The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Photo credit: Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Tragedy in Texas

Over the 4th of July weekend, tragedy struck in central Texas. As of the timing of this writing, the near historic flash flooding event has claimed over 120 lives with many still missing. While this area is known to have flash flooding, nobody was anticipating the Guadalupe River to rise an astonishing 26 feet in 45 minutes.

Unfortunately, the days following the tragic event were not much better as more severe storms continued to drop significant amounts of rain on an already devastated area. One can easily identify the parallels from this disaster to the Helene flooding that occurred in western North Carolina. The news of this disaster is littered with countless tales of heartbreak and heroism.

The Texas flooding and the Helene flooding bring a renewed appreciation to the forces of Mother Nature. It should remind everybody to verify and validate their preparedness levels, both professionally and personally. Unfortunately, flood warnings tend to be ignored or not taken seriously by many.

This easily be observed by the amount of people who get stranded in their vehicles when they attempt to drive through flood waters. Or worse, they are stranded in their homes or on their rooftops.

Continued, next page.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *LeiAnna Moorhead Presents Storms Preparedness to Florida's Agritourism Industry*
- *SART-Sponsored Animal Technical Rescue Training*
- *Commissioner Simpson, FDACS Urge Vigilance as NWS Threat Increases*

"SART Partners can educate members of their communities about hazards associated with confined spaces and advocate for appropriate mitigation and response strategies. We love to see those happy little ducklings and kittens returned to safety!"

— Brandi K. Phillips
Animal Technical Rescue Branch Director
University of Florida
Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service
Read more on Page 14.

Tragedy in Texas (continued)

Photo credit: Jack Morgan / Texas Public Radio

Some may remember Texas A&M University Veterinary Emergency Team (TAMU VET) being deployed to Florida via Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request after Hurricane Ian in 2022. During their deployment they assisted with veterinarian care of working canines for search and rescue operations. Once again TAMU VET was called to assist, but in their own state. During their 23-day deployment, the team cared for nearly 100 working canines for various afflictions ranging from heat stress to leg injuries. Those hardworking canines are credited with finding who were credited with finding 98% of the missing people.

LeiAnna Moorhead Presents Storms Preparedness to Florida's Agritourism Industry

Established in 2013 by dozens of agritourism industry members, the Florida Agritourism Association (FATA) is a state-wide organization that supports Florida's growing agritourism industry. FATA provides support by focusing on education, business development, marketing, and advocating for industry friendly legislation. This month our very own LeiAnna Moorhead presented an educational webinar to FATA on preparing farms for hurricanes and other emergencies. Topics covered were basic preparation tips, an overview of Emergency Support Function 17 (ESF17), and how resources are requested and mobilized during emergencies. The webinar was just under an hour long and the recorded presentation can be viewed on YouTube at Storm Preparation for your Farm.

IMAGES OF RECOVERY

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.

SCAN BELOW

Person(s) conducting the research: PIE Center • 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

00:00:00

3...2...1...1...2...3

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.

Continued, next page.

New World Screwworm (continued)

Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Treatment

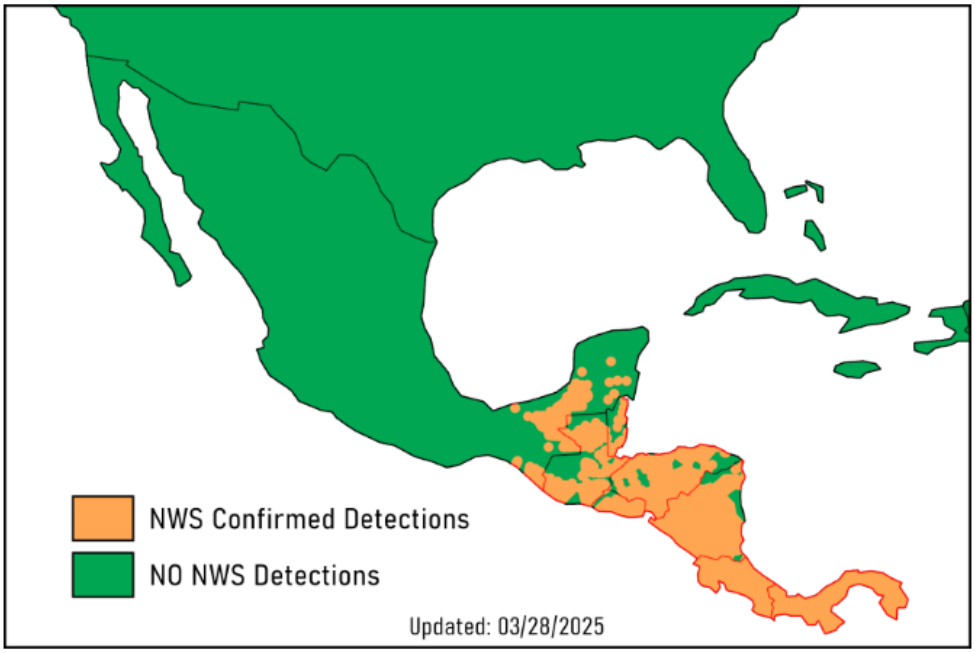
Screwworm infestation is treated by cleaning the site and topical application of a pesticide or other medication effective at killing the screwworm larvae. Treated wounds should be inspected daily until completely healed. The examining veterinarian will remove larvae from the wound with tweezers, place 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

New World Screwworm Webinar for Animal Industry

The New World screwworm (NWS), *Cochliomyia hominivorax,* is a devastating animal and public health pest. When NWS fly larvae burrow into the flesh of a living animal they cause serious, often deadly damage to the animal. NWS can infest livestock, pets, wildlife, occasionally birds, and in rare cases, people. Prior to successful eradication campaigns, NWS caused devastating losses in U.S. livestock through death, reduced productivity, and increased veterinary costs. During the 1976 NWS outbreak in Texas, producers spent an estimated $132.1 million (or $731.8 million in 2025 dollars) that year in response. Should NWS re-establish in the U.S., the economic consequences would be severe. For example, Texas alone could face losses exceeding $700 million annually, with broader impacts on the state's economy reaching $1.8 billion.

Webinar Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Explain the NWS life cycle, clinical signs, and morbidity and mortality
- Summarize the current outbreak status of NWS infestations in Central America
- Describe how to report infestations
- Identify key interventions for eradication
- Locate specific support resources for responding to NWS

Webinar Topics

Webinar topics will include, but are not limited to:

- Biology/life cycle of NWS
- Distribution and current outbreak
- Recognizing infestations (clinical signs)
- Reporting infestations
- USDA actions and planned response
- Outreach materials

Register Today

https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/b3a5ac06-ba89-4268-8022-2c5b998e93b2@ed5b36e7-01ee-4ebc-867e-e03cfa0d4697

WEBINAR
August 13, 2025
1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (ET)
Microsoft Teams

TARGET AUDIENCE
Interested stakeholders and partners from Animal industries

REGISTRATION
Registration is required.

CURRICULUM QUESTIONS
Professional People Training
APHIS.VS.Training@usda.gov

THIS WEBINAR WILL BE RECORDED.

This webinar does not have Continuing Education Units.

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, *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 communities that are more prepared 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

