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EDEN Offers Plant Biosecurity Management Course

EDEN, the Extension Disaster Education Network, is offering a course on *Plant Biosecurity Management* for extension advisors, agents, and specialists who understand the urgency of plant protection and who will have the opportunity to teach plant biosecurity management to those involved in the U.S. agricultural sector. It is also suitable for agricultural producers, emergency managers and public health officials.

The interactive on-line course helps teach one to prepare for a plant biosecurity event; to appropriately respond and recover; and to reduce the effects of future such events. There is no charge for taking the course on-line and one should plan to devote about eight hours to the learning module. No university credit is given for completion, but a Certificate of Completion is awarded for successful conclusion. Access the course through www.eden.lsu.edu/learningops/PlantBio/default.aspx.

EDEN is a collaborative multi-state effort by Extension Services across the U.S. to improve the delivery of services to citizens affected by disasters. The EDEN site serves primarily Extension agents and educators by providing them access to resources on disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery that will enhance their short- and long-term programming efforts. www.EDEN.lsu.edu

For additional information, contact Carol Lehtola, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist at the University of Florida’s Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering: (352) 392-1864 clehtola@ufl.edu.



There is no charge to take EDEN's interactive on-line biosecurity course.

SART Advisory Board Membership Expands

The 4th Quarter SART Advisory Board met in Gainesville on Wednesday the 6th and welcomed the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services on board as a full member. The initials of course stand for U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/).

Wildlife Services is tasked with resolving conflicts between humans and wildlife, creating a balance that allows populations to co-exist peacefully. The mission includes not only controlling wildlife damage to crops, but action in cases where public health and safety issues arise, including possible biosecurity issues.

In Florida, Wildlife Services provides assistance with an enormous range of wildlife concerns, some of which are: managing expanding feral hog populations, monitoring for rabies and West Nile Virus, coyote control, preventing wildlife collisions with aircraft, protecting sea turtles, eliminating populations of exotics and helping dissuade cormorants in Florida's growing aquaculture industry. See www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/pdf/florida.pdf for a more detailed list of Wildlife Service's role in Florida agriculture.



Mr. Bernice Constantin, State Director, is located in the Gainesville Wildlife Services office and may be reached at (352) 377-5556.

NOTE: Please watch for minutes of the December 6 Advisory Board meeting which will be available and posted on this web site soon.

The First Quarter 2007 Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for March 7th at 9:00 a.m. in the Florida Farm Bureau building, Gainesville.

According to APHIS Wildlife Services, regulated hunting is not controlling Florida's exploding population of feral hogs

Farm Bureau Preps County Offices – Earns SART “AttaBoy!”

Following the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, the Florida Farm Bureau recognized a need for county members to have readily available emergency data. So

in January, 2006 Frankie Hall and Adam Basford began to develop an emergency response and management guide.



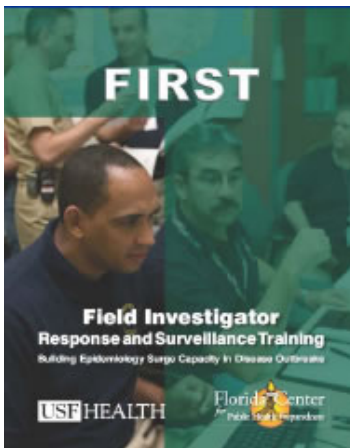
“It quickly became apparent that *one size does not fit all*, however,” Adam reported to the recent SART Advisory Board meeting held the Farm Bureau in Gainesville. “We have offices in 60 counties and each is slightly different. Thus, our approach became to develop a template that would be useful in each office (protecting records, evacuation plans, building codes, etc.), but which would account for Florida’s diversity. We were finished in May and sent binders to our offices in time for the 2006 hurricane season, which fortunately was mild.”

For additional information about the Farm Bureau Efforts, contact Frankie Hall or Adam Basford at (352) 378-8100 or www.floridafarmbureau.org.

