



Vol. 5, No. 5, May 2009

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Openings in Agroterrorism Courses

FDACS' Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness is again partnering with the Western Institute of Food Safety and Security (WIFSS) to sponsor DHS Certified Agroterrorism Courses. All courses are **Free**.

There are a few openings for June course offerings, but registration closes soon!

- **AWR-151 Awareness: Understanding the Dangers of Agroterrorism**
 - **June 3, Sarasota:** 8:00 AM to Noon at the Manatee Community College Center for Innovation and Technology at Lakewood Ranch (Auditorium), 7131 Professional Parkway, East Sarasota, FL 34240.
 - **June 4, Ft Myers:** 8:00 AM to Noon at the Fort Myers Regional Operations Center, 4700 Terminal Drive, Suite 6, Ft Myers, FL 33901.

Registration is also open for the July and September courses.

- **AWR-152 Preparedness: Principles of Preparedness for Agroterrorism and Food Systems' Disasters**
 - **July 9, Gainesville:** 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM at the USDA Farm Service Agency, 4401 NW 25th Place, Suite M, Gainesville, FL 32606.
 - **September 15, Orlando:** 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM at the Orange County Sheriff's Office Central Operations Center, Mel Martinez Auditorium, 2500 W. Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL 32804.
 - **September 16, Miami:** 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM at the FDLE Miami (MROC), in the FDLE Building, Emergency Operations Center, 1030 NW 111th Ave, Miami, FL 33172.
- **AWR-153 Detection: Principles of Detection and Diagnosis: Strategies and Technologies**
 - **June 2, Seffner:** 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Hillsborough County Extension Office, 5339 South CR-579, Seffner, FL 33584.
 - **June 17, Belle Glade:** 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Everglades REC Conference Center, 3200 East Palm Beach Road, Belle Glade, FL 33430.
 - **June 18, Homestead:** 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Miami-Dade County Extension Office, Agricultural Center, 18710 SW 288th Street, Homestead, FL 33030.
 - **June 19, Davie:** 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Institute of Public Safety (Building 22, Room 155), Broward College, Central Campus, Davie, FL 33314.
 - **July 7, Tallahassee:** 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Betty Easley Conference Center, Southwood State Campus, 4075 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399.
 - **July 8, Jacksonville:** 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Jacksonville FDLE Regional Operations Center (JROC), 921 N Davis Street, Building E, Jacksonville, FL 32209.

Check the links below for details and contact me if you have questions: Art Johnstone, Director, FDACS Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness, Office - (850) 410-6758 Mobile - (850) 251-4184 johnsta@doacs.state.fl.us.

Registration:

<http://wifss.ucdavis.edu/agroterrorism/classes/classesbydate.php>

Course Information:

http://wifss.ucdavis.edu/agroterrorism/classes/course_desc.php

Follow Up about AgERT Training at CDP





“Thanks for the article about Agricultural Emergency Response (AgERT) Training at the Center for Domestic Preparedness (<http://cdp.dhs.gov> – March 2009 SART Sentinel),” writes Gordon Harman, APHIS Liaison to CDP. “If your folks have questions regarding the course content, they may call me at (256) 231-5632 and register through Florida State Administrative Agencies. SAA representatives for Florida are Novella Tise (850) 414-8563 and Rudolf Ferguson (850) 922-5423. The Eastern Region Student Services Coordinator is Tom Tidwell (866) 213-9546 tidwellt@cdpemail.dhs.gov.”

Future classes include: 7-12 June (6 seats), 27 July-1 August (19 seats), 23-28 August (29 seats) and 20-25 September (27 seats). Harman notes that Auburn University awards 30 continuing education veterinary credits and that the course is also open to state and local fire, Hazmat and law enforcement personnel.

For additional information about the training, contact R. Gordon Harman, 256) 231-5632 office or (301) 332-8390 BlackBerry: robert.g.harman@aphis.usda.gov or harmanr@cdpemail.dhs.gov.

