The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Don't delay… Register today for the 2025 SART Planning Conference!

Special Features of this Issue:

- *K9 Medic Training Recap*
- *FDACS ESF 17 & SART Partner Host Florida Veterinary Corps Training at the 2025 Annual FVMA Conference*
- *Florida EDEN Mental Health Awareness*

Register Now for the 2025 SART Planning Conference Starting on May 28th in St. Pete Beach

Don't delay, register now for the upcoming 2025 SART Planning Conference! The conference is by invite only to our county ESF 17 contacts and Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART) partner agencies.

Kicking off the afternoon of Tuesday, May 28th, in St. Pete Beach, Florida, the organizers say that "With new courses, workshops, and sessions, there will be plenty to learn and many opportunities for you to be a part of SART's future!"

The SART Planning Conference will take place at The Sirata Beach Resort. Registration is free and there will be limited hotel room sponsorships available for attendees. The conference will familiarize participants with disaster situations and provide background information on animal and agricultural-related emergency management issues.

Some workshop topics include:

- Animal Technical Rescue
- Small Animal Emergency Sheltering
- EOC/ICS Interface
- Animal All Hazards Awareness

Visit www.FLSART.org to register and read more about the hotel sponsorship and program overview. Complete details will be posted soon!

For any conference related questions, please contact Emily Nolen at Emily.Nolen@fdacs.gov or via phone at 850-756-1565.

"SART worked to bring an intense, hands-on training experience that focused on protecting and caring for canine first responders in the field."

— LeiAnna Moorhead
Emergency Programs Manager
ECO for ESF 17 and FLSART
Division of Animal Industry, FDACS

See K9 Medic Training Recap story on page 3.

WILL YOU BE READY WHEN THE NEXT DISASTER STRIKES?

Join us at the 2025 SART Planning Workshop

May 28-30, 2025
The Sirata Beach Resort · St. Pete Beach, FL

Meet with experts to get the resources you need and learn how to integrate animal care and agriculture into your disaster planning while enjoying this lovely resort.

STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM
S. A. R. T.
FLORIDA

Visit **flsart.org** for more information about registration and the new training opportunities at this event.

The SART Mission: Coordinating Disaster Response for Animals and Agriculture

K9 Medic Training Recap

On April 18-20, a variety of K9 handlers from multiple jurisdictions including local, state, and federal law enforcement and regulatory agencies participated in the sixth offering of the K9 First Responder and Tactical Emergency 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.

Sentiments provided by leadership regarding the past K9 First Responder Trainings: "By partnering with K9 MEDIC and the Florida National Guard, SART worked to bring an intense, hands-on training experience that focused on protecting and caring for canine first responders in the field, when a veterinarian or hospital isn't around. They're preparing themselves for all situations, whether a missing child, a massive hurricane, or even an act of terrorism they're called to assist with," said LeiAnna Moorhead, Florida SART Administrator, FDACS. "By providing better training the handler can feel confident in learning to apply these emergency medical skills for their K9 partner," said Emily Nolen, Florida SART coordinator.

(Continued on next page.)

K9 Medic Training Recap (continued)

"K-9 medical training is a skill rarely offered to handlers," said Sergeant Meyers, Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force. "Providing this course with life-saving, pre-veterinary competencies to handlers throughout the state of Florida helps the communities in which they serve by increasing handlers' abilities to recognize, intervene, and transport their K-9 so they can continue working for years to come."

The K9 First Responder and Tactical Emergency Casualty Care Training is sponsored by the Florida SART and in partnership with the Florida National Guard Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force, and K9 Medic. Camp Blanding is the host for this training because it is the primary military reservation and training base for the Florida National Guard with state-of-the-art training facilities.

10th Annual Florida Agricultural Policy Outlook Conference

The Annual Florida Agricultural Policy Outlook Conference examines critical policy issues facing Florida agribusiness leaders and explores valuable economic insight helpful for making informed business and policy decisions.

This year's Florida Agricultural Policy Outlook Conference will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at the Plant Science Research and Education Unit, 2556 W. Highway 318, Citra, FL 32113. We hope you will join us as we focus on federal and state policy issues impacting Florida agriculture, agribusinesses, and rural communities. Get the chance to hear from policymakers, key stakeholders, and expert researchers on topics such as specialty crops, the Farm Bill, Risk Management, Labor, and more.

