



The Sentinel

Newsletter of
the Florida State
Agricultural
Response Team



Image: Arlene Phillips and her son Mark grab supplies and literature from a Red Cross worker. (Joel Addington, The Baker County Press)

Rural Resilience: How SART Helped Baker County Build Disaster Readiness

When the August 29 hurricane preparedness event launched at Glen Baptist Church in Baker County, Florida, over 50 families received emergency kits—and vital connections to resources they'd never known existed. Among those resources was the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART), a critical presence for rural agricultural communities facing hurricane threats.

For Baker County, hurricane preparedness extends beyond water and batteries. It means protecting livestock, feed, and infrastructure that sustain local economies. According to SART materials distributed at the event, Florida's food and agriculture sector carries an annual economic impact exceeding \$200 billion. Hurricanes threaten this foundation through flooding, damaged fencing, contaminated supplies, and disrupted livestock feeding schedules.

SART supports Emergency Support Function 17, Florida's coordinated system for animal and agricultural disaster response. Representatives educated attendees on emergency veterinary services, livestock feed distribution, animal sheltering options, and crop damage assessments.

In Baker County, evacuating large animals presents unique logistical challenges. Livestock require specialized transport, approved shelter facilities, and veterinary oversight—capabilities SART provides by bringing wire cages and animal-sheltering equipment into affected communities as part of coordinated emergency protocols.

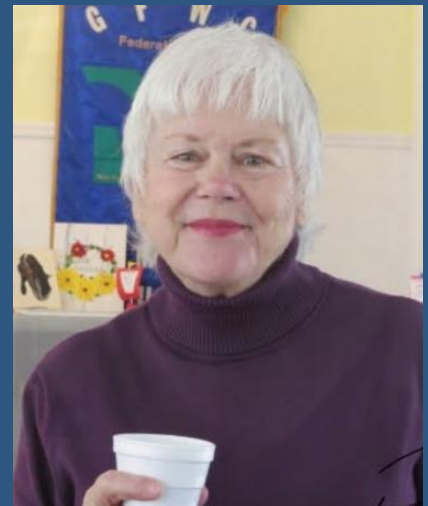
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Special Features of this Issue:

- New World Screwworm Update
- Become a Volunteer of the Florida Veterinary Corps Today!
- Fall Food Safety

***“We must prepare
to be our own
disaster response
and do all we can
to build
resilience.”***

— Betty Center
Baker County Community
Organizations Active in Disaster



Rural Resilience: How SART Helped Baker County Build Disaster Readiness (continued)

"We must prepare to be our own disaster response and do all we can to build resilience," said Betty Center, a member of the Baker County Community Organizations Active in Disaster and Long-Term Recovery Committee.

The Long-Term Recovery Committee, which organized much of the event, evolved from recovery work following Hurricanes Helene and Milton. On July 15, 2025, the Baker County Commission pursued FEMA planning assistance. Eight committee meetings and two public forums shaped recovery goals: strengthening emergency communications, improving drainage infrastructure, and preparing for future disasters while preserving rural character.

SART's participation underscored a broader truth about modern disaster management: comprehensive resilience requires addressing all dimensions of community stability. In agricultural regions, that means protecting not just human safety but the farming operations that anchor rural economies and food systems.

For Florida SART, the Baker County event demonstrated what happens when agricultural response teams join forces with emergency management agencies, nonprofits, and engaged citizens. The result is a community that understands survival depends on protecting every asset—from family members to the livestock that define rural life.

Updated HPAI Temporary Restrictions on the Importation of Dairy Cattle



On September 1, 2026, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) updated restrictions on imported dairy cattle following confirmed detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in herds in Texas and Utah. Dairy cattle entering Florida from a state not cleared by USDA of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) must have an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI) that includes:

- Whether the cow is lactating or not.
- If lactating, proof she tested negative for H5N1 influenza within 7 days before arrival, including test date, lab name, and test number.
 - Herds in a "Voluntary HPAI Monitored Unaffected Herd" don't need individual cow tests, but the OCVI must say so and include the date of the herd's last test.
- If non-lactating, the OCVI must be issued within 10 days of arrival in Florida.
- Dairy cows from a herd that had HPAI in the last 120 days are banned from entering Florida.
- Exception for slaughter-bound cows:
 - Lactating cows heading directly to slaughter don't need the H5N1 test—just a valid OCVI or owner-shipper statement issued within 10 days before crossing into Florida.

