The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

That's a wrap for the 2025 SART Planning Workshop in St. Pete Beach!

SPECIAL EDITION: 2025 SART Planning Workshop Recap

On May 28th we kicked off the workshop by welcoming over 100 attendees from across the state to learn more about emergency response for animals and agriculture. This 3-day workshop is sponsored by the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART). This bi-annual event hosts Florida's county emergency management staff and SART partner agencies.

This workshop served as an opportunity for those who work in emergency response for animals and agriculture to gain more knowledge about best practices for response, and network with others from across the state. Through the multiple workshop sessions, trainings, and demonstrations attendees were able to work through different emergency situations to create a best practice plan for their home county or area to increase their emergency preparedness. Along with gain important certifications relating to their key roles in emergency management for animals and agriculture through the trainings offered at this workshop.

Continued, next page.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *UPDATE: New World Screwworm*
- *Florida EDEN: Mental Health Matters*
- *Four Steps to Food Safety*

The ***Images of Recovery Project*** seeks photographers of all skill levels to contribute up to three photos depicting the recovery process in agricultural communities affected by recent hurricanes, aiming to identify needs and barriers and facilitate long-term recovery through Extension resources, with submitted photos showcased post-project via QR codes.

See story on page 15.

SCAN BELOW

SPECIAL EDITION

SPECIAL EDITION: 2025 SART Planning Workshop Recap

Features of this event included presentations by Stephanie Hendrix (Pinellas County Emergency Management – Host County Welcome), LeiAnna Moorhead (Florida ESF 17 and SART: Concepts of Operations), Colonel Lee Adams (Agricultural Protection and Security in Florida), Dr. Christa Court (Agricultural Economic Impacts and Data Tools You Can Use for Treat Assessment), Dr. Saqib Mukhtar (Working with UF/IFAS Extension in Blue Skies & Beyond), Dr. Tracie Guy (Food and Agriculture Sector Treats: Foreign and Emerging Animal Diseases), Dr. Terry Clekis (Florida Veterinary Corps: Building Community Partnerships with Veterinarians), Jessica Ber (The Hurricane Bonus Prize: The little surprise that "bugs" recovery efforts and what you can do about it.), and Lt. Louis Hinds (Captive Wildlife Critical Incident and Natural Disaster Response).

Continued, next page.

SPECIAL EDITION

SPECIAL EDITION: 2025 SART Planning Workshop Recap

The training sessions were guided by UF College of Veterinary Medicine (Animal Technical Rescue Awareness Level) and (Animal All Hazards Awareness), Florida State Animal Response Coalition (Small Animal Emergency and Disaster Sheltering Course – Awareness Level), NSB Advanced Enterprises (G0191: Emergency Operations Center/ Incident Command System Interface). These training sessions were able to provide the attendees with a course certification upon completing this workshop.

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SPECIAL EDITION

SPECIAL EDITION: 2025 SART Planning Workshop Recap

We wrapped up the workshop on May 30th leaving sunny St. Pete Beach, with personnel across the state more prepared to respond to emergencies that affect animals and agriculture!

SART Workshop Presentations and Resource Handouts are available on our website at: https://flsart.org/EventMeetings/PlanningConferences

New World Screwworm

Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

New World screwworms are fly larvae (maggots) that can infest livestock and other warm-blooded animals, including people. They most often enter an animal through an open wound. They feed on the animal's living flesh and, if not treated, infestations can be fatal. While New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) has not been widely present in the United States since the 1960s, it is still found in most of South America and in five Caribbean countries. Cases began spreading in 2023, heading north from Panama, and have reached southern Mexico, increasing the risk of reintroduction into the United States.

Signs

Screwworms are typically found on warm-blooded animals that have a draining or enlarging wound.

Screwworm eggs are creamy and white and deposited in a shingle-like manner on or near the edges of superficial wounds. The larvae are cylindrical with one pointed end and one blunt end and have rings of dark brown spines around the body. Female screwworm flies are larger than a housefly with a dark blue to blue-green body and reddish-orange head.

