2: April - June

Floridian Evacuations from Haiti – ESF 17 and Florida SART Assisting
As has been reported over the past few weeks, the crisis in Haiti has been at the forefront of the news cycles. Governments across the globe have been scrambling to evacuate their citizens from Haiti. This ongoing crisis has, unfortunately, had a direct impact on many Floridians with Haitian ties. With seemingly no end in sight, vast amounts of resources have been mobilized to help bring Americans, their families, and their pets back home.

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

County, state, and federal agencies will continue to monitor any incoming flights and provide aid to Floridians arriving from Haiti.
(April 2024)

Welcome to the ESF 17 SART Team, Josh Wells!
Hi, I'm Josh Wells, the newest Government Analyst I for the Division of Animal Industry and ESF 17. I am originally from North Carolina but have a fair amount of family here in Florida, so it's not a completely new scene for me. I have spent just over 20 years in the Army where my last 10 years or so were focused a lot on emergency management and disaster relief efforts. After I retired, I worked for Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Forest Fire Protection. I have also worked for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency where I was the State Training Officer. Academically speaking, I am currently working on a graduate certificate in Agriculture Defense and Bio Security from Penn State.
(April 2024)

Continued, next page.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

Florida SART and ESF 17 at the North Port Hurricane Expo

On Saturday, April 20th, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 specialist, Melody Belanger, was able to attend the 2024 North Port Hurricane Expo in Sarasota. This Expo is held annually to help bring awareness to the local population about how to prepare before a hurricane effectively.

With hurricane season approaching, it is a great time to start creating a hurricane preparation plan for your home. A wide variety of organizations attended the North Port Hurricane Expo to provide hurricane readiness information as well as information about how one could volunteer to aid in post-storm recovery.
(May 2024)

FDACS ESF 17 & SART Partner Host Inaugural Florida Veterinary Corps Training at the 2024 Annual FVMA Conference

LeiAnna Moorhead (Emergency Programs Manager, Emergency Coordinating Officer, FDACS) and Eric Black, Florida Forest Service held the Florida Veterinary Corps: Emergency Response Readiness and Exam Prep (FEMA IS-100/200/700/800) Training at this year's Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) Conference. The FVMA is a SART partner and cooperating organization for the Florida Veterinary Corps and its premiere annual conference brings in veterinarians and veterinary technicians from all around the state; it was the perfect forum to hold this inaugural training for the Florida Veterinary Corps.

Photo (left to right): Eric Black, FDACS Florida Forest Service, Dr. Terry Clekis, FVMA, LeiAnna Moorhead, FDACS, and Dr. Lawrence Garcia, UF VETS Team, at the Florida Veterinary Corps information booth.
(June 2024)

Continued, next page.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

Governor's Hurricane Conference 2024: From Forecast to Action

Pictured above: LeiAnna Moorhead (FDACS), Deborah Tannenbaum (USDA), Erin Jones (UF/IFAS), and David Outerbridge (UF/IFAS).

Emergency managers, staff, and private industry from across the State of Florida came together for the annual Governor's Hurricane Conference in West Palm Beach, Florida. Spending the days of May 12 – 17, 2024, in vital trainings and workshops that will better prepare emergency staff for response and recovery after a hurricane makes landfall. The 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season is predicted to be one of the most active in a very long time, and this conference only makes the emergency staff feel more prepared for such a busy season.

Some of the topics that were addressed in hurricane preparedness included Tropical Meteorology, Local Volunteers and Donations, Best Emergency Practices for Livestock, Identifying Recovery Resources for Florida's Agricultural Communities, and Geographic Information System (GIS) in Disaster Management: From Prevention Through Recovery. SART Partners and leadership from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the University of Florida Cooperative Extension (UF/IFAS), provided timely information about recovery efforts and resources for the agricultural community. Our very own LeiAnna Moorhead (Emergency Programs Manager, Emergency Coordinating Officer, FDACS) served on the panel for this workshop session, providing vital information to county emergency managers for response and recovery resources for animals and agriculture.
(June 2024)

Pictured above: Dr. Angie Lindsey (UF/IFAS) viewing Marion County's Mobile Command Unit.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

SART Partners Discuss Farmer Recovery Center with FEMA Administrator
Dr. Christa Court and Dr. Angie Lindsey represented the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension at a meeting with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Deanne Criswell.