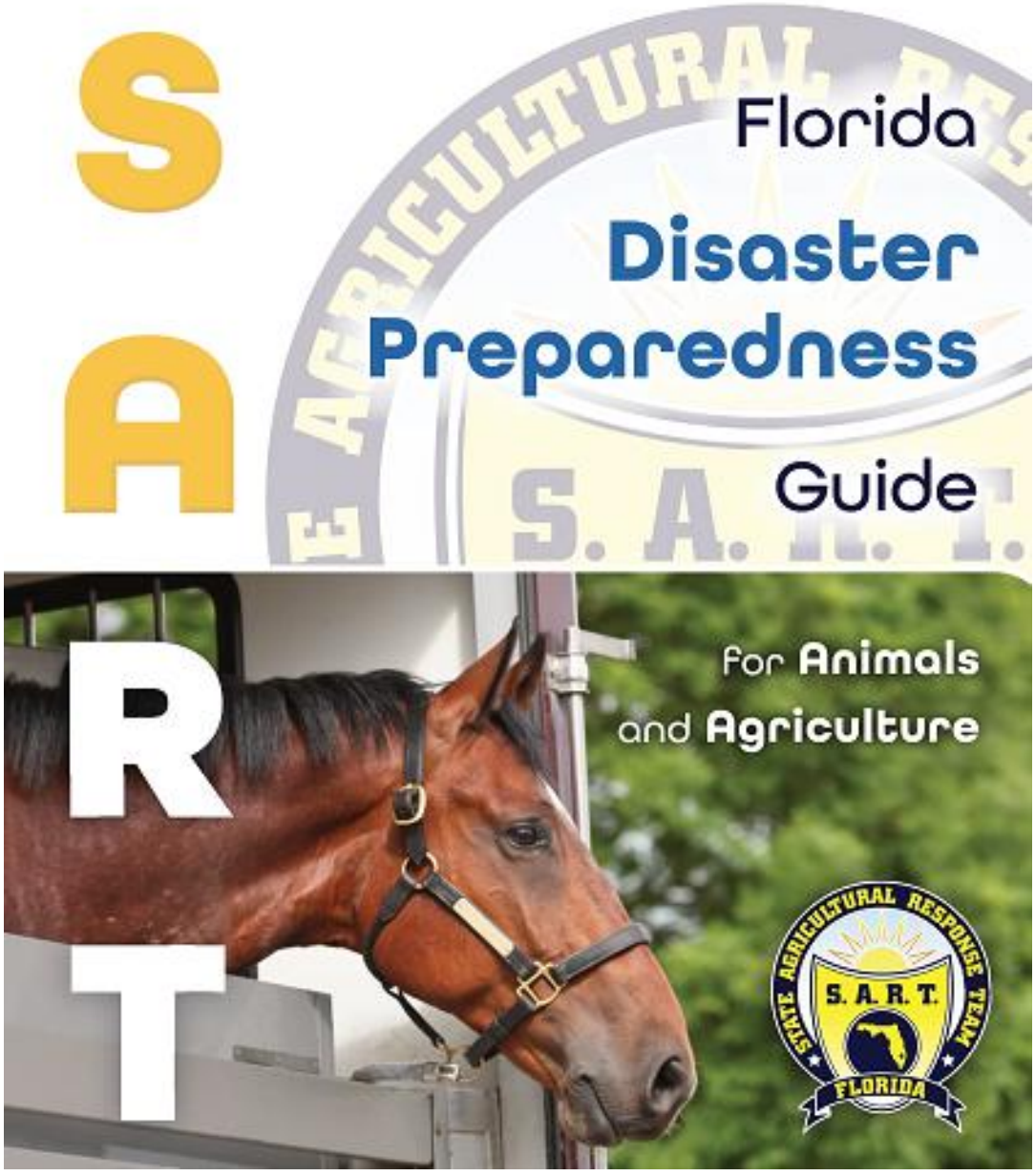
By strengthening these skills and attitudes, Extension professionals can better balance personal and professional responsibilities and serve their communities more effectively in times of need.

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!

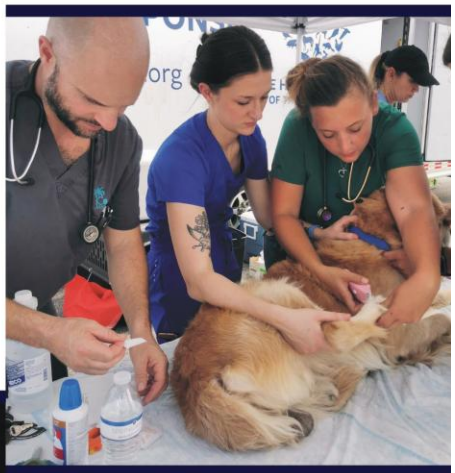
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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