For more information, visit: https://flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=31328204

New World Screwworm

Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Florida Updates Animal Import Requirements Amid New Detections

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) issued new temporary rules on September 9, 2026, for animals coming from areas affected by New World Screwworm (NWS). Any warm-blooded animal that originated in – or spent time in – an infested zone within 14 days before reaching Florida must now meet additional entry requirements. Until further notice, owners or transporters must apply for a Florida Certificate of Animal Movement and obtain a prior permission number at least two days before the animal arrives at the Florida border. Infested and High-Risk counties for each affected state are listed in the table below. New World Screwworm detections in the United States rose to 50 in September. NWS has not been detected in Florida.



Source: USDA/APHIS

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.

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).

Continued, next page.

New World Screwworm (continued)

Separating Fact from Fiction

Understanding the facts about New World Screwworm is critical to containing the spread of NWS and addressing public concern. The USDA's NWS Myth Busters fact sheet identifies and dispels common misconceptions related to Screwworm. For example, presence of fly larvae is not necessarily indicative of a Screwworm infestation. Botfly and blowfly infestations present similarly to NWS and may coexist with NWS in some instances. Examination of a specimen by an entomologist is necessary to positively identify the fly larvae species. Additionally, the publication explains that NWS is not contagious, is not a food safety concern, and that culling an entire herd due to the presence of NWS is not necessary.

More details may be found at:

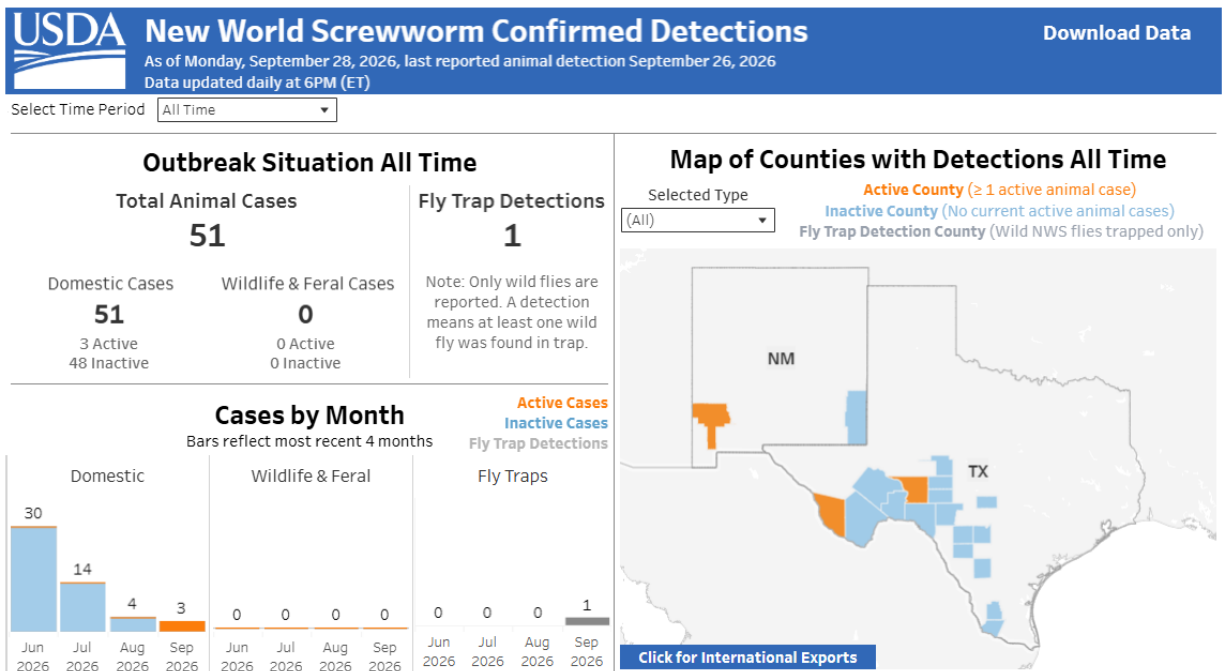
<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/nws-myth-busters.pdf>

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 New World 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, September 28, 2026.

