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## New ESF 17 Coordinator



Joe Kight has been involved in animal and agricultural emergency planning and preparedness for 15 years.

Mr. Joe Kight is Florida's new Emergency Support Function (ESF) 17 Coordinator reporting to Dr. Thomas Holt, State Veterinarian and Director of the Division of Animal Industry (DAI).

Joe is responsible for coordinating and directing emergency preparedness and response for DAI, and is the emergency point of contact for the division. In addition, he will represent the DAI on the State Agricultural

Response Team (SART). His previous involvement in the development of emergency management programs, beginning in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, ensures continuity of effort, says Dr. Holt.

Joe received his BS degree with a major in Agricultural Education and Extension from the University of Florida in 1974. Following graduation, he worked with the Volusia County School Board, Florida Farm Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Joe began work with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in February 1985, as Chief of the Bureau of License and Bond in the Division of Marketing, and joined the Division of Animal Industry nine years later.

"I think of myself as a problem solver," Joe says. "My job is to remove hurdles, help the members of our state-wide division and team to be more successful."

Headquartered in Tallahassee, Joe can be contacted at (850) 410-0920 or via e-mail at [rightj@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:rightj@doacs.state.fl.us). In an emergency, he may be contacted at (850) 251-2841.

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## Volusia Farm Service Agency Relocates Due to Tornado Damage

Agricultural producers participating in USDA programs served by the Deland/Volusia County USDA Service Center should contact the Tavares/Lake County USDA Service Center (for information and directions call **(352) 343-2581**) to process any program applications for the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The USDA offices were transferred to Lake County after tornadoes hit the area on Friday, February 2. "The building where our office was located is mostly destroyed, but we are serving our FSA customers through the Lake County Office," said Kevin Kelley, FSA State Director.



The destructive "Ground Hog Day" weather system struck at night and has forced the relocation of the Deland/Volusia County FSA office.

USDA officials are still assessing area agricultural damage. Affected producers should contact the Lake County FSA for information on USDA disaster assistance. This information is also available online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing>

Disaster information may be obtained at three Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC), open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The centers are located at 38521

Lakeview Drive and 1985 Laurel Manor Drive in Lady Lake and The Villages of Sumter County, as well as 31029 Lake Mack Road in the Paisley area. At these centers one can meet disaster recovery specialists and government representatives who can answer questions and provide recovery information. To register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) or call (800) 621-FEMA. Storm victims may register on site at the DRC.

For additional information, contact Kevin L. Kelley, FSA State Executive Director (352) 379-4500 or Cynthia M. Portalatin, FSA Public Affairs Specialist (352) 379-4562 [cynthia.portalatin@fl.usda.gov](mailto:cynthia.portalatin@fl.usda.gov).

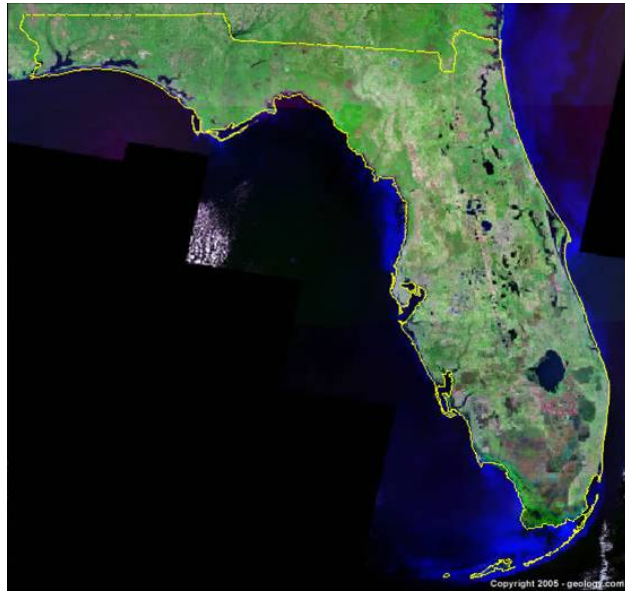
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## New Training Unit: Introducing Florida's Livestock and Horse Industries

If there is a problem understanding Florida's diverse and growing animal agricultural sectors, it is determining what should be included. Cattle, pigs and horses, certainly. And probably rabbits and chickens. But what about honeybees and exotic big game animals such as Axis deer on game preserves or unusual snakes and tarantulas imported legally and sold to exotic pet enthusiasts?