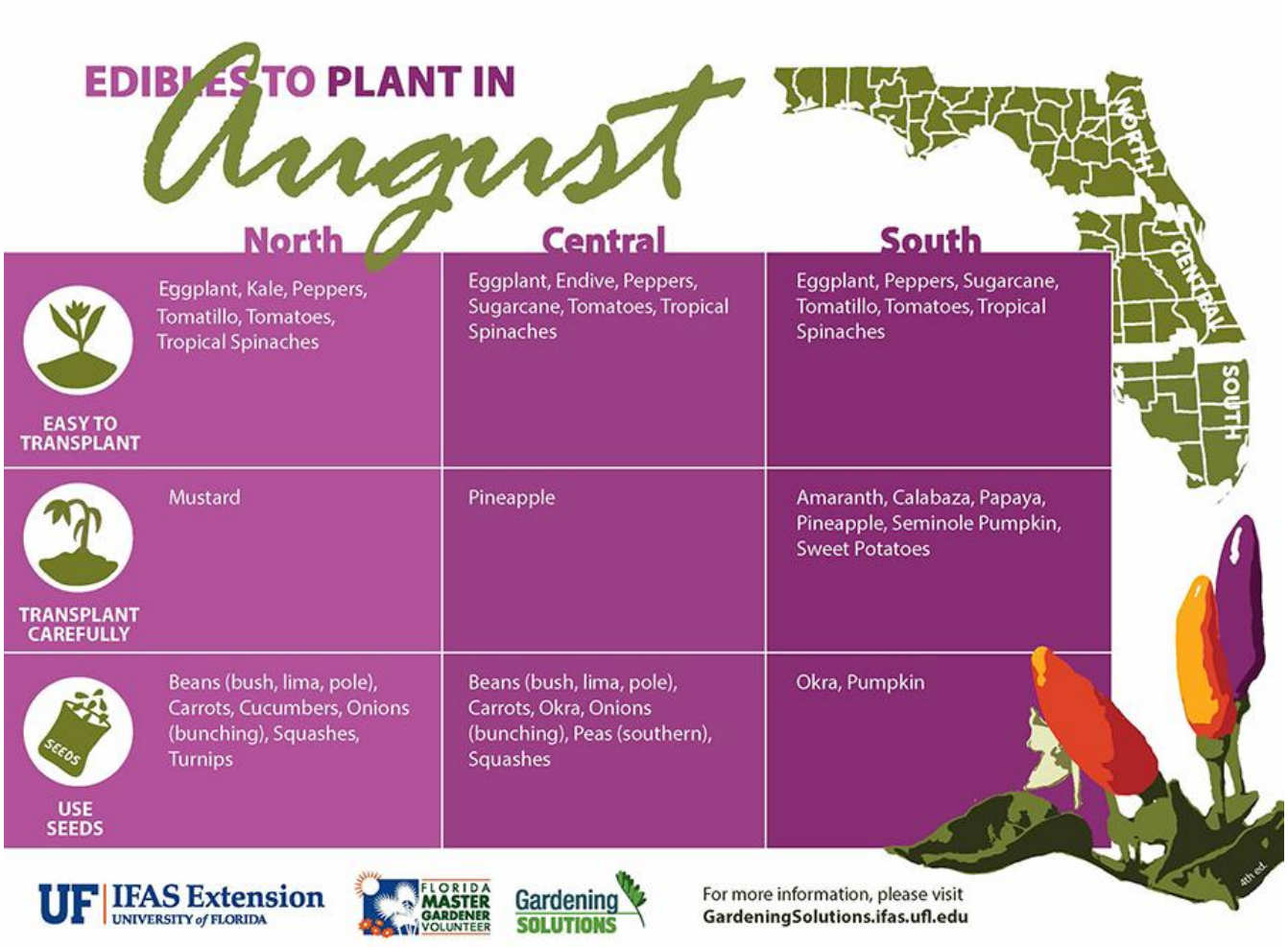
UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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 August - 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
• August 9 – Sarasota	• TBD

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

SART-Sponsored Animal Technical Rescue Training

Florida SART sponsors a limited number of trainings annually at no cost to participants. Registrants must be Florida residents serving communities in Florida to be eligible for participation. These trainings will take place at the Florida State Fire College (11655 NW Gainesville Rd, Ocala, FL 34482). Participants are responsible for their own travel costs and meals, but registration fees are covered by Florida SART for these classes. We encourage all participants to bring their own Class C helmet with chinstrap and gloves for handling rope to training. Limited quantities of PPE may be provided by the UF VETS team.