Almost any type of wound can become infested with screwworm larvae, including those caused by feeding ticks, castration, dehorning, branding, shearing, barbed wire fences, and even shedding of antler velvet in deer. The navels of newborn mammals can also become infested.

Guidance for Animal Health

Carefully inspect animal wounds and hides for signs of screwworm. Owners should immediately consult their veterinarian if a case of screwworm is suspected.

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New World Screwworm (continued)

Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Treatment

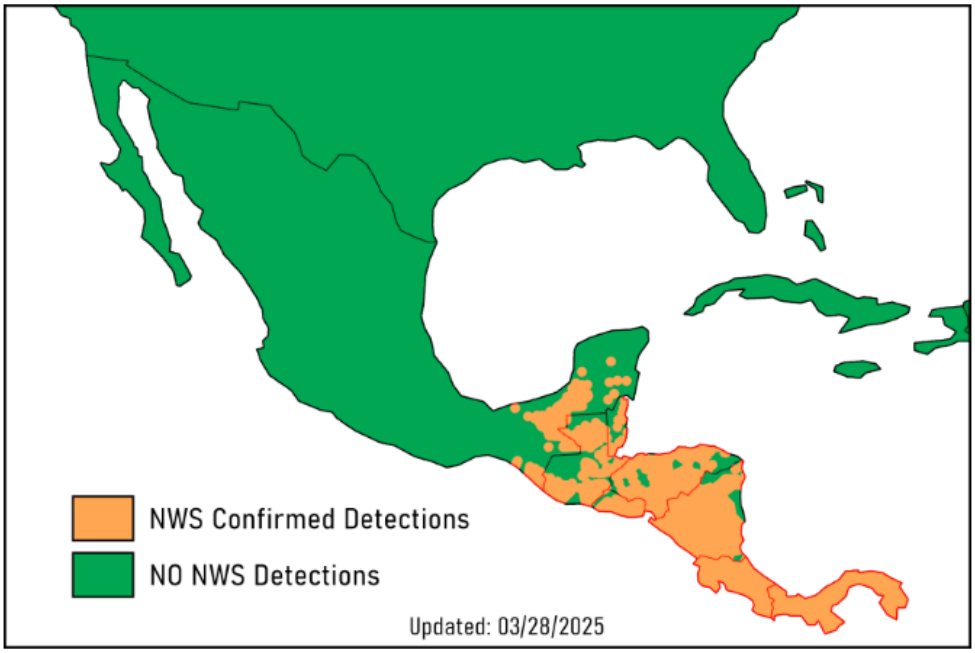
Screwworm infestation is treated by cleaning the site and topical application of a pesticide or other medication effective at killing the screwworm larvae. Treated wounds should be inspected daily until completely healed. The examining veterinarian will remove larvae from the wound with tweezers, place them in alcohol, and report to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Animal Industry (State Veterinarian's Office).

Report Suspected Cases

- **By phone during office hours:** (850) 410-0900
- **By phone after hours:** 1-800-342-5869
- **Via email:** RAD@FDACS.gov
- **Report online at:** www.FDACS.gov/RAD

Wildlife Reports

To report sick or injured wildlife, including a suspected screwworm infestation, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922) or email the Wildlife Health Team at WildlifeHealthTeam@MyFWC.com.



Resources

- Information on the Screwworm Eradication Program (USDA APHIS)

Screwworm Information Sheets (Provided by USDA APHIS)

- Screwworm Brochure (English Version)
- Screwworm Brochure (Spanish Version)
- Screwworm Poster
- Screwworm Factsheet
- Screwworm Pest Alert (English Version)
- Screwworm Pest Alert (Spanish Version)

For the latest information, visit:
https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Pests-and-Diseases/Animal-Pests-and-Diseases/New-World-Screwworm