For more info on our speakers and the full agenda, visit go.ufl.edu/FlAgPolicy2025

FDACS ESF 17 & SART Host Florida Veterinary Corps Training at the 2025 Annual FVMA Conference

Emily Nolen (ESF -17 and FL SART Coordinator, FDACS) and Eric Black, Florida Forest Service instructed 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. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting veterinarians and veterinary technicians to assist local and state emergency management officials in the event of any disaster involving animals and animal health. Volunteers may serve in veterinary assessment teams, triage or emergency animal treatment teams, and animal disease surveillance or control teams under an Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

Photo: The Florida Veterinary Corps information booth at the 2025 FVMA Annual Conference.

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FDACS ESF 17 & SART appreciate Dr. Clekis' and the FVMA's long-standing partnership and dedication to protecting animal health and safety during disasters!

Florida EDEN: Mental Health Matters

Disasters shake more than just the physical foundations of our lives—they can take a significant emotional toll as well. This according to the Florida Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). While the loss of property and disruption to daily life are often visible, the invisible impacts on mental health can be just as devastating. For Extension professionals, the responsibility of supporting communities through these events can bring added emotional strain, especially when navigating personal losses at the same time.

The educational materials below aim to equip you with practical strategies to strengthen personal resilience and better support those around you. Together, we can foster healthier, more prepared communities—emotionally and physically—before, during, and after disaster strikes.

Personal resilience plays a critical role in disaster response, especially for Extension professionals who serve on the front lines during crises like hurricanes. Resilience is the ability to reduce stress and adapt in challenging situations—anchored by three key attitudes: *challenge*, *commitment*, and *control*.

Research from UF/IFAS following Hurricane Irma showed that while many agents demonstrated strengths in learning and connecting with others, they also faced mental fatigue, stress, and unclear expectations—factors that impacted their ability to meet job demands.
This educational resource outlines practical strategies for building resilience, including:

- Clarifying disaster response roles
- Offering targeted training
- Promoting support services and peer connection

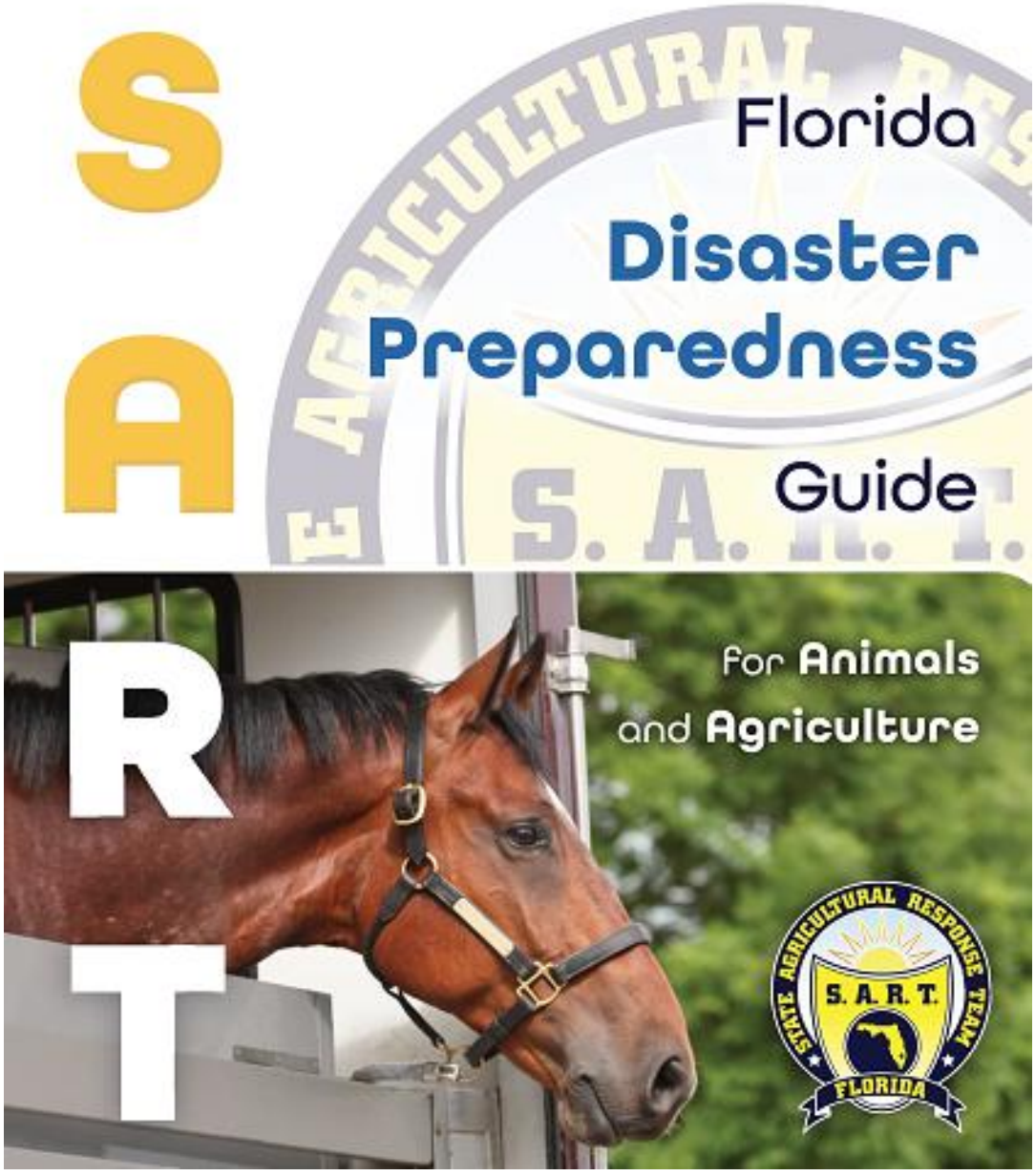
By strengthening these skills and attitudes, Extension professionals can better balance personal and professional responsibilities and serve their communities more effectively in times of need.