The meeting took place in April on the topic of the Farmer Recovery Center that was set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) following Hurricane Idalia. At the Farmers Recovery Center, agricultural landowners could learn about disaster assistance programs available for farmers and meet with representatives from USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Rural Development, and U.S. Small Business Administration. Other SART Partners in attendance included Deborah Tannenbaum with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).
(June 2024)

Q3: July – September

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.

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.
(July 2024)

Continued, next page.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

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?

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

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.
(August 2024)

SART Responds to Hurricane Debby

On August 2nd the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated to a level 2 as they gathered more information on the storm developing in the Caribbean that would later be called Hurricane Debby. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) began to prepare Floridians and stage equipment in strategic areas of Florida to have the most effective response to the storm. As shelters and residents prepared for the impact on North Florida, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 and the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) monitored the storm as it developed into a Category 1 hurricane. Hurricane Debby made landfall on August 5th in Steinhatchee, Florida at approximately 7:30 am as a Category 1 hurricane and followed a close path as Hurricane Idalia in 2023. Taylor and Dixie Counties were the first to be impacted by the storm by the way of storm surge and wind damage.

Madison, Suwannee, Layfette, and Hamilton Counties were second to be impacted with 12 plus inches of rainfall causing major flooding in surrounding rivers. This flooding affected pasture lands, personal property, roadways, shelters, and animal and agricultural infrastructure. Animal shelters were also affected by the flooding in Taylor, Suwannee, Sarasota, Manatee, and Hamilton Counties.
(September 2024)

Continued, next page.

Florida SART: 2024 Year-in-Review (continued)

Q4: October – December

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. (November 2024)

SART Response to Hurricane Milton

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. (November 2024)

Federal Assistance to Help Farmers, Foresters, and Communities Impacted by Hurricane Helene

This past October the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) added more flexibilities to the Disaster Assistance Programs to better serve the agricultural communities in the Big Bend Area of Florida impacted by Hurricane Helene. These programs are focused on getting agriculture producers from a wide variety of commodity production to get back on their feet. The USDA has deployed over 190 staff members to assess the assistance needs and provide the necessary feedback for any additional flexibilities to be added to the preexisting programs. Here are some of the Flexibilities for Disaster Assistance Programs:

- Extended sign-up beginning Oct. 15, 2024, and ending June 1, 2025, in states impacted by Hurricane Helene,
- Executed Emergency Response (ER-850) to expedite FSA approval of surface debris removal, fence restoration, and non-ground disturbing activities.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said, "At USDA, our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families and farmers who have been impacted by this storm, our job is to try to keep farms viable and operational, to help rural communities remain resilient, and at the end of the day to get as much help as quickly as possible to as many people as possible." This statement by the agricultural secretary shows how important these federal assistance programs for hurricane relief are not only to those farmers impacted but to the USDA. Florida Farmers often rely on these Disaster Assistance Programs to recover from the devastating storms and get back to putting food on our tables.

- Livestock Indemnity Program
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program
- Tree Assistance Program
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Program
- Marketing Assistance Loans

For more information about the various programs USDA offers after a disaster event be sure to check out www.farmers.gov. If you or someone you know is unsure if any USDA programs apply to them, please take a quick look at the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. For any additional questions or concerns about these programs please contact your local county FSA office.