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

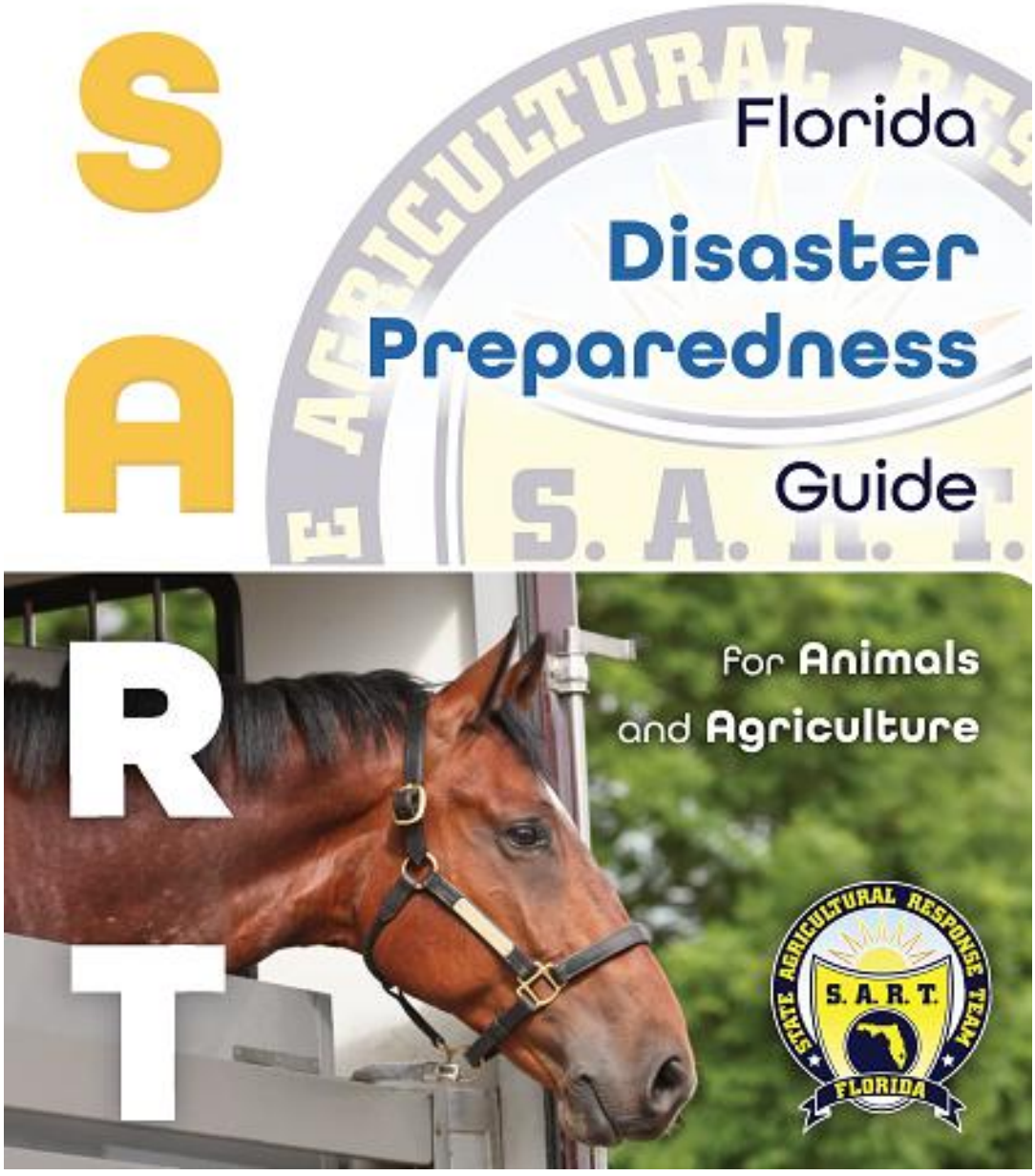
By strengthening these skills and attitudes, Extension professionals can better balance personal and professional responsibilities and serve their communities more effectively in times of need.

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!

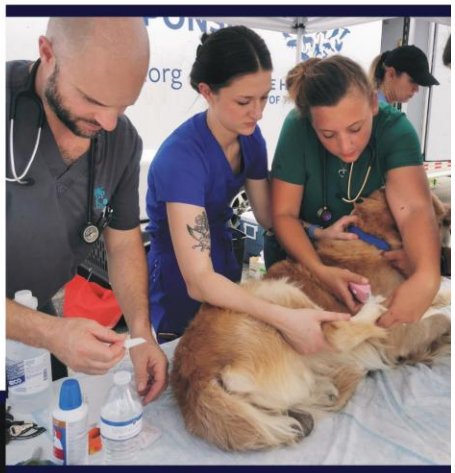
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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

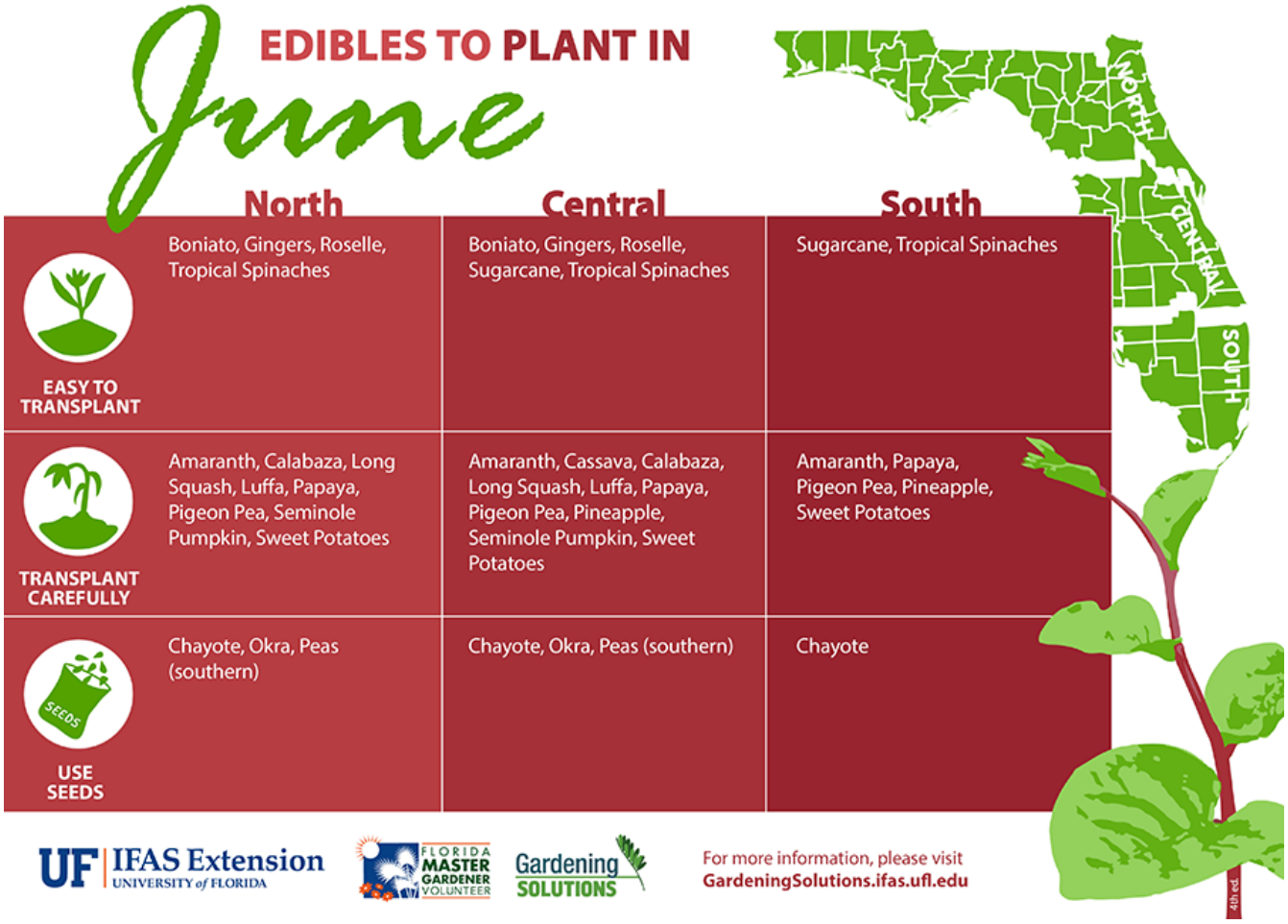
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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
• June 5 – Leon County • June 20 – Union County • July 19 – Polk County • July 26 – Walton County • August 9 – TBD	• June 9-10 – Pinellas County

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

EDEN Professional Development Webinar, June 10th: Mental Health Resiliency During Times of Disaster and Recovery

Working on the front and secondary lines of disaster and recovery makes professionals and volunteers susceptible to the effects of trauma of others. In this session, you will learn how to increase your resiliency and readiness to serve now, so you can be better equipped for the sudden increase of stress. Additionally, you will develop basic skills to recognize when folks need professional help and when you can provide basic care, comfort, and support to your clientele or colleagues who are experiencing disaster-related stress.