The Florida Farm Bureau has developed formats for emergency response plans and disseminated them to each county

Field Investigator Courses Are Still Open

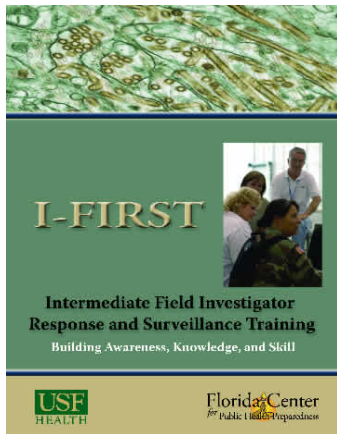
The Florida Center for Public Health Preparedness, College of Public Health, University of South Florida, still has slots available for its basic (FIRST) and intermediate (I-FIRST) courses in Field Investigator Response and Surveillance Training.



FIRST is a basic course designed to help public health staff and their community partners who may be called upon to assist epidemiology staff in their investigations during a public health crisis. There is no charge for the one-day, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., course, but some on-line preparation is required. Participation is limited to 50.

- Tampa Region: January 30, 2007: Location TBD
<http://www.fcphp.usf.edu/courses/course/course.asp?c=FIRST67TPA>

- West Palm Beach: February 20, 2007: Location TBD



I-FIRST is the intermediate course, designed to further develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of public health professionals and their community partners who may be deployed on *Field Epidemiology Strike Teams*. Members of these teams assist epidemiology staff in disease investigations during a public health crisis. The focus is gastro-intestinal illness and avian influenza.

- Tampa Region: January 31-February 1, 2007: Location TBD

<http://www.fcphp.usf.edu/courses/course/course.asp?c=IFIRST67TPA>

For more information, contact Pam Price, Coordinator, Education and Training Florida Center for Public Health Preparedness, College of Public Health, University of South Florida, 13201 Bruce B. Downs Blvd. (MDC56), Tampa, FL 33612 (813) 974-3718; 574-3718 (Suncom) or (813) 974-6644 pprice@health.usf.edu www.fcphp.usf.edu/.

Time to Plan for 2007 State Conference

There's no reason to put this off one extra minute. Place the annual Florida ESF17/SART Conference May 30-June 1, 2007, at the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort, St. Petersburg Beach on your schedule now. (www.tradewindsresort.com)

- It is timed for the beginning of the 2007 hurricane season.
- It is the end of the school year – so while your family swims or shops for antiques, you can expand your horizons, build valuable response skills and make great contacts.



Conference attendees leaving class!

Florida ESF 17 Coordinator Dr. Greg Christy expects 200 to 300 people representing every facet of emergency preparedness and disaster readiness-planning to attend. With a terrific schedule of meetings and demonstrations, this conference will be especially beneficial for county SART coordinators. Sessions are tentatively scheduled on animal, aquaculture and farm/nursery

issues; terrorism awareness, emergency management and organizational skills under pressure. You will learn how to boost the effectiveness of your county SART and how to make best use of the SART website. Additionally, you can be introduced to training from ICS-100 and IS-700.

Room rates are less than \$100 per night, so this conference should be very affordable as well as tremendously informative.

For updates and additional information, stay tuned: www.flsart.org!

Florida AgSafe

The difficulty is always getting timely information in the hands of people with the need-to-know. That's why ... or how www.flagsafe.ufl.edu is so important. Administered by the University of Florida's Carol Lehtola from the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, this web site should be on the must-read list for agriculturalists.

Lehtola, who is the university's agricultural safety specialist, says that a recent issue of the site newsletter *Safety News & Notes* – both current and former issues are available at the FIAgSafe web site – discussed the following subjects:

- Thoughts & Quotes (training is more than a video)
- Confined Space for Agriculture – Free Course On-line
- Off-Guard Project (Photo-Essay Book)
- Assessing Damage and Restoring Trees after a Hurricane
- Interactive Demonstrations of Safe Play Areas at Rural & Agricultural Events
- Extension Publications in Spanish
- It's Easier to Bury a Tradition than a Child
- Lawn Equipment Safety Video & Audio Clips
- Concerned Families for ATV Safety
- Farm Security – Meth Production
- NIOSH Publication for Working Safely with Cranes & Hoisted Loads
- Prevent Tip-over Hazards (furniture on children)



Prevent Children Drowning around the Home
If you can't find something of interest on this site, consider yourself informationally challenged! For additional information, contact Carol Lehtola, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist at the University of Florida's Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering: (352) 392-1864 clehtola@ufl.edu.