The Coordinated Training Event

By John Haven, Director, UF College of Veterinary Medicine

	
<p>Lana Haven, UF VETS team volunteer (left) handles the horse with Dr. Bill Shelton from the Vet Corps during the A-frame lift of "Sheridan."</p>	<p>UF Vet School student Heather Rogers directs the lowering of Vet School student Carrie Coffee during the canal rescue of horse rescue dummy "Fugly."</p>

April 4: Bay Area DART and the UF College of Veterinary Medicine VETS disaster response team put on an all day large animal technical rescue "awareness level" training class, which was sponsored by the City of Pinellas Park. The city provided two parks, tents, equipment, etc. to make for an exceptional training venue. The class consisted of local veterinarians and technicians, police officers from the mounted patrol, fire/rescue, and humane groups from surrounding communities. Local Vet Corps Reserve members also participated. Pinellas Park is a large equine community, often overshadowed by the race horses in Ocala.

More than 30 people received hands-on training starting out with basic knot tying, moving through an A-Frame Lift of a live horse, a swim rescue of a horse, and the grand finale of a rescue of "Fugly" the horse rescue dummy, from the canal. This required trained responders to be lowered into the canal.



UF VETS team member Katherine Pennenga directs a team during the A-frame lift of "Sheridan."



John Haven's horse "Moose," who often volunteers for training, enjoys a swim rescue.

In these times of tight budgets, the UF VETS team goal is to combine its training with surrounding communities and SART partners, to share its knowledge, enhance its own skills by working with others in new situations, and to build relationships with partners it will respond with during a disaster. The VETS team attempts to have at least one training evolution per month for its team.

Current Issues

It's Hurricane Season!

The storm on the home page is, of course, Hurricane Katrina. This is a NOAA photo taken at landfall on August 29, 2005. Hurricane season officially runs from June 1st to November 30th ... although storms may swirl northward out of the tropics either before or after those dates.

- A HURRICANE WATCH means that hurricane conditions may exist within 36 hours.
- A HURRICANE WARNING indicates that sustained winds of at least 74 mph are expected within 24 hours.

"We foresee average activity for the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season," write Philip J. Klotzbach and William M. Gray at Colorado State University's *Tropical Meteorology Project*. "We have decreased our seasonal forecast from our initial early December prediction. [As of April 7th,] We anticipate an average probability of United States major hurricane landfall."



Philip Klotzbach and William Gray of Colorado State University's Tropical Meteorology Project.

Basing their forecast on cooler water temperatures in the Atlantic, meteorologists Klotzbach and Gray predict six hurricanes and a dozen tropical storms. This forecast as well as past forecasts and verifications are available at <http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/Forecasts>.

Selenium & Polo Horses

What is selenium? It is a chemical element that is necessary for proper animal cell function; it is also toxic in large doses.

Selenium is implicated in the sudden and initially mysterious April 19 deaths of 21

Selenium (top to bottom): raw, processed and bottled for pharmaceutical uses.



Venezuelan polo horses in Wellington, Florida. A vitamin supplement containing vitamin B, potassium, magnesium and selenium, was prepared by Franck's Pharmacy in Ocala. It may somehow have mistaken the 0.5 mg/ml veterinary prescription for 5.0 mg/ml. The administered compound was apparently a substitute for Biodyl, a vitamin-mineral mix that is not approved for use in the US.

In a summary memorandum, Florida State Veterinarian Dr. Tom Holt stated that the animals had "significantly increased selenium levels" in samples tested. Findings obtained at the Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Kissimmee were confirmed by independent testing at UF's College of Veterinary Medicine, the University of California-Davis' Animal Health and Food Safety lab and at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

"Signs exhibited by the horses and their rapid deaths were consistent with toxic doses of selenium," Holt said.

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/press/2009/04282009.html>

Flooding & Drought

"Due to the relatively flat terrain across Florida, it is complicated to drain accumulated water. When rivers rise, water tends to spread out far from riverbanks." (www.floridadisaster.org)

According to Joe Kight, Florida ESF-17 Coordinator, few animal issues resulted from the flooding. "People took care of their own needs and helped each other so it wasn't a severe issue." On the other hand agricultural issues such as delayed plantings may not

yet be fully assessed. (View photos and a slide show at the Suwannee River Water Management District internet site at www.srwmd.org.)

FDACS' experienced on-site team leader David Perry worked with Hamilton, Madison and Suwannee Counties to ensure that state resources was available if needed and that inter-agency coordination was smooth.