Follow Florida EDEN on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay updated! Visit our webpage to learn more and access disaster preparedness resources.

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!

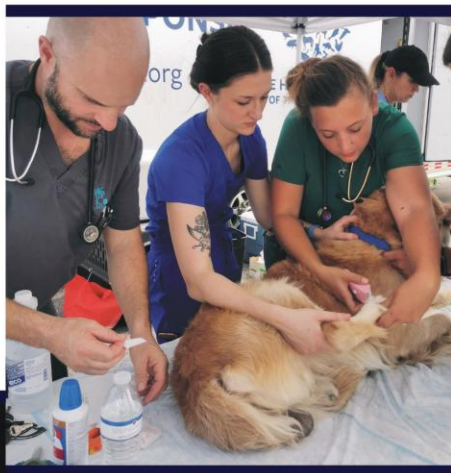
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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

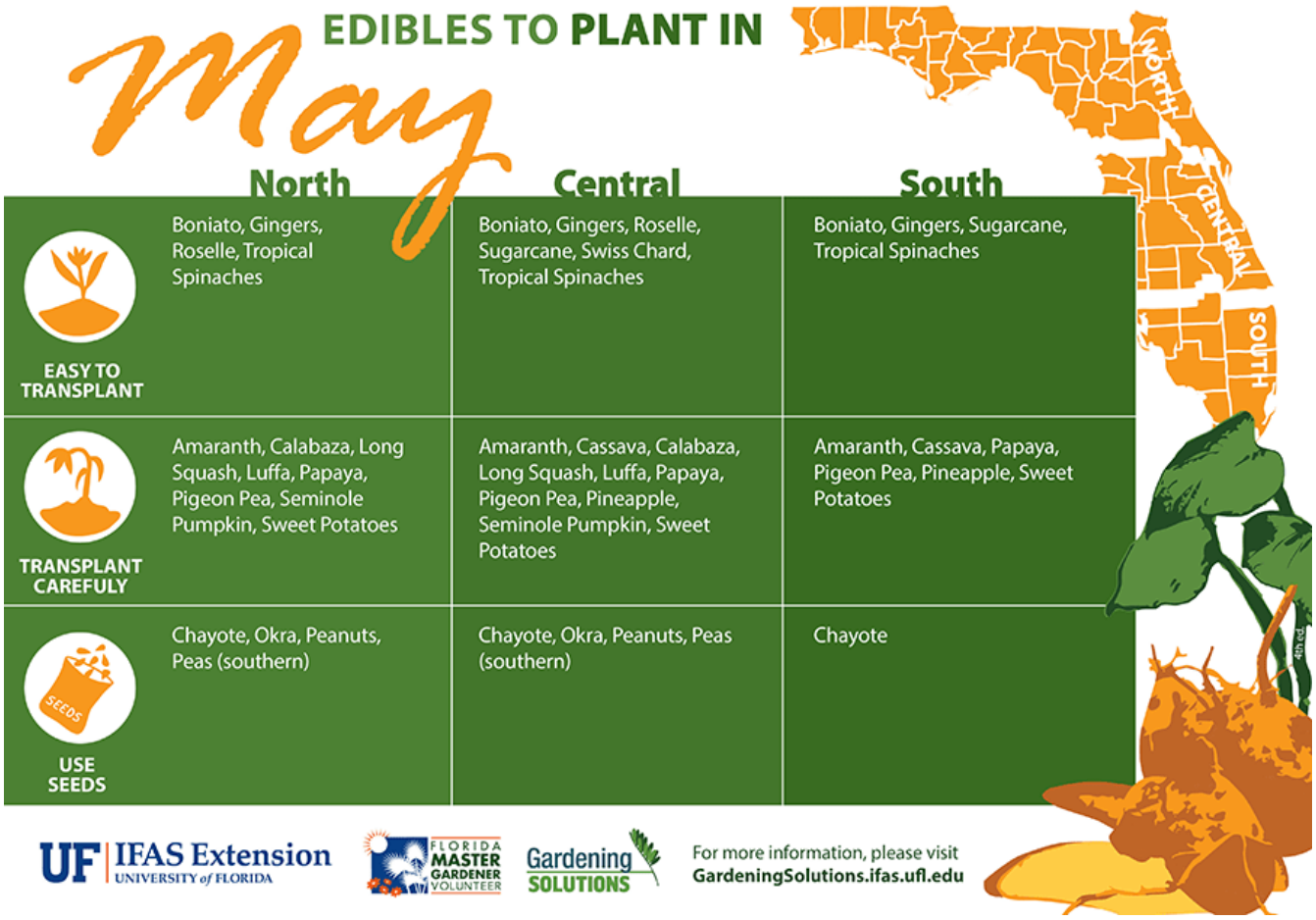
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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 May - 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
• May 5, 2025 • May 19, 2025 • June 5, 2025 • June 20, 2025	• May 20-21, 2025 • June 9-10, 2025

To register, visit: https://flsarc.org/training-classes-events

4-Day Multi-Discipline Animal Search and Rescue Training

This unique 4-day training event May 13-16, 2025 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 Virtual Meeting – June 23rd, at 10:00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams

In the News…

- Commissioner Wilton Simpson, Florida Forest Service Highlight Current Wildfire Conditions, Urge Residents to Be Wildfire Ready (FDACS)
- USDA Expediting $10 Billion in Direct Economic Assistance to Agricultural Producers (USDA)

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE | INSTITUTE FOR INFECTIOUS ANIMAL DISEASES

This program is funded through USDA APHIS NADPRP

For questions, contact Dr. Jimmy Tickel and Sarah Carrell at:
jimmy.tickel@ag.tamu.edu | sarah.manning@ag.tamu.edu

100% Online & Self-Paced

REGISTER NOW!

SUMMER 2025

PRODUCER DECON

CERTIFICATE TRAINING PROGRAM

Educating producers on how to utilize decontamination best practices to prepare their farms and staff for implementing prevention and response activities during a foreign animal disease outbreak.

This Program Provides Producers with Knowledge to:

- **Understand Disease Threats & Government Collaboration**
- **Perform a Premises Assessment & Site Decon Plan**
- **Protect their Livelihood & Implement Routine Biosecurity Practices**

Those eligible to enroll in the program include but are not limited to:
U.S. small and large-scale livestock and poultry producers, food animal and agriculture affiliates, industry site managers, extension agents and ag educators, animal feed industry personnel, and other professionals in food animal and livestock production fields.

