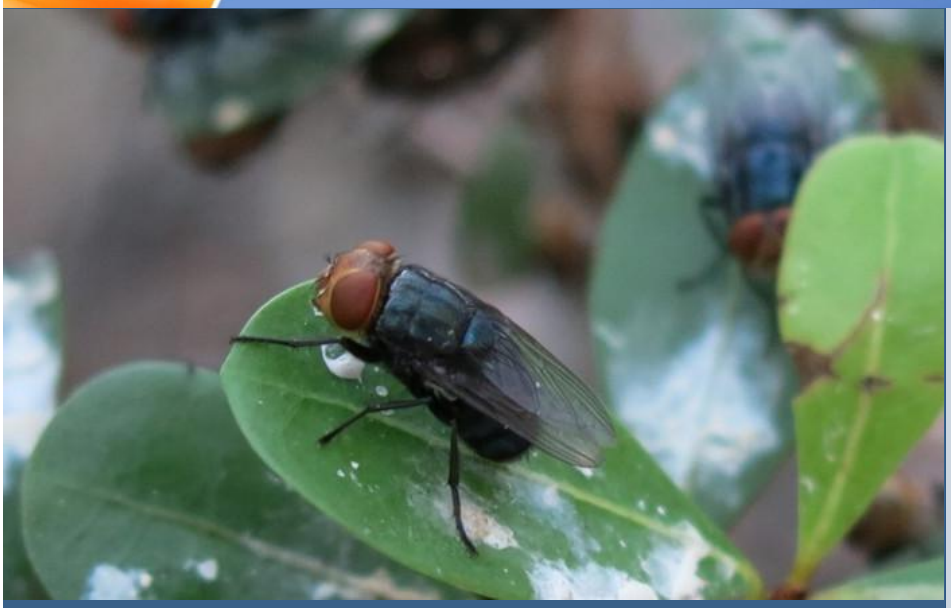
The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team



NWS is one of the animal diseases that effects the deer populations.

New World Screwworm Inching Toward the U.S.

Keeping a close eye on high consequence animal diseases is one of the ongoing efforts for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 personnel. New World Screwworm (NWS) is a foreign animal disease that infects living animals by laying fly larvae (maggots) into the flesh of an open wound on the animal and causing NWS myiasis, which often leads to death of the infected animal.

Florida originally experienced NWS in the Florida Keys with the local key deer being affected, but eventually after diligent work by ESF-17 and FDACS, the key deer outbreak of NWS was eradicated due to the deer only residing on the key island and not able to spread the disease to the mainland deer. With strong surveillance and education about NWS Florida has been able to keep the disease out of both the captive and wild deer in the state. However, NWS has been spreading throughout the southern and central American countries threating reintroduction into the United States and specifically southern states.

ESF-17 and FDACS in partnership with FL SART is working to prepare for possible reintroduction of NWS into the state. Per the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) it is most important to report any suspicious wounds, maggots, or infestations to a local accredited veterinarian, your State Animal Health Official, or a USDA veterinarian so that correct testing and surveillance actions can be taken.

Continued, next page.