Janis Hunter from the Suwannee County Animal Shelter noted, "It appears that all went as well as can be expected, at least, from calls we received at the shelter. We opened a pet friendly shelter, but after 'no takers' we soon closed. Seems that folks heeded the messages and are taking pets with them when they evacuate. Most people who live on the river are used to the move whenever the river rises.



"It does not seem rational," Hunter says, "that we could have a drought and flooding at the same time. But we have been dry for so long and most of the rain is above us in the watershed. It flows down and affects our rivers. I guess we all saw the results.

"All agencies appeared to work well together and were very prepared. I felt that, had the need been there, everyone was ready to respond. The Sheriffs Office did a great job getting out and informing the public. So much was on a wait and see basis, that I am sure many, both citizens and first responders were a little frustrated. It would have been foolish to rush in with more than what was needed, before it was needed."

Kight mentioned that it was no longer flooding from rain in Georgia that concerned him for 2009, but the state's extraordinarily dry conditions and the likelihood of extensive wild fires. "It is so dry that even a small fire and wind from the wrong direction can really cause havoc."

NEW Boss at Emergency Management

As Craig Fugate works his way through the morass of Washington politics on his way to leading FEMA, Florida Governor Charlie Crist has chosen Ruben Almaguer interim director of the Division of Emergency Management. Almaguer has been the agency's deputy director for nearly two years. Prior to that, he was administrative operations chief of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department and had worked in communications, special operations and search-and-rescue.



NPDN Releases “E-Learning” Modules

In April, the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) released a series of interactive, e-Learning modules:

- Mission of the NPDN
- Monitoring for High Risk Pests
- Diagnosing Plant Problems
- Submitting Diagnostic Samples
- Photography for Diagnosis
- Disease and Pest Scenarios

NPDN modules include a post-test and all individuals completing the training at the 70 percent level or higher receive a certificate of completion. Nationally, 90 individuals have completed the training, including six Florida-based participants. To access the training, go to <http://cbc.at.ufl.edu/> and click on “Take the On-Line Training Modules.”



Dr. Amanda Hodges, IFAS/UF

In addition to the core crop biosecurity training, the NPDN plans to release some pest specific modules in the near future. The draft version of the chilli thrips (*Scirtothrips dorsalis* Hood) module is currently under review and available on-line with an anticipated release date of May 2009. If you have questions or comments regarding the current or future planned NPDN e-Learning modules, please contact Dr. Amanda Hodges at achodges@ufl.edu. (Dr. Hodges is Assistant-in Extension Scientist and [Southern Plant Diagnostic Network](#) (SPDN) Assistant Director at IFAS-UF, Gainesville.

More Conference Follow-Ups

Dr. Jiannong Xin of IFAS/UF's Office of Information Technology (352) 392-0429 xin@ufl.edu reminds us that presentations from the 2009 SART Conference are now available on the SART website at <http://www.flstart.org/SART/tm?pageID=1>. Alternatively, you may click on the "Conference Presentations" on the left menu of the SART website.

Suzan Loerzel, DVM, PhD
APHIS Area Emergency Coordinator

The Conference was excellent. I was impressed by the breadth of representation from various sectors: local/county, state, federal, NGOs, extension, etc.

It's motivating to see what some counties have achieved, sometimes through grit, perseverance, caring and an unwavering belief in making things better. Clearly, not all counties have the same resources and some have plans that are not as far along. But it was clear that this conference provided a great forum for gathering information, comparing notes and getting ideas about how

people can start, implement or improve plans.

Speaking with county animal services representatives, I gained a better appreciation for the impacts and challenges that local political and budget environments impose. I came away with a reinforced opinion of how important it is to support local efforts as that is where a response starts. In that context, developing ideas and tools to facilitate local preparedness is useful. Figuring out what is most needed would be the first step and I imagine that not all counties need the same things. Perhaps also providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information (such as through the SART website as was suggested) would be beneficial.

Someone mentioned tracking local resources and having a mechanism to match needs with resources. (I interpreted this to also include neighboring counties being able to effectively communicate or share resources or perhaps the State facilitating this process.) Maybe a resource template could be made and distributed to the counties.