It is easier to bury a tradition than a child.

Exotic Update: Melaleuca (*melaleuca quinquenervia*)

According to the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, "invasive exotic pest plants are biological pollutants that wipe out more natural habitat every year than development." In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, Florida spent \$90,836,680 on exotic plant, animal and insect control. Approximately 1.7 million acres of Florida's remaining natural areas have been invaded by exotic plant species.

Florida's ecosystems are unique. Exotics alter the landscape of Florida and render habitats unsuitable to native species. This reduces biodiversity and puts additional strain on endangered species, of which Florida has more than any other state in the continental U.S.

A native of Australia, the melaleuca or paperbark tree is an aggressive invader originally introduced in Florida in 1900 for landscaping and "swamp drying." It spreads extraordinarily rapidly, produces millions of seeds, and grows in very dense, almost impenetrable, aggregations. If that were not bad enough, melaleuca out-competes native vegetation and destroys habitat – sawgrass marshes and wet prairies, for instance – that is suitable for our native animals and insects. According to the Department of Environmental Protection, in a single year, one melaleuca tree can produce a dense island hammock nearly 600 feet in diameter.

Unfortunately, melaleuca has taken over hundreds of thousands of acres in the Everglades. It is an extremely difficult plant to eradicate, because a single tree can produce up to one million seeds per year and can store about 20 million seeds. Seed dispersal is triggered by events such as storms, fires, chopping trees down and even the application of herbicide. Florida spends \$3-6 million each year attempting to control this plant.



- Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Invasive Plant Management
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/index.htm>
- University of Florida, IFAS, Integrated Pest Management
<http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/applying/invasive-species/index.htm>
- Florida Exotic Pest Council <http://www.fleppc.org/>

Damage to Florida's Everglades from the invasion of melaleuca (and Brazilian pepper) may now be irreversible.

Florida Horse Park Makes Pitch to Advisory Board

Margaret Rowell, Director of Development for the Florida Horse Park near Ocala introduced the park to the recent SART Advisory Board. Located in the heart of Florida horse country – at least 900 horse farms in the immediate area – the 500-acre facility is designed to serve the \$100 billion U.S. horse market.

"We were established by Florida statute in the late '90s and due to the generosity and hard work of many individuals and organizations, we are up and running in grand style," Rowell said. "The park hosts equestrian events of all styles from Olympic-style



dressage competition to polo to recreational trail riding. Riders can access the Cross Florida Greenway directly from the park.”

If you would like to know more about Florida Horse Park, check out their web site at www.flhorsepark.com or contact Margaret at (352) [307-6699](tel:307-6699)/margaret@flhorsepark.com.

Carol Clifton enjoys trail rides atop her five-year-old gelding paint Stormy

Liz Wang Sighting and Update

We recently called former Florida SART Coordinator Liz Wang to check on her progress developing the SART concept in the Lone Star State. Her new title in Austin is Executive Director of the Texas State Animal Resource Team (TXSART), a program of the Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation.

Liz reports that, “Texas is special in every way. Everything is different in Texas.”

Apparently, Texas’ animal and agricultural emergency response is organized on a very decentralized structure, not along the state ESF guidelines implemented by Florida. Counties and regions are the primary responding units with state agencies and industry cooperators participating as needed ... and as requested by local authorities. It is what one might expect from a state that was formerly an independent nation!



Right now, Liz’ goals are putting together the TXSART Summit – scheduled for January 19-20 - and working with the national state programs which will be held in Las Vegas this month. Liz can be reached by email at ewang@tvma.org.

Liz said she looked forward to having help from FL SART at the TXSART Summit. David Perry and John Haven have been asked to facilitate two breakout sessions addressing damage assessment and donations management, respectively. David Perry of FDACS has been Incident Commander for Florida's recent hurricanes, as well as for the EMAC assistance team to Mississippi during Hurricane Katrina. John Haven, U.F. Veterinary College Director and VETS Team Director, will help brainstorm fundraising and fostering the relationship between veterinary professional associations, universities and industry.

About the SART Sentinel

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The SART SENTINEL is an E-mail newsletter prepared monthly by Rick Sapp and the members of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team. Past issues of the *Sentinel* are archived on the Florida SART Web Site, 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.