AWR – 8 Hours	OPS – 24 Hours
• October 20, 2025	• October 21-23, 2025

To register, visit: https://bit.ly/SART2025ATR

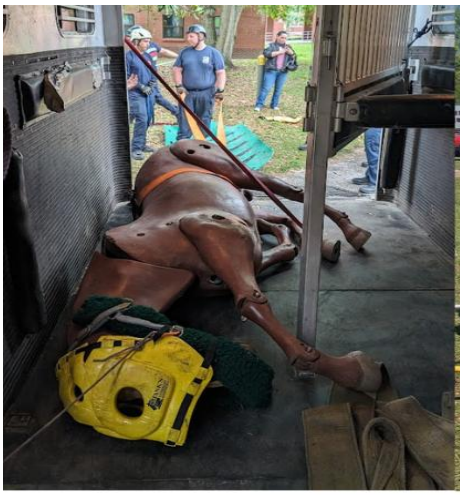
SART Partners Meeting

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

- Monthly Virtual Meeting – August 27, at 10:00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams

In the News…

- Commissioner Simpson Applauds Rollins' Announcement of $675 Million in Disaster Relief for Florida Agriculture (FDACS)
- Commissioner Simpson, FDACS Urge Vigilance as New World Screwworm Threat Increases (FDACS)



Sponsored by Florida SART

ANIMAL TECHNICAL RESCUE TRAINING

Target Audience:

Livestock Owners, Fire/ Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, Animal Control, Veterinary Professionals, Extension Agents

Location:

Florida State Fire College
11655 NW Gainesville Rd
Ocala, FL 34482

Course Fee:

Free - Participants responsible for travel costs

Training Date

AWR-8 hours
Oct. 20, 2025
OPS-24 hours
Oct. 21-23, 2025

All trainings 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM
CEs provided by Florida State Fire College

Point of Contact:

Brandi Phillips
brandikphillips@ufl.edu

Register for free at bit.ly/SART2025ATR

UF Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service
College of Veterinary Medicine
UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA

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

Animal Rescue from Sewers and Storm Drains

In August 2023, three Floridians tragically lost their lives after entering a Texas cistern in an attempt to rescue a dog. The animal had fallen eight feet into water below ground. All three individuals succumbed to hydrogen sulfide gas exposure — a silent, deadly hazard. This incident is a sobering reminder of the risks associated with rescuing animals from confined spaces such as storm drains, sewers, and culverts.

These environments can accumulate toxic or flammable gases from fertilizers, fuel spills, or nearby pipelines. While local animal rescues involving ducklings or kittens are often successful and heartwarming, responders must not overlook the hidden dangers. According to OSHA, confined spaces are not meant for regular human occupancy, often contain limited entry and exit, and may require special permits if atmospheric or structural hazards are present. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that over 60% of confined space fatalities are would-be rescuers, underscoring the need for caution and training.

For SART partners, the takeaway is clear: if the rescue scene resembles a confined space, it should be approached as a technical rescue. The safest strategy often involves avoiding entry altogether. Tools such as nets or baited traps can enable animal retrieval from a distance. When entry is unavoidable, specialized response teams should be contacted. Fire departments may assist with forced-air ventilation, while hazmat units can monitor air quality for oxygen, toxicity, and flammability. If conditions demand it, rescuers must wear appropriate respiratory protection.

Animals in distress may act defensively, creating risk for bites, scratches, and potential disease exposure. Safety protocols should minimize direct contact until the animal is secure and calm. After rescue, decontamination is critical — a lathering with Dawn dish soap and thorough rinse can remove most surface contaminants. Rescuers should wear personal protective equipment during this process to avoid contact with pathogens like hepatitis or harmful bacteria.
Community education on the risks of confined spaces is vital. Public safety professionals and SART partners must prioritize responder safety alongside animal welfare. Those interested in learning more about safe animal rescue techniques are encouraged to explore training opportunities at: https://responseteam.vetmed.ufl.edu

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.

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.