Read more at: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-events/news/10-04-2024/usda-offers-resources-adds-flexibilities-disaster-assistance-programs-1

Hurricane Helene Preliminary Damage Report

The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Economic Impact Analysis Program (EAIP) has recently released their initial assessment of the damages sustained from Hurricane Helene. Unfortunately, because this year's hurricane season was so active, the numbers were delayed. Truly separating damage from one hurricane to another is a formidable task. Since 2016, UF/IFAS has been refining their collection methodology to get as accurate of an assessment as possible. This year the information was collected directly from the commodity producers and in some cases government agencies. Because the loses will be realized in a different ways and times, information will continue to be collected throughout the 2024-2025 marketing season.

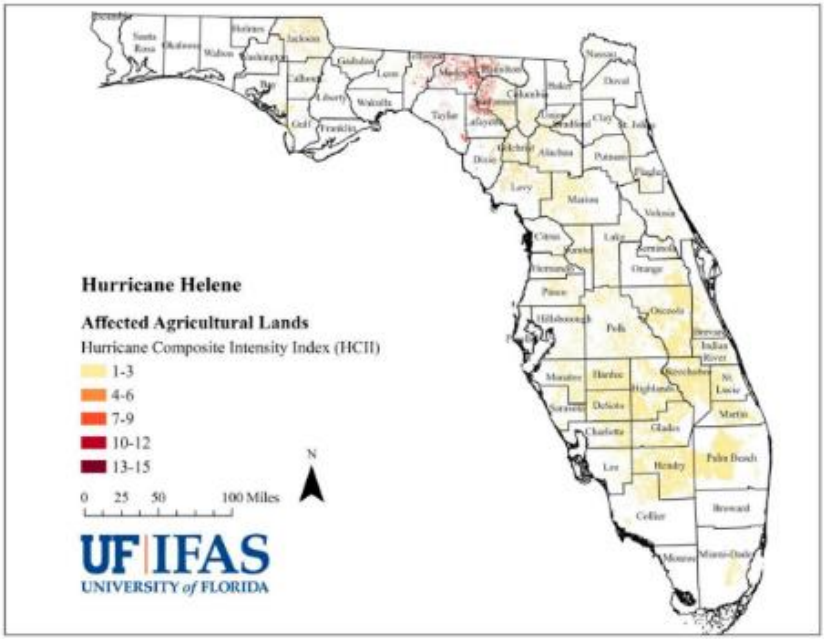

Image: *Hurricane Composite Intensity Index (HCII) level of impacted agricultural lands in Florida for Hurricane Helene*. (FDACS)

Based on the preliminary numbers, over six million acres were impacted by Helene. Grazing land appears to have taken the hardest hit followed by field and row crops, animals and animal products, and vegetables, melons, and potatoes. Additionally, production losses are estimated between $40.3 million and $162.2 million. The report by UF/IFAS offers a thorough breakdown for the impacted areas as well as a convenient one-page summary. If you would like to view the nitty gritty details, you can access the full report with the link below. As always, we would like to extend our gratitude to our many SART Partners who helped get our state through this very busy hurricane season and on the road to recovery.

Commodity Group	Hurricane Composite Intensity Index (HCII)					Total
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	
Animals and Animal Products[1]	4,132,315	51,871	128,704	9,124	1,035	**4,323,048**
Field and Row Crops[2]	1,022,006	37,954	102,222	6,161	571	**1,168,914**
Citrus[3]	274,705	-	-	-	-	**274,705**
Vegetables, Melons, and Potatoes	195,243	887	7,208	637	199	**204,174**
Greenhouse/Nursery	78,413	1,032	1,771	84	2	**81,302**
Fruit and Tree Nuts[4]	16,221	664	1,745	315	95	**19,040**
Total	**5,718,902**	**92,407**	**241,650**	**16,322**	**1,901**	**6,071,183**

Court, C. D. *Assessment Of Agricultural Losses Resulting From Hurricane Helene*. UF/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program, Food and Resource Economics Department, University of Florida.
Hurricane Helene Damage Assessments - Food and Resource Economics Department - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences - UF/IFAS

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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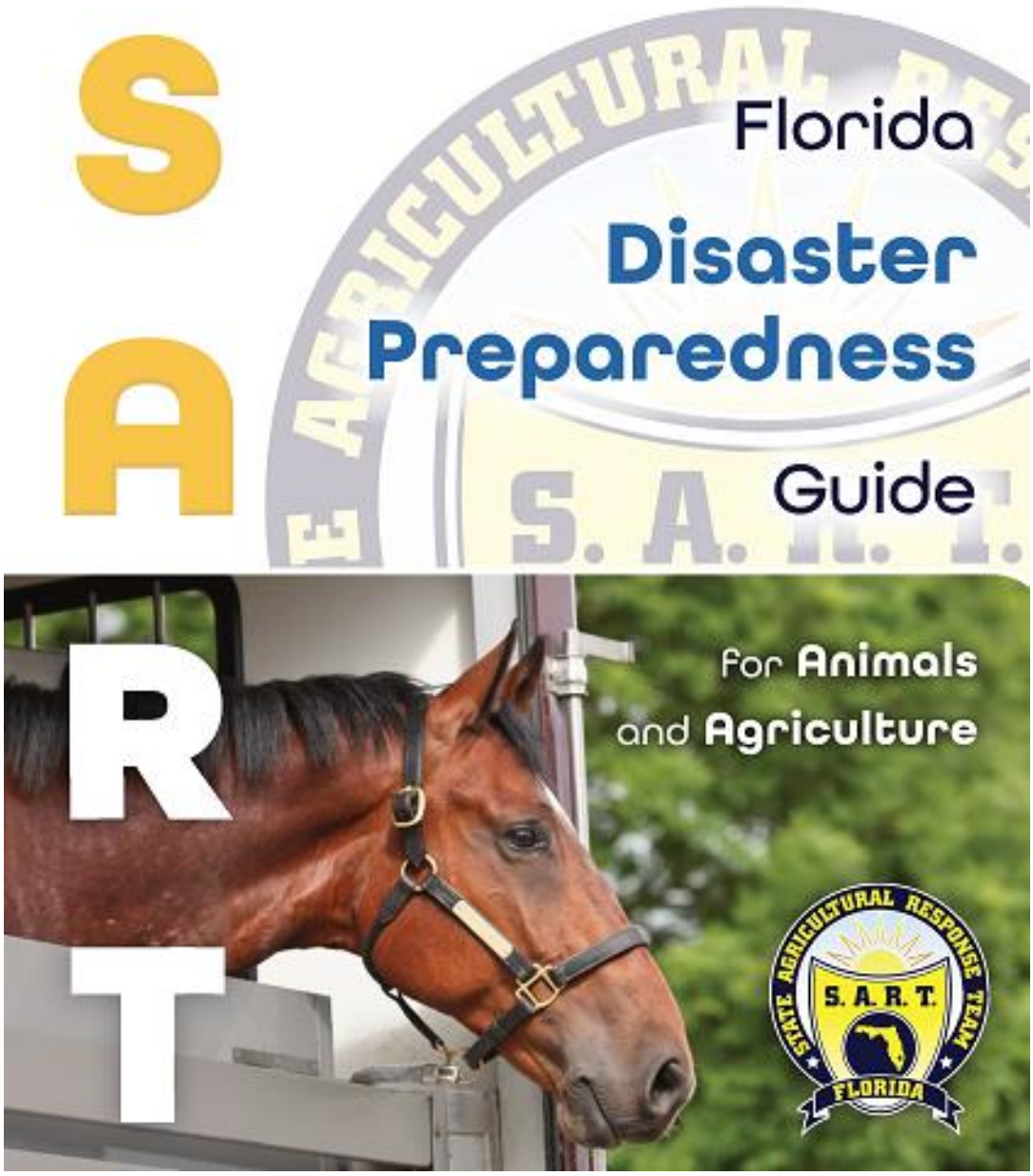
go.ufl.edu/miltonagimpacts

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!