To register, visit:
https://connect.extension.org/g/eden/event/eden-professional-development-webinar-5

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, FDACS Urge Vigilance as New World Screwworm Threat Increases (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Celebrates Signing of Historic 2025 Florida Farm Bill (FDACS)

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:

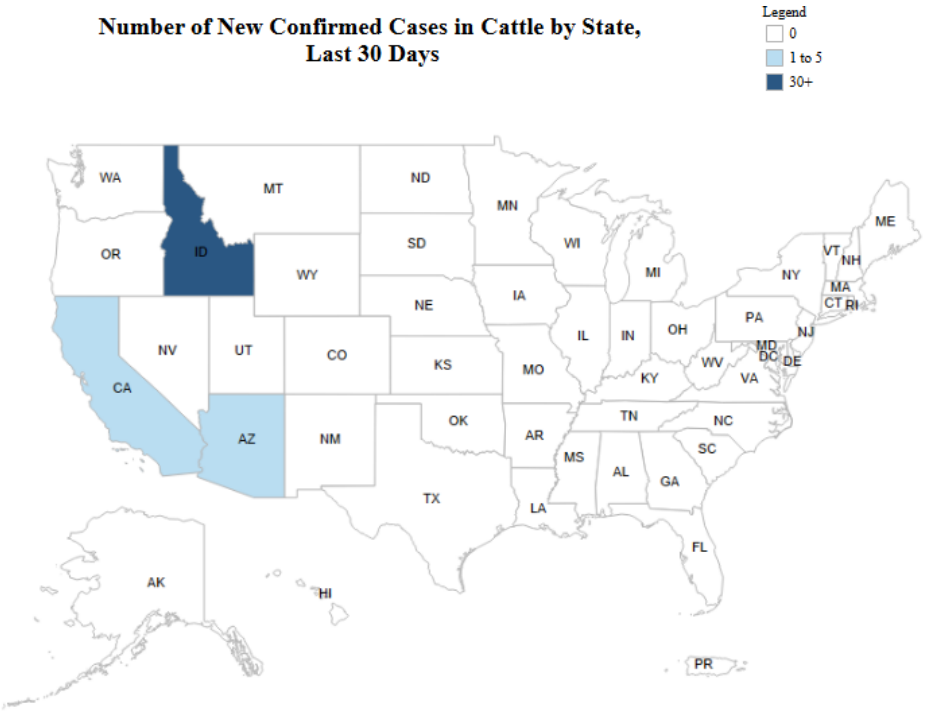
- **Understand Disease Threats & Government Collaboration**
- **Perform a Premises Assessment & Site Decon Plan**
- **Protect their Livelihood & Implement Routine Biosecurity Practices**

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.

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 (May 27, 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.