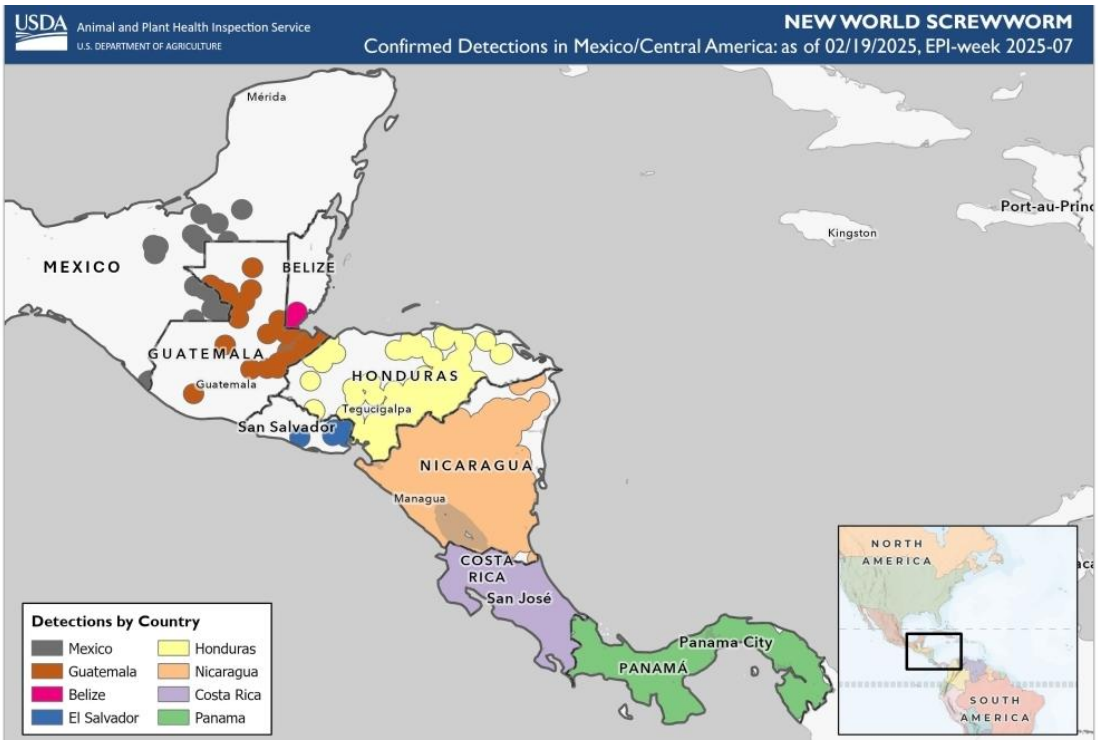
Special Features of this Issue:

- *LeiAnna Moorhead Presents at the FACA/FAPAA 2025 Educational Conference*
- *Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!*
- *4-Day Multi-Discipline ASAR Training*

"Animal control officers are instrumental in the rescue, transportation, sheltering, and care of animals during disaster; they, too, are a part of our public safety system."

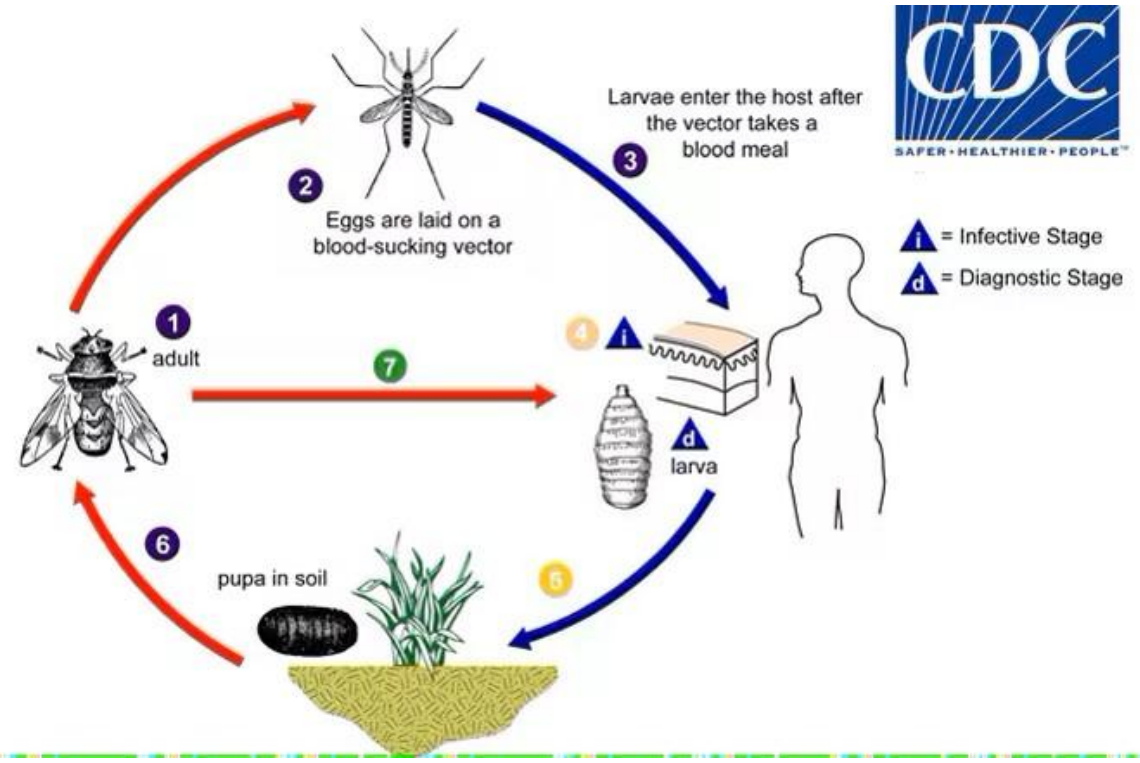
— LeiAnna Moorhead
Emergency Programs Manager
ECO for ESF 17 and FLSART
Division of Animal Industry, FDACS
Read more on Page 3.

New World Screwworm Inching Toward the U.S. (continued)



The potential impact of unreported NWS cases could cost millions of dollars from livestock losses, trade embargoes, and eradication work. Since this disease is also zoonotic many human and animal lives could be at stake if potential NWS cases are not reported and allowed to spread.

For more information about NWS and how you help prevent the spread of this disease please visit: New World Screwworm: What You need to Know



LeiAnna Tucker Presents at the FACA/FAPAA 2025 Educational Conference

At a recent conference session titled, **"Disaster Readiness, Everything You Need to Know,"** LeiAnna Moorhead, Emergency Coordinating Officer & Florida SART Administrator with FDACS, delivered an essential presentation on preparedness and response strategies for disasters. Joined by Kate MacFall, Florida State Director of The Humane Society of the United States, the session provided crucial guidance for shelters and emergency responders in handling crises effectively.

Moorhead emphasized that disaster preparedness starts long before an emergency arises. "Your ability to respond and recover is directly tied to the local partnerships you must develop during 'blue skies,'" she noted, underscoring the importance of pre-disaster planning. Moorhead also said that "Animal control officers are instrumental in the rescue, transportation, sheltering, and care of animals during disaster; they, too, are a part of our public safety system. This training session helped them understand where they fit in their jurisdiction's incident command system and how to build stronger local partnerships to augment their resource needs."

The discussion outlined key actions that organizations should take to ensure resilience and continuity in the face of natural disasters, particularly hurricanes, and included:

1. **Building Relationships with Emergency Support Functions (ESF) 17 Representatives** – Moorhead urged organizations to identify and establish connections with their county's ESF 17 representatives well in advance. This proactive approach ensures better coordination and access to emergency resources when needed.
2. **Networking with National Support Organizations** – Engaging with national animal welfare and disaster relief groups can provide shelters with crucial resources and assistance when local capacities are overwhelmed.
3. **Establishing Regional Collaboration** – Moorhead highlighted the importance of forming alliances with nearby shelters. Mutual aid agreements enable shelters to assist one another when one is affected by a disaster, ensuring continued animal care and operations.