Working on communication processes during events might also be useful. Some things are in place already and the SART mail list is very helpful. My impression is that during an event, communication might have room for improvement. I have seen a dramatic improvement from when SART first started, but I wonder if everyone is satisfied with the communications during actual events and if not, is there a way to proactively improve on the communications plan?

I liked the format of the conference but if there is a desire to mix it up a little, why not have a session where attendees go to break out groups and work on ideas-problems-solutions and present summaries to the conference. For common issues, getting attendees to work on solutions would be an engaging process that might generate interesting solutions. It might also provide a forum to discuss things in detail away from the general sessions. Another idea is to do a short table top exercise to test some of the county plans.

**Mark Hinkle, Coordinator
Marion County Animal Services**

Thanks for asking my opinion about the SART Conference in Cocoa Beach. I really enjoyed all of the speakers and appreciate that they gave up their valuable time to talk to us. I was really impressed with how friendly and open everyone was, and really felt like we were all on the same team. Thanks for allowing me to attend.

The 2009 Conference was my first SART meeting and I feel everything I heard while there can be used to help us here in Marion County. I especially enjoyed the information about the killer bees [Dr. Jamie Ellis, IFAS/UF]. Now I know how to deal with them and survive. Run like Hell and call an exterminator!



Even scientists need a snack. Dr. Suzan Loerzel, DVM, PhD – APHIS checks out conference brownies.

More SART Conference Friends



Volusia County's Toni Contarino (left) and Delores Ferguson.



Ebbin Spelman (left – Alachua County) and Richard Ziegler (Leon County).



Allan Schwartz (left – HSUS and DART) and FDACS' Gary Painter.



USDA – APHIS' Megan Adams (left – Vero Beach) and Gregory Gaj (St. Petersburg)

		
<p>Two heads are better than one! (Thanks to FDACS' David Perry and Gary Painter.)</p>	<p>Men in hats; women with badges. (Thanks Fred and Connie.) SART – all that and training, too!</p>	

Africanized Honey Bees

The term “killer bees” may be socially and biologically incorrect, but it causes people to pay attention and thus, it is oddly useful. Dr. Jamie Ellis' (IFAS-UF) presentation about this social insect at the 2009 SART Conference generated a great deal of response in the *Sentinel's* informal follow-up survey. Florida state apiarist Jerry Hayes reminds that a great deal of information – videos, articles, photos – is available on line at FDACS' site www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/plantinsp/ahb.html.

USDA/APHIS Emergency Mobilization Guide

APHIS' new Emergency Mobilization Guide (MOB Guide) will assist the agency's efforts to *effectively and efficiently respond to every conceivable agricultural and homeland security emergency situation.*



Under a declaration of "Total Mobility" all APHIS employees are considered available for direct emergency assignment. They may be deployed to the site of an emergency where they will be required to work irregular hours and perform duties beyond their normal job description to support the response.

The MOB Guide at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/emergency_response/ spells out how APHIS employees will be selected for service and addresses issues concerning their deployment, from reporting requirements and notifications, to procedures for receiving mobilization instructions. The Guide also

establishes the length of a standard assignment and the maximum period of time an assignment can be extended.

The first APHIS employees to be deployed in an emergency will be volunteers. In the event of a long-term or large-scale response where additional assistance is needed, APHIS employees will be called to duty according to an existing system, known as the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS). This system details employees capabilities and dispatchers track the status of employees during an incident.

The MOB Guide maps a consistent APHIS emergency response and lets employees know what to expect if deployed. It also provides guidance on demobilization procedures that must be followed by employees returning to their regular positions. Because APHIS employees will work alongside state partners during an emergency, the Guide is also a good resource for state regulatory officials.



Beetles In The News

The Beetles are in the news again and they are coming to Florida. Although, no, this is not the Fab Four of John, Paul, George and Ringo. We wish it were....

A tiny, Asian beetle is killing Florida avocado trees. Imported accidentally (aren't they all!) from Asia, *Redbay Ambrosia Beetle*, carries a deadly fungus called *Laurel Wilt*. The Associated Press recently made the beetle the subject of a national story. While publicity highlights this looming

environmental and agricultural problem, and thus keeps the public informed, it doesn't help solve the problem directly.

UF-IFAS and USDA scientists have not yet made headway finding a way to stop its spread. Pesticides and fungicides are expