The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

Sumter County First Responders preparing ATR equipment for operational use.

Sumter County Continues to Be Ready

The University of Florida (UF) Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service (VETS) participated in a mock livestock trailer accident exercise with Sumter County Fire Rescue in order to ensure their team is prepared to manage a similar incident safely and humanely.

During the exercise, personnel considered their options for managing the health of the animal, established perimeters around the scene to prevent loose animals and protect public safety, used extended reach tools and considered best practices for safe access the animal, and worked to prevent injuring the animal further in their extraction.

The team demonstrated excellent communication and coordination through two evolutions and practiced additional skills following the exercise. Many of the skills used in this discipline are perishable and regular training with the crews that will be responding together is a critical aspect of mission readiness.

Sumter County Fire Rescue has been involved in Animal Technical Rescue (ATR) for more than a decade. They have a Memorandum of Understanding with FDACS Florida SART for one ATR trailer equipped with extrication equipment and is a prioritized jurisdiction for training with the UF VETS team.

Over the years, they've responded to numerous calls in Sumter and surrounding counties. Their commitment to human life safety and animal welfare is a great example of what Florida has to offer to our livestock communities.

Special Features of this Issue:

- *New World Screwworm Update*
- *Fall Food Safety*
- *SART Equipment Request*

"SART has strategically deployed Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) trailers, Mini-MARE trailers, livestock panels, and Animal Technical Rescue Trailers (ATR) across the State for emergency response"

— LeiAnna Moorhead
Emergency Programs Manager
ECO for ESF 17 and FLSART
Division of Animal Industry, FDACS
Read more on Page 5.

Welcome to the Team – Captain Dana Russell and Dr. Nathan Gimbal

Captain Dana Russell.

There have been a few changes to our SART partner contacts lately. One such change is the departure of Captain Kara Hooker of the Captive Wildlife division of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). As we bid her farewell and wish her the best on her next assignment, let us welcome Captain Dana Russell to the team. Captain Russell has taken over for Captain Hooker at the General Headquarters in Tallahassee. She has been with FWC for just over 23 years. Over the years she has worked extensively in the field from Key West to Jacksonville. Her most recent role was serving in Policy and Professional Standards.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Nathan Gimbal who will be working with Dr. Terry Clekis in the Florida Veterinarian Medical Association (FVMA). Based in the Treasure Coast area, Dr. Gimbal and his wife are extensively involved in the veterinarian world as they own and operate three veterinarian hospitals. Their practices mainly focus on cats and dogs but have been known to see other smaller patients such as smaller mammals, reptiles, and the occasional duck.

Welcome to the team, Captain Russell and Dr. Gimbal!

Dr. Nathan Gimbal (right)
Photo courtesy of Dr. Nathan Gimbal

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.

Source: USDA APHIS (Updated 9/30/2025)

New World Screwworm Resources

- Information on the Screwworm Eradication Program (USDA APHIS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson, FDACS Urge Vigilance as New World Screwworm Threat Increases
- FDACS – New World Screwworm Information Page

SART Equipment Request

SART has strategically deployed Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) trailers, Mini-MARE trailers, livestock panels, and Animal Technical Rescue Trailers (ATR) across the State for emergency response.

- **MARE Unit:** A MARE Unit (Mobile Animal Response Equipment) is a 16' open-sided steel livestock trailer stocked with small animal response necessities such as plastic animal crates, leashes, water and food bowls, and cleaning equipment.
- **Mini-MARE Unit:** A Mini-MARE Unit is a smaller, more mobile enclosed trailer, with animal crates of various sizes and some of the miscellaneous items in the full MARE Unit.
- **Livestock Panels:** Livestock panels can be used for the quick setup of a temporary pen for livestock.
- **ATR Unit:** An ATR (Animal Technical Rescue) Unit is an enclosed trailer containing equipment for both livestock and smaller animal technical rescues. Included are a portable A-frame/crane unit, rope systems, webbing, harnesses for large and small animals, and rescue glide for moving animals, a mud extrication system, and safety equipment for the responders.

If a local government agency needs to request this equipment during a *non-declared event*, then the requesting county's Emergency Management Director must send a request to the state ESF 17 ECO, LeiAnna Moorhead, via email at LeiAnna.Moorhead@fdacs.gov. The request will be reviewed by the ESF 17 ECO, FDACS Bureau Chief of Animal Disease Control, and the FDACS State Veterinarian. The requestor will be contacted directly of its approval status.

Note: FDACS ESF 17 will ensure the resource request process is coordinated appropriately for declared and non-declared emergency events (Local > County EOC > State), and that the county has exhausted all available local resources prior to requesting state emergency response equipment.

For more information, visit: https://flsart.org/resource/equipmentrequest.jsp

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

Ready Business.
HURRICANE
TOOLKIT

Ready Business Hurricane Toolkit

Why Should Organizations Care About Hurricane Risk?
Significant portions of the United States are at risk for the effects of tropical storms and hurricanes. It is important that organizations throughout the country, including associations, businesses, and community groups, understand the risks and potential impacts and prepare accordingly.

The *Ready Business Program* for Hurricane and the Preparedness and Mitigation Project Plan allow users to take action to protect employees, protect customers, and help ensure business continuity.

Organizations can achieve six levels for recognition through the Ready Business Program. The levels include **STAFF, SURROUNDINGS, SPACE, SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE,** and **SERVICE.** The first five levels can be achieved either independently or as a group. The **SERVICE** level is achieved by completing requirements **for STAFF, SURROUNDINGS, SPACE, SYSTEMS**, and **STRUCTURE** levels in addition to the **SERVICE** requirements

Benefits

Peace of mind that your organization is prepared not only for hurricanes, but for other business interruptions and natural disasters.

Ready Business **window cling** to announce to your customers or clients and employees that you have taken steps to prepare your STAFF, SURROUNDINGS, SPACE, SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE, and are prepared to be of SERVICE after an event.

Ready Business **recognition certificate.**

Ready Business **web badge** to display on your organization's website.

Organization listing on Ready Business website.

Sample **news release** to recognize and acknowledge your organization's participation in the ***Ready Business Program.***

Gain tips for **media placement.**

Inspire others to take steps to improve community resiliency.

For more information, please visit:
https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/79714/file/Hurricane_Ready_Business_Toolkit_Interactive_Final_508.pdf

Florida State Animal Response Coalition

www.flsarc.org

352-658-1224

Pet Evacuation Documents Bag

Pet's Name:

Bring these items when you evacuate. Prepare one bag per pet.

- ☐ **Medication (make sure it's current)**
- ☐ **Medical Records**
- ☐ **Vaccination Records**
- ☐ **Special Medical/Behavioral Instructions**
- ☐ **Picture of your Pet and Picture of You With Your Pet**
- ☐ **All Identification Numbers (Microchip, Tattoo, Rabies Tag)**
- ☐ **List of Distinguishing Features/Marks**
- ☐ **Emergency Contact Information for You**
- ☐ **Emergency Contact Information for Your Pet (Vet, babysitter, caregiver, etc.)**

In addition to these items, you should also bring the following:

Food/Water for 7 days
Food and water bowls
Poop bags
Toys and treats
2 extra collars and leashes
Bedding
Trash bag
Pet first aid kit
Pet carrier
Litter box/litter