New World Screwworm Resources

- [Commissioner Wilton Simpson Issues Emergency Rule to Further Protect Florida from Threat of New World Screwworm](#)
- [USDA APHIS – Information on the Screwworm Eradication Program](#)
- [FDACS – New World Screwworm Information Page](#)
- [FDA – New World Screwworm Information for Veterinarians](#)

NEW WORLD SCREWORM(NWS) ENHANCED PROTOCOLS

September 2026

ANIMAL MOVEMENT WITHIN FLORIDA

No enhanced NWS protocols, visit [FDACS.gov/AnimalMovement](https://fdacs.gov/AnimalMovement) for existing animal movement requirements.



ANIMAL IMPORTS FROM NON HIGH-RISK NWS AREAS

No enhanced NWS protocols, visit [FDACS.gov/AnimalMovement](https://fdacs.gov/AnimalMovement) for existing animal movement requirements.



ANIMAL IMPORTS FROM HIGH-RISK NWS AREAS

- Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI), valid for 5 days from date of inspection, documenting that all animals have been inspected and found free of disease and pests, including NWS.
- Without a valid OCVI, imports will be quarantined and fines will be levied.



ANIMAL IMPORTS FROM NWS INFESTED ZONES

- All warm-blooded animals originating from designated infested zones within the previous 14 days must receive a Florida Certificate of Animal Movement and prior permission number, applied for 2 days in advance of arrival.
- Certificate will require an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI), valid for 5 days from date of inspection, documentation of inspection, documentation of effective treatment for NWS.
- Without a Florida Certificate of Animal Movement and required documentation, imports will be turned away at the border.

For the latest information on the New World Screwworm, zone designations, and animal movement protocols, visit [FDACS.gov/NWS](https://fdacs.gov/NWS) or scan the QR code above.



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 3, Taylor County - October 17, Duval County - November 7, Lee County - November 21-22, Online Live	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 is not open to the public:

- SART Partners Monthly Virtual Meeting – October 28, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. (Microsoft Teams)



In the News...

- [Florida races to stop tiny pest ruining sugarcane, lawns](#) (Tallahassee Democrat)
- [Florida Forest Service Opens 2026 Applications for Southern Pine Beetle Assistance and Prevention Program](#) (FDACS)
- [Emergency Rescue of Trafficked Aquatic Wildlife](#) (Yahoo)
- [Pinellas joins Pasco, Hillsborough in declaring state of emergency over dengue fever](#) (WFLA)

SART Offers Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training – Register Now!

The Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training is the first of its kind to be offered in Florida. The Training 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.

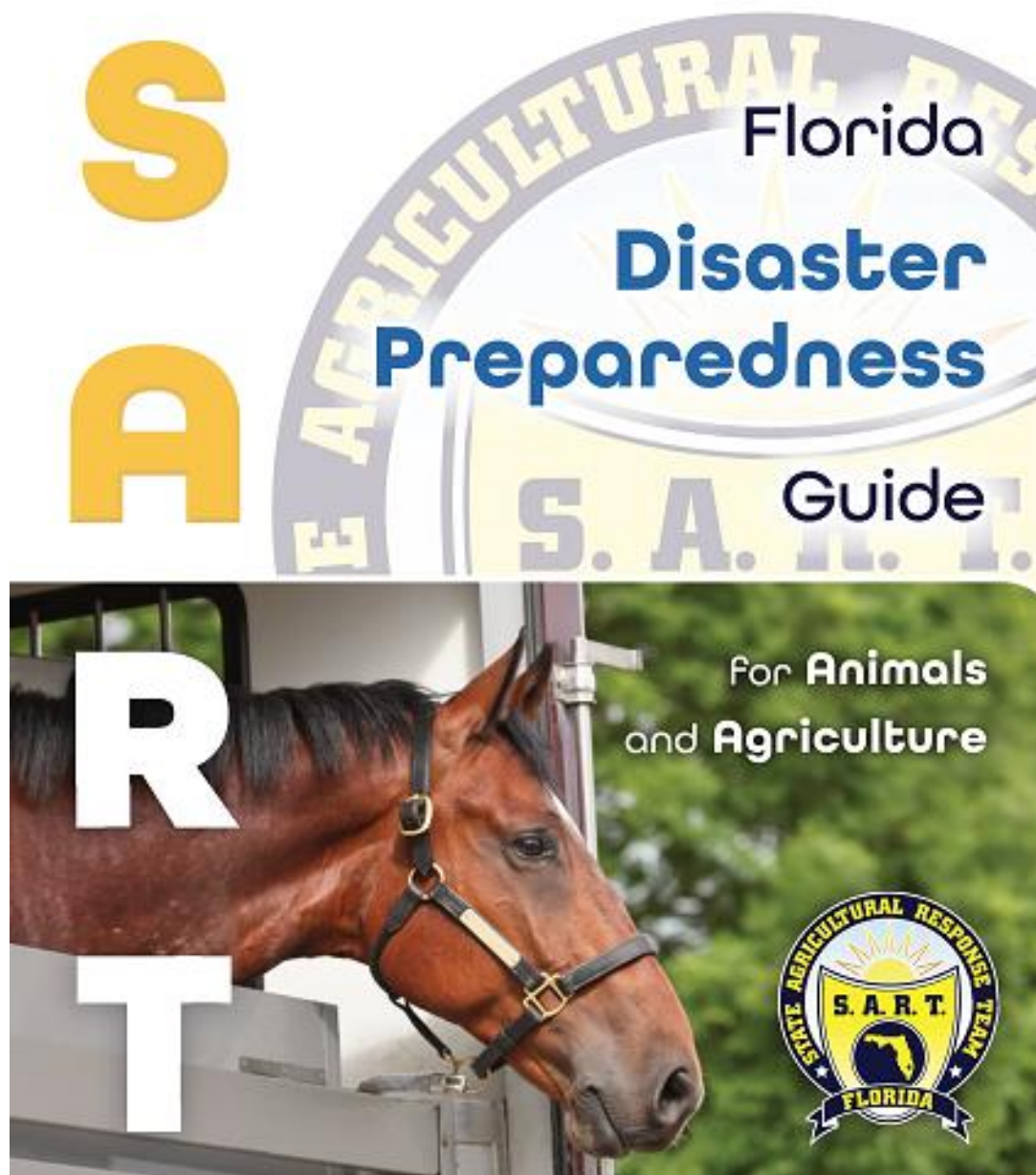


The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture

The [Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture](https://flsart.org/resource/DisasterPreparednessGuides/DisasterPreparednessGuides.jsp) 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

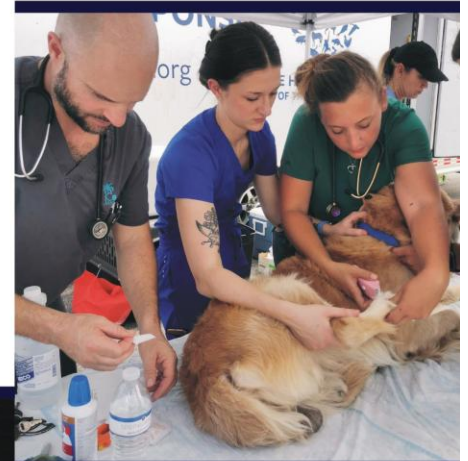


Florida VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

UF College of
Veterinary Medicine
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



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>

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN *October*

North

Central

South

 EASY TO TRANSPLANT Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Strawberry, Swiss Chard	Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Strawberry, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tropical Spinaches	Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Eggplant, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Peppers, Strawberry, Sugarcane, Swiss Chard, Tomatillo, Tomatoes, Tropical Spinaches
 TRANSPLANT CAREFULLY Celery, Mustard, Spinach	Celery, Mustard, Pineapple, Spinach	Amaranth, Calabaza, Celery, Long Squashes, Luffa, Mustard, Pineapple, Potatoes, Seminole Pumpkin, Spinach
 USE SEEDS Carrots, Onions (bulbing, bunching), Radish, Turnips	Carrots, Onions (bulbing, bunching), Radish, Turnips	Beans (bush, lima, pole), Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bulbing, bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Turnips



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



Gardening
SOLUTIONS

For more information, please visit
GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

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.



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.



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.



Tell children not to accept—and especially not eat—anything that isn't wrapped.



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.



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 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.*)



If you have very young children, remove any choking hazards like gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.



Before and after eating treats, wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.



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

SART Response Equipment List and Request Information

<https://flsart.org/resource/equipmentrequest.jsp>

FDEM Vector Control Quick Guide

<https://flsart.org/pdf/Vector%20Control%20Quick%20Guide.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.

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