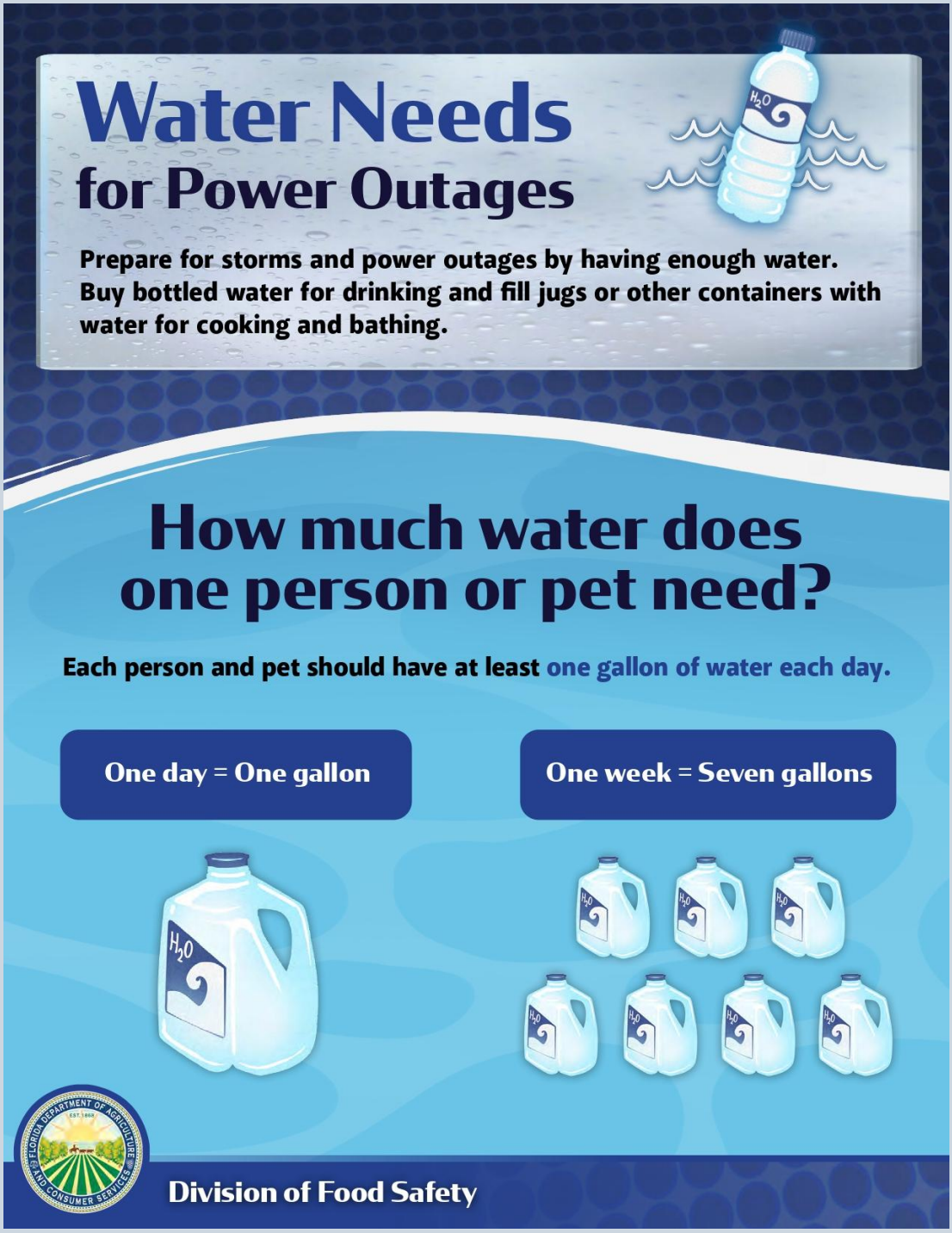
> **Laura Bevan**
>
> Humane Society of the United States
>
> "I was blown away by the depth of the information provided in this training. It held my attention and the videos from around the state gave real life experience to the subject."

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.



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

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cattle
https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/115892/file/2024-HPAI-Dairy-Cattle-Announcement.pdf

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

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.

Editing Services: The Turner Network, LLC under contract with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: flsart@turnernetwork.com

Associate Editor: LeiAnna Moorhead, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: LeiAnna.Moorhead@FDACS.gov