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

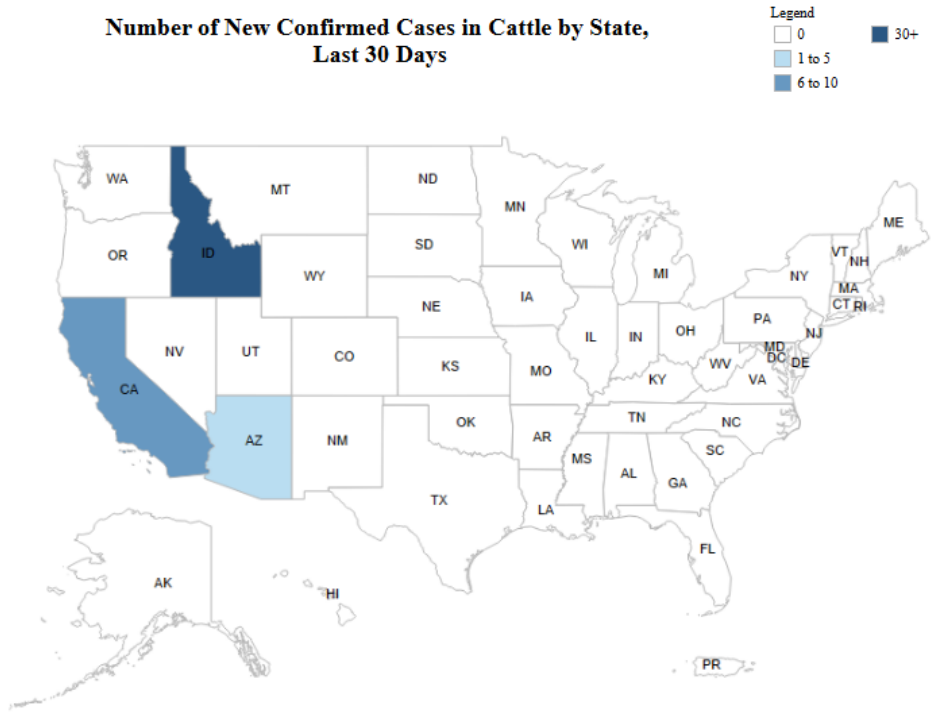
Payment due at time of registration. Refunds: 10+ days prior to class = 100%; 5-10 days prior to class = 50%; 0-5 days prior to class = no refund.

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 (April 29, 2025)

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.

> **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.

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.

SEVERE STORMS & HURRICANES

Stay Food-Safe Before, During, and After Weather Emergencies
As hurricane season approaches, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has released an updated edition of *A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes*. This essential guide, revised to equip consumers with practical, life-saving tips, outlines how to safeguard perishable food items and prevent foodborne illness during power outages, floods, and other weather-related emergencies.

Power Out? Keep Cold Food Safe
The guide advises placing appliance thermometers in refrigerators and freezers to monitor temperatures. During an outage, it's critical to keep refrigerator doors closed—food will remain cold for about four hours, while a full freezer can maintain safe temperatures for up to 48 hours. Perishable items like meat, dairy, eggs, and leftovers must be discarded if exposed to temperatures above 40°F for more than two hours. Dry ice or block ice can help prolong safe storage.

Flooded? Know What to Toss
Floodwaters pose serious contamination risks. The USDA warns against consuming any food that may have contacted floodwater unless stored in sealed, waterproof containers that can be thoroughly sanitized. The guide details how to clean and recover canned goods and kitchen tools, and provides a complete list of foods to discard or save based on exposure and temperature conditions.

Helpful Tips and Hotlines for Emergency Situations
To assist in recovery, the USDA offers tips for removing lingering odors from refrigerators and safely discarding irreparable units. The bulletin also highlights key emergency contact information—including USDA's *Ask Karen* service, the FDA's Safe Food Information Line, CDC guidance for cleanup safety, and EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline—to ensure consumers have 24/7 support when it matters most.

For the full guide and more resources, visit: www.fsis.usda.gov

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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