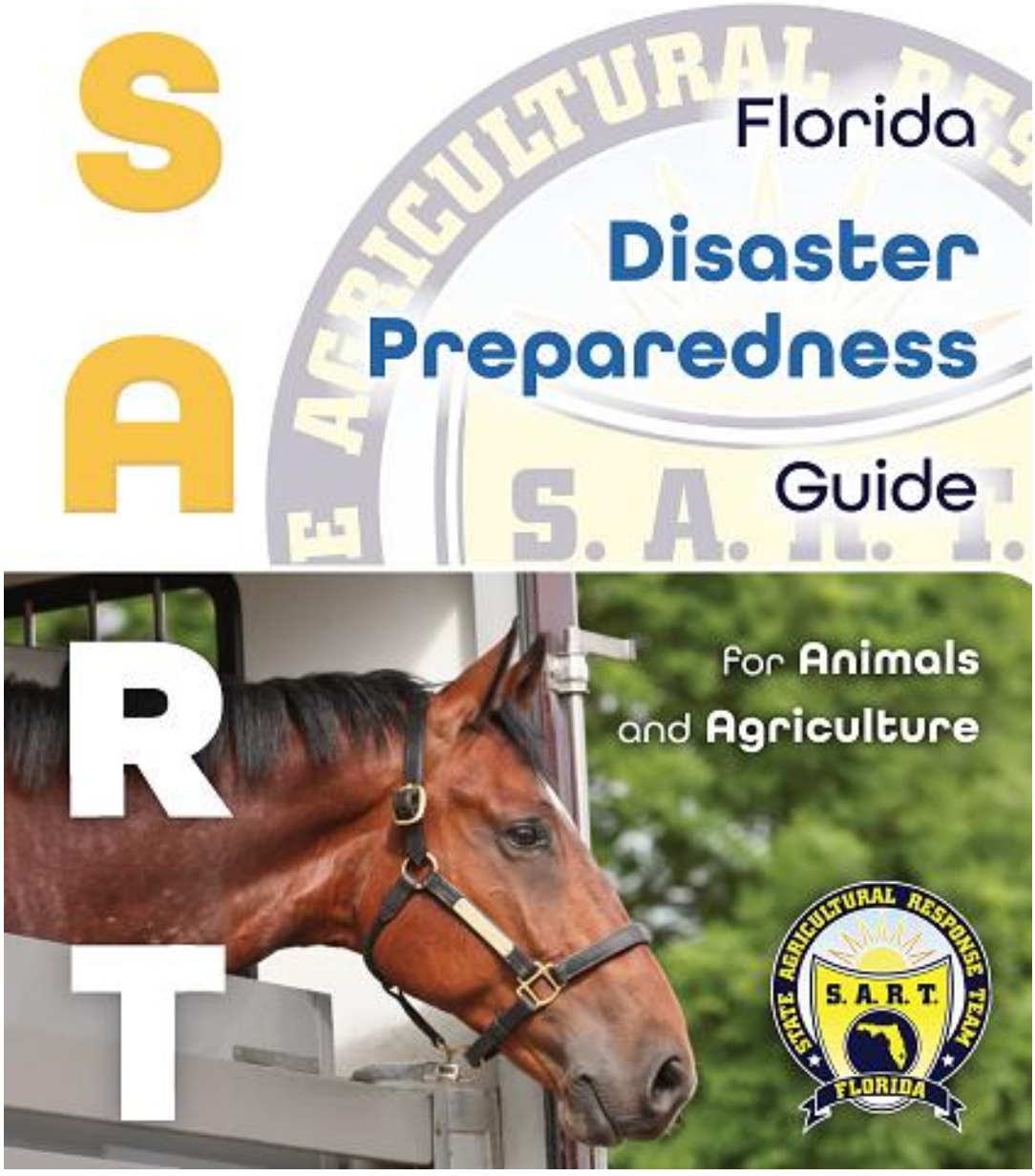
The session served as a vital reminder that preparedness is the foundation of effective disaster response. By fostering strong networks, developing solid response plans, and securing resource partnerships, shelters and emergency responders can significantly mitigate the impact of disasters and recover more swiftly.

Moorhead's expertise and actionable insights provided attendees with a clear roadmap to strengthen their disaster readiness strategies, ensuring both human and animal welfare remain a top priority in times of crisis.

The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture

The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture was developed by FDACS and Florida 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!

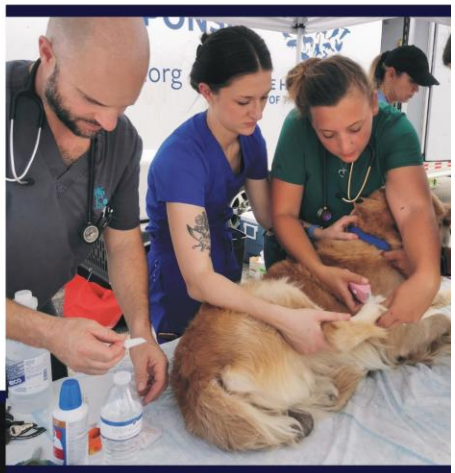
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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

Florida SART, FDACS, and University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) teamed up to create a training 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 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 March - 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
• March 22, 2025 • March 29, 2025	• TBD

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

4-Day Multi-Discipline ASAR Training

This unique 4-day training event covers three ASAR FEMA Resource Typed field disciplines at one location. Training days include Large Animal Rescue Operations (LARO), ASAR High Angle Ropes and Rigging, and ASAR Floodwater Boat Operations. Additional details may be found on the flyer, next page.

Registration: https://asartraining.com/event/pensacola-4-day-2025

SART Partners Meeting

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

- Monthly In-Person Meeting – March 26th, at 10:30 a.m. in Newberry, FL

In the News…

- U.S. will spend up to $1 billion to combat bird flu, USDA secretary says (NBC News)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Announces 2025 Florida Farm Bill (FDACS)
- New Report Reveals More Americans Got Sick, Died from Recalled Food in 2024 (Health.com)

4-Day Multi-discipline ASAR Training

May 13-16th, 2025

Large Animal Rescue Ops, ASAR High Angle Ropes, ASAR Floodwater Boating Ops

Escambia County Public Safety
6575 North W. Street, Pensacola, FL 32505

Course Topics

Hazard Identification
Scene Management
Large Animal Safety
A-Frame / Sling Use
Rolls / Pulls / Assists
Control / Containment
Basic Vitals & Field Triage
Low Angle Ropes/Knots
Mechanical Advantage System
High Angle Applications
Raise and Lower systems
Rappelling
Companion animal packaging/restraint
Floodwater Boating Operations
Self-Rescue, Team Rescue, Small Animal Rescue

Required PPE

Work/Water Gloves
Dress for Weather Appropriate Footwear
Safety Helmet
Class II seat harness or Class III full body harness
Class V PFD
Water Rescue Helmet
Drysuit/Wetsuit (optional)

This unique 4-day training event covers three ASAR FEMA Resource Typed field disciplines at one location. Training days include: Large Animal Rescue Operations (LARO), ASAR High Angle Ropes and Rigging, and ASAR Floodwater Boat Operations. Incidents that involve large animals require special considerations and training. LARO simulates those incidents by using scenario training with a life-size, weighted, articulated horse mannequins that allow training for virtually any LARO situation. We will build on the rope skills learned during the LARO to transition to ASAR High Angle ropes and rigging, focusing on skills needed to rescue companion animals in high angle rescue scenarios. Incidents that involve animals trapped in flood water present challenges and hazards that will be discussed during the ASAR Floodwater Boat Operations, small animal water rescue techniques will be the primary focus, with additional discussion about large animal issues and hazards in floodwater. Participants need to have the ability to swim in moving water conditions. Please note check-in starts at 7:30am on May 13th, 2025; and the event will happen rain or shine.

Registration:
https://asartraining.com/event/**pensacola-4-day-2025/**or scan the QR Code

Fee
$650 first time participants
$500 for recerts

Payment Methods Accepted
Credit / Debit card, PayPal, Agency Check

For directions, questions, or other area accommodations, contact:
Kevin Monfreda
kjmonfreda@myescambia.com
(850) 595-0091 Phone

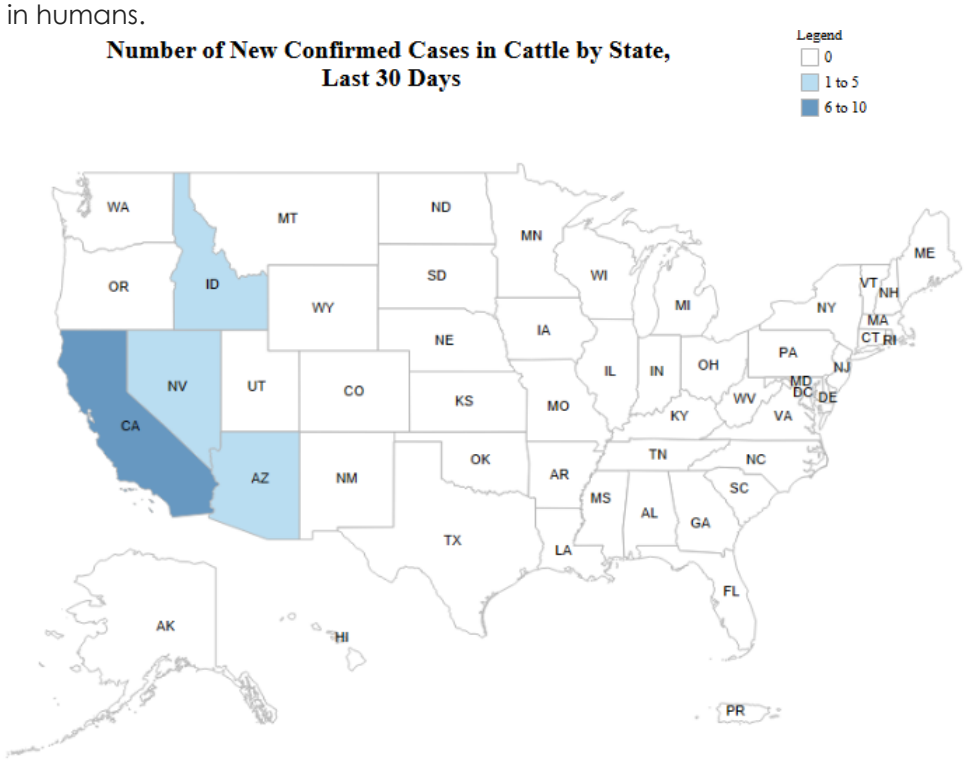
Payment due at time of registration. Refunds: 10+ days prior to class = 100%; 5-10 days prior to class = 50%; 0-5 days prior to class = no refund.