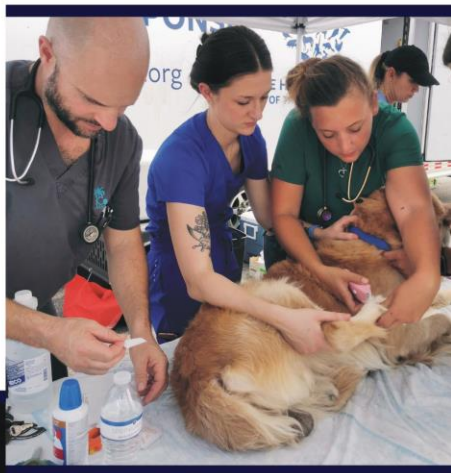
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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 December - 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 – December 18th, at 10:30 a.m.

In the News…

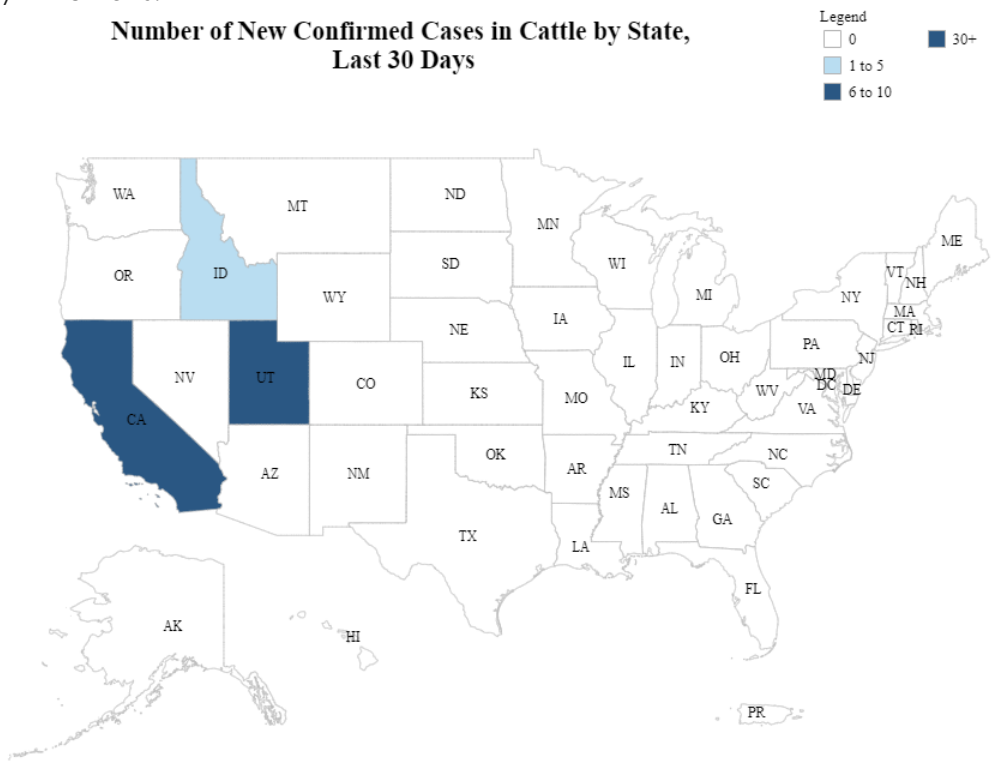
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Warns of Increased Fire Danger in Florida Due to Hurricane Debris, Dry Weather (FDACS)

- 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.

Laura Bevan

Humane Society of the United States

"I was blown away by the depth of the information provided in this training. It held my attention and the videos from around the state gave real life experience to the subject."

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.