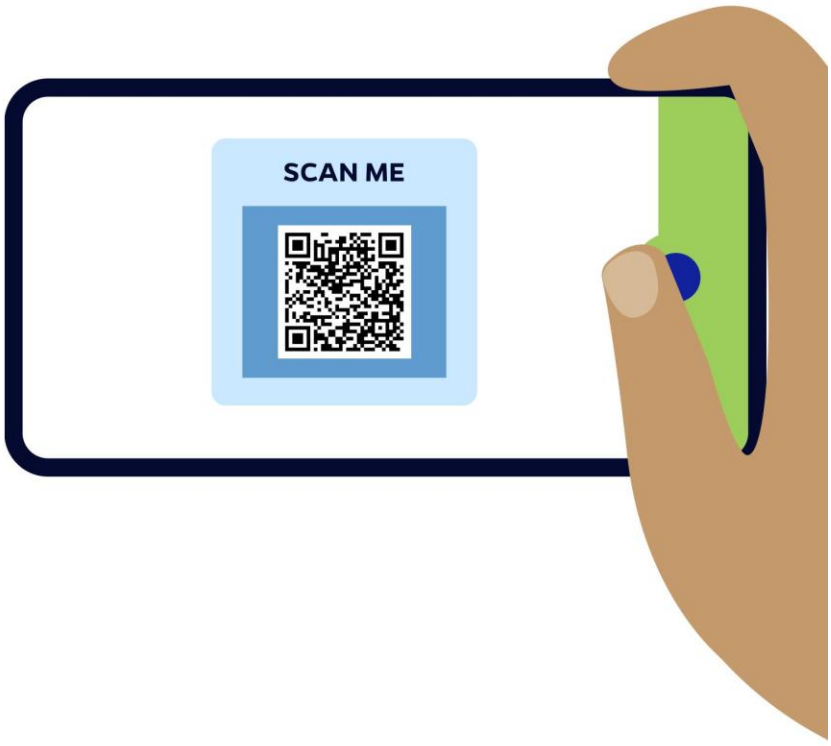
Further, **FDA states confidence that pasteurization does effectively inactivate HPAI in milk.** However, "the FDA continues to advise strongly against the consumption of raw milk and recommends that industry does not manufacture or sell raw milk or raw milk products." For more information, please visit 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

IMAGES OF RECOVERY

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR UF/IFAS
RESEARCH STUDY

The **Images of Recovery Project** seeks photographers of all skill levels to contribute up to three photos depicting the recovery process in agricultural communities affected by recent hurricanes, aiming to identify needs and barriers and facilitate long-term recovery through Extension resources, with submitted photos showcased post-project via QR codes.



Person(s) conducting the research: Dr. Angela Lindsey, associate professor, Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, ablindsey@ufl.edu, (352) 273-3552, Anissa Mattox, research coordinator, PIE Center, azagonel@ufl.edu, (352) 273-3552, Sandra Anderson, research coordinator, PIE Center, sanderson11@ufl.edu, (352) 294-2778

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.

Paula Carroll

Jefferson County, Florida

"I feel that with this training we will succeed... I am much more equipped."

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.

Four Steps to Food Safety

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes four essential steps to prevent foodborne illnesses: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. These guidelines aim to reduce the risk of food poisoning by promoting proper hygiene and safe food handling practices. Cleaning involves washing hands, utensils, and surfaces thoroughly to eliminate harmful germs. Separating raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods prevents cross-contamination. Cooking foods to the right temperature ensures that harmful bacteria are killed, and chilling perishable items promptly slows bacterial growth.

Proper handwashing is crucial in preventing the spread of germs that cause food poisoning. The CDC advises washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after food preparation. Utensils, cutting boards, and countertops should be cleaned with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item. Fresh fruits and vegetables should be rinsed under running water to remove potential contaminants. Additionally, raw meats should be kept separate from other foods during shopping, storage, and preparation to avoid cross-contamination.

Cooking food to the appropriate internal temperature is vital for food safety. The CDC recommends using a food thermometer to ensure foods reach safe temperatures: 145°F for whole cuts of beef, veal, lamb, and pork; 160°F for ground meats; and 165°F for all poultry. Leftovers and casseroles should also be heated to 165°F. Refrigeration is equally important; perishable foods should be refrigerated within two hours, or within one hour if the ambient temperature is above 90°F. Keeping the refrigerator at 40°F or below and the freezer at 0°F or below helps prevent bacterial growth.

For more detailed information, please visit the CDC's Food Safety page:
https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/prevention/index.html

SART Resources and Links

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – USDA APHIS Flock Defender
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/outbreak-illness/outbreak-illness

Large Animal Incident Response Plan Template
https://flsart.org/resource/TLAER

Pet Sheltering Resources
https://flsart.org/resource/petshelter

Ask IFAS: Disaster Preparedness and Recovery
https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/entity/topic/disaster_preparedness_and_recovery

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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