This training unit presents an overview of the livestock and horse industries in Florida and gives a snapshot of their distribution, value to the economy and viability.

<http://www.flsart.org/library/index.htm>



Florida has a large and vital industry in every sector of livestock and horses, from raising cattle, pigs and chickens to horse racing.

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## New Training Unit On Line: Foreign Animal Disease Recognition

In an effort to promote farm security in Florida, a 70-minute training unit "Livestock & Horses: Foreign Animal Disease Recognition" is now on line at the SART web site: [www.flsart.org/PDF/LAH-FAD-LP-2007-01.pdf](http://www.flsart.org/PDF/LAH-FAD-LP-2007-01.pdf).

Christian Hofer, Katherine Maldonado, Paul Gibbs, Charles Brown and Carol Lehtola, all of the University of Florida, Gainesville, introduce foreign animal diseases, discuss nine threats to animal agricultural security and addresses methods of increasing farm security.

- *Foot and Mouth Disease* (viral in origin; can even be spread on clothing).
- *Heartwater* (often fatal, bacteria is spread by ticks; a U.S. outbreak could cost billions).
- *African Horse Sickness* (virus causes high death rate; zebra is possible reservoir host).
- *Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis* (serious viral disease endemic to Central/South America).
- *Rift Valley Fever* (acute viral disease spread by mosquitoes transmissible to humans).

- *Exotic Newcastle Disease* (fast acting, often fatal to birds and poultry, spread through contact with droppings).
- *Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza* (highly contagious, generally fatal virus among birds; potential human pandemic).
- *African Swine Fever* (highly contagious virus).
- *Classic Swine Fever* (“hog cholera;” highly contagious and deadly).

Produced by professionals at the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, IFAS, the new training unit “Livestock & Horses: Foreign Animal Disease Recognition” is a 70-minute primer in the potential for exotic animal disease vectors to impact Florida’s animal industry.



It is vitally important to be alert to foreign animal diseases because recognition results in quarantines, interruption of the food supply chain, the slaughter of thousands of animals, millions of dollars spent on controls and, ultimately, increased cost to the consumer.

## New Training Unit Explores Exotic Plant Diseases



Citrus greening has arrived in Florida and probably cannot be eradicated.

Under the heading *Three Exotic Plant Diseases Threatening Florida*, a new SART training unit discuss three specific agricultural sectors – citrus, field crops and nurseries – and the three diseases that pose the greatest threat to their survival. It also illustrates the variety of ways that diseases can reach and become entrenched in Florida.

Citrus, an enormous agricultural sector in the Sunshine State (90,000 jobs and an output impacts of \$10 billion), is threatened with extremely dire

consequences as a result of “citrus greening.” Although Vietnamese scientists recently reported a breakthrough, there is no known cure for this disease, which quickly kills trees and renders fruit unpalatable.

Although the Florida soybean crop is small, it – as other state crops throughout the south – struggles with “soybean rust.” Disease spores were probably blown into Florida from South America by a hurricane in the ‘90s! The nursery industry faces “sudden oak death,” syndromes not limited to oak trees. Although this disease is not quickly fatal for yard, garden and nursery plants it quickly begins to deform stems, defoliate branches and wither leaves and fruit. SOD was probably imported from wholesale nurseries in California.



Three exotic psyllid species have been found in Florida and all carry a bacteria detrimental to the citrus industry.

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## New Training Unit: An Entomological Perspective for Emergency Agricultural Response



Plant-eating snails are not native to the Florida environment and pose a danger because they have no natural native predators; they are not part of the natural food-chain of the state.

The final unit – for now – in the SART series of training modules and units is *An Entomological Perspective for Emergency Agricultural Response*. Its Lesson Plan, Participant Workbook and PowerPoint Presentation focus on Florida as a “sentinel state.” Our peninsula’s unique geographic position attracts wandering entomological species (bugs) from every corner of the earth – so far, nothing identified from space, no extraterrestrial seeding of soybean fields – and, by and large, the overwhelming majority are Not Beneficial!