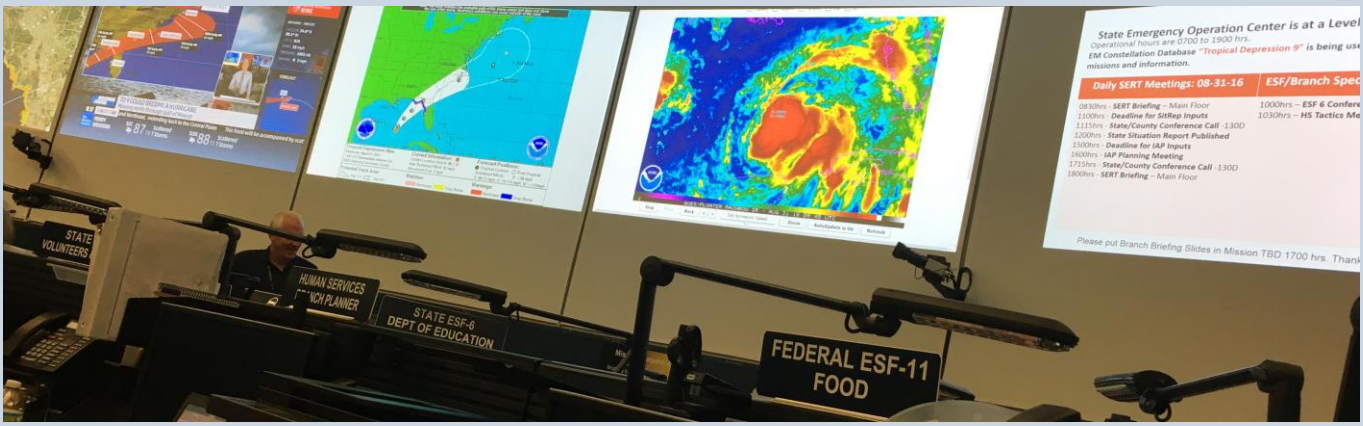
Click here for the FDACS Announcement on ASF.

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.

Hurricane Helene and Milton Food Safety Response Efforts



In late September, FDACS Division of Food Safety mobilized to respond to what became Hurricane Helene. On September 23rd, a core team began preparations for full scale activation post landfall. By September 27th full activation commenced, and food safety response teams were briefed on protocols for assessing potentially impacted food establishments. Food Safety response teams had 14,327 potentially impacted retail food establishments and 1,296 potentially impacted manufacturing establishments.

Food safety teams worked diligently to assess potentially impacted food establishments and were about to transition to in person follow ups when Hurricane Milton came along. Planning had already been underway, so post landfall food safety teams were briefed on the new list of 33,039 potentially impacted retail establishments and 3,144 potentially impacted manufacturing establishments. Meanwhile our Bureau of Dairy Industry remained in contact with the dairy farms and processors in path of both storms. Dairy Industry served as a vital link of communication with the team at the State Emergency Operations Center to secure generators, monitor flooding situations and flag critical infrastructure for power restoration priority.

By October 18th all 36,183 establishments had been assessed and the teams transitioned to in person follow ups which were completed by the end of the month for each storm. The Division of Food Safety continues to work on optimizations, which improve response efforts each activation.

Food Storage Essentials

- Plan on enough storage space in the refrigerator and freezer. In the refrigerator, air needs to circulate to keep the temperature at 40°F or below. Keep your freezer at 0°F or below.

- Monitor your refrigerator and freezer temperatures with thermometers. Place one in your refrigerator and one in your freezer in easy-to-read locations and check the temperature regularly—at least once a week.

- Refrigerate meat, poultry, seafood, eggs and other perishables as soon as you get home from the store.

- Stick to the "two-hour rule." Remember to not allow foods needing refrigeration to sit out longer than two hours—one hour if the temperature is above 90°F. This includes leftovers, "doggie bags," and take out foods.

- Check food storage directions listed on food labels. If something hasn't been properly refrigerated, it is usually best to throw it out.

- After cooking, divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.

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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