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

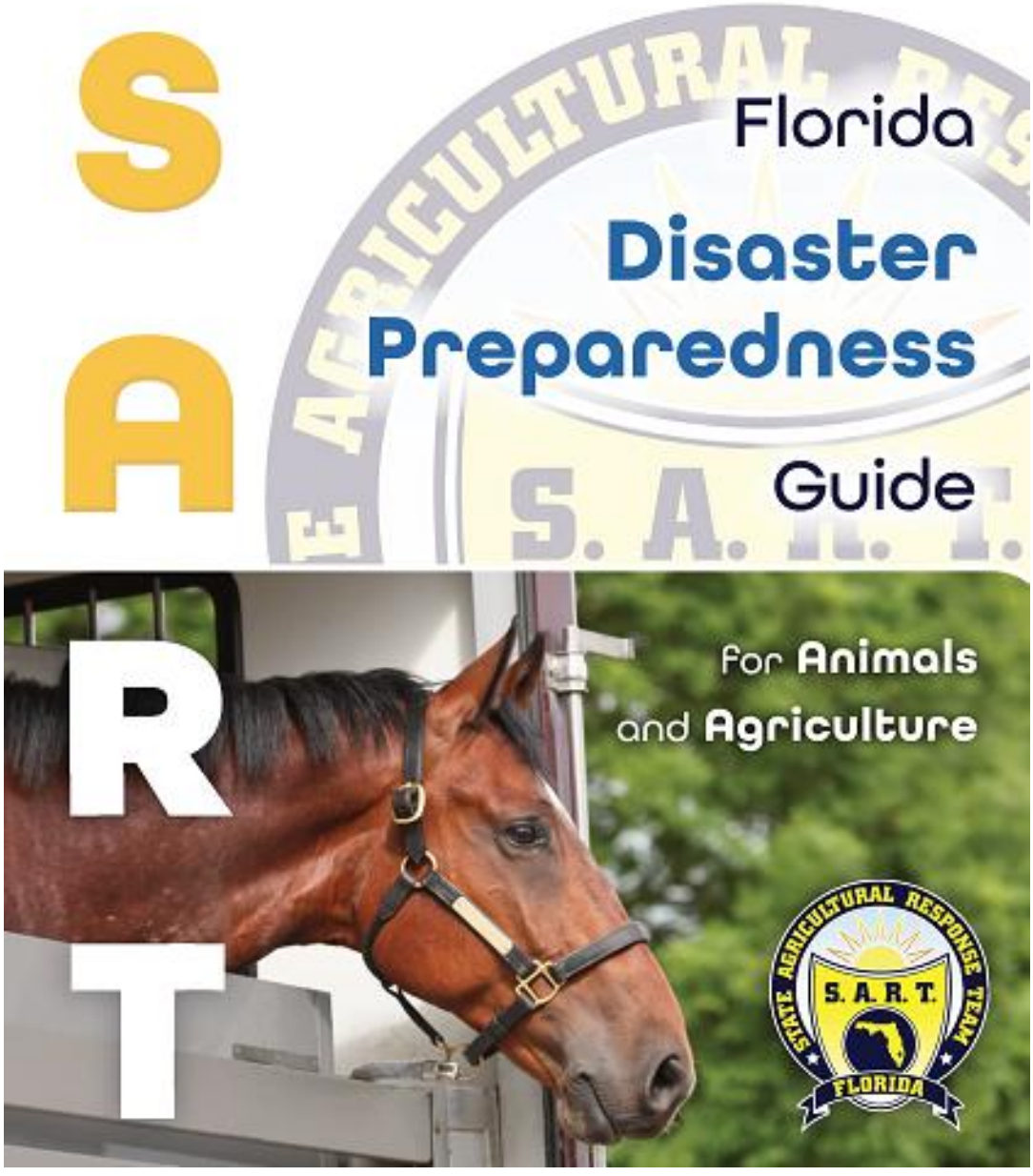
By strengthening these skills and attitudes, Extension professionals can better balance personal and professional responsibilities and serve their communities more effectively in times of need.

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!

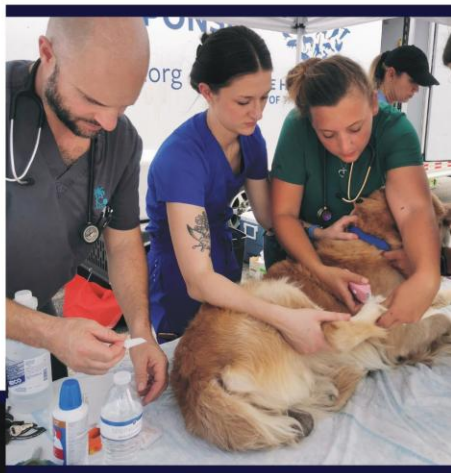
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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 October - 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
• October 18, Taylor County • October 25 & 26, Taylor County • November 1, Taylor County	• TBD

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

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 – October 22, at 10:00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams

In the News…

- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Announces Preservation of Double Eagle Ranch in Volusia County (FDACS)
- UF/IFAS warns of emerging pest threatening South Florida crops: Two-spot cotton leafhopper detected (UF IFAS)

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.

Fall Food Safety

Tailgate parties, Halloween parties, pumpkin patch visits, cane grindings, craft festivals — the crisp, cool days of fall are full of fun activities that often involve delicious things to eat. But just because the weather is cooler doesn't mean you can forget about food safety. Follow our simple tips and enjoy this festive season without a hitch.

Interested in other food safety topics? Visit the Division of Food Safety's Consumer Resources and Outreach website to find helpful videos, flyers, and more listed by category!

Halloween is a real treat!

Follow these simple tips to help prepare and protect your family for the big night:

- [ ] Give children a light meal or snack before they go trick-or-treating–don't send them out on an empty stomach.
- [ ] If children want a tasty sweet, urge them to wait until they get home so you can inspect their loot before they eat any of it.
- [ ] If your child has a food allergy, check the label to make sure the allergen isn't listed. (*Important Note: Candy purchased in bulk bags may not be individually labeled with ingredients or allergen warnings.*)
- [ ] Before and after eating treats, wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.
- [ ] Tell children not to accept–and especially not eat–anything that isn't wrapped.
- [ ] Inspect wrapped treats for signs of tampering like unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.
- [ ] If you have very young children, remove any choking hazards like gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.

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

SART Response Equipment List and Request Information
https://flsart.org/resource/equipmentrequest.jsp

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