*An Entomological Perspective* unit examines some of the invasive insects loose in the state, and the measures for responding effectively in a demographic climate of rapid urbanization: management, eradication or a combination of the two strategies. Also reviewed are some of the bugs that Florida farmers, ranchers and growers DO NOT want here regardless of the cost!

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## Guest Appearances May Not Highlight SART Events

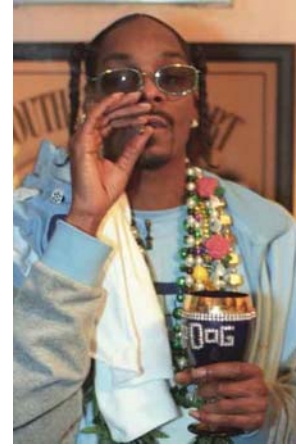


Madonna will not give the keynote speech at the SART Advisory Board meeting March 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in the Florida Farm Bureau in Gainesville.

The next quarterly Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 7th at 9:00 a.m. in the Florida Farm Bureau building in Gainesville (same location as the December 6, 2006 meeting). The FFB is located on the east side of Interstate 75 in southwest Gainesville and can easily be reached by taking the SR 121 (Williston Rd.) exit.

Secondly, the annual Florida ESF17/SART Conference is scheduled for May 30-June 1 at the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort ([www.tradewindsresort.com](http://www.tradewindsresort.com)), St. Petersburg Beach. Timed for the beginning of the 2007 hurricane season, it is also the end of the school year, so make this a working

vacation! Attendance is limited to about 300. Go to [www.flsart.org/pdf/SART%20Registration%20Form.pdf](http://www.flsart.org/pdf/SART%20Registration%20Form.pdf) to make reservations.



We regret that Snoop Dogg may not be present to recite his all-time rap classics at the Florida SART Conference May 30<sup>th</sup> in St. Petersburg.

## There May Be A Test ....

Quick!

If you were on the road and discovered an agricultural emergency, do you know the telephone number of the State Emergency Operations Center? Hmmm. It is in Tallahassee so the area code must be 850 ....

If ESF 17 is "Animal Protection: Agricultural, Livestock and Dairy Issues," then ESF 16 would be \_\_\_\_\_ and ESF 11 would be \_\_\_\_\_ and ESF 4 would be \_\_\_\_\_?

Hint: one of them is "Agricultural Law Enforcement Issues," one is "Food, Water and Ice: Distribution to Victims" and one is "Firefighting: Wildfire."



If you had the recently produced DOACS poster (DACS-P-01312) you just might remember all of the above ... and the telephone number for the EOC is (850) 413-9900.

For additional information about emergency resources, visit the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services web site at [www.doacs.state.fl.us](http://www.doacs.state.fl.us).

Never shout “Fire!” in a crowded theatre ... unless there truly is a life-threatening fire, in which case don’t hold back! In Florida, Firefighting/Wildfires is an ESF function. Do you know which one?

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## Exotic Update: Air Potato

One potato, two potato ... billion potato!

The air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) is a non-native, invasive vine. Covered with large leaves, it can grow 60 to 70 feet in one season and overtop trees, engulfing native vegetation in natural areas.

A member of the yam family, air potatoes produce enormous numbers of aerial tubers that look similar to Idaho potatoes, each of which is filled with seed. These potato-like growths attached to the stems, which grow into new plants. The large number of these bulbis facilitate the plant’s spread and make it extremely difficult to eliminate.

While yams species are grown around the world and have multiple uses, the air potato may have entered Florida as an ornamental and prospective food plant in about 1905 (or earlier). By the early 1970s, it was already recognized as a pest.



Air potatoes on the vine. These lightweight tubers vary in size from a pencil eraser to The Rock’s clenched fist, but all contain new vine seed, and hundreds of the tubers can be found under a single vine.

To combat the spread of air potatoes, some localities sponsor annual “Air Potato Round-Ups.” Gainesville is one such community where each year in January or February, nearly 1,000 volunteers collect about 10 tons of air potatoes and other invasive plants from natural areas and neighborhoods. This successful event is modeled after popular litter clean-up efforts, but instead of trash, participants pick up tubers of the invasive air potato. [www.cityofgainesville.org/webportal/portals/mco/PR-Air%20Potato.pdf](http://www.cityofgainesville.org/webportal/portals/mco/PR-Air%20Potato.pdf)

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## 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](http://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.