www.asartraining.com

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 2024, 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 gives 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.

Joan Radabaugh

Florida Association of Animal Welfare Organizations

"The training is comprehensive and easy to understand and reference. The videos demonstrate how planning successfully benefits both large and small communities."

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.

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.

FDA: Food Safety During Emergencies

In light of the increasing frequency of natural disasters, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued comprehensive guidelines to help consumers and industry stakeholders ensure food safety during emergencies. These guidelines are crucial for maintaining public health during events such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

Key Recommendations for Consumers

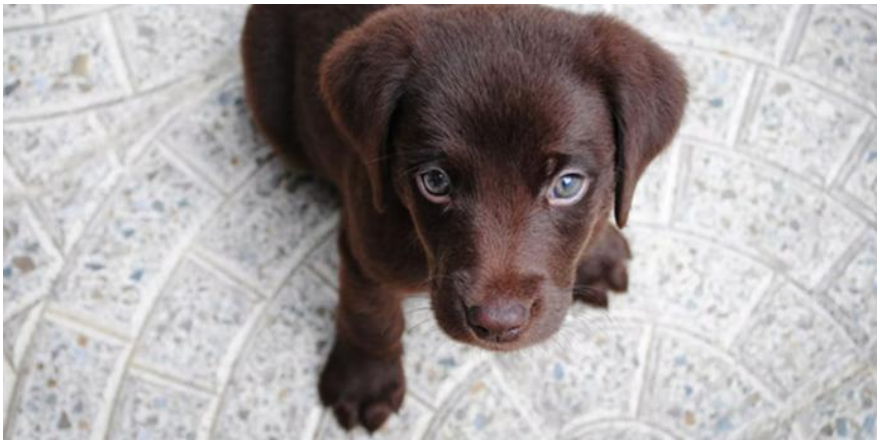
1. **Preparation Before Emergencies:**
    - **Stock Essential Supplies:** Keep unscented liquid household bleach available for water purification. Store a sufficient supply of non-perishable food, water, and medications on shelves positioned safely above potential flood levels.
2. **During and After Emergencies:**
    - **Assess Food Safety:** Discard any perishable foods that have been at temperatures above 40°F for more than two hours. Do not consume food that has come into contact with floodwaters, as it may be contaminated.
    - **Water Purification:** If there's a concern about water safety, boil it for at least one minute or disinfect it by adding eight drops of unscented liquid household bleach per gallon, then let it stand for 30 minutes before use.

Guidance for Industry Stakeholders

1. **Evaluating Crop Safety Post-Flooding:**
    - **Contamination Risks:** Floodwaters can carry hazardous substances. Crops exposed to such waters may be unsafe for consumption and require thorough evaluation.
2. **Operational Considerations:**
    - **Facility Assessment:** Food manufacturing plants and warehouses should inspect and sanitize equipment and surfaces that have been in contact with floodwaters before resuming operations.

These guidelines aim to minimize health risks associated with food and water consumption during emergencies. For detailed information and resources, visit the FDA's official page on food safety during emergencies.

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

FDEM Vector Control Quick Guide
https://flsart.org/pdf/Vector Control Quick Guide.pdf

Dairy Farm Emergency Information Sheet
https://flsart.org/resource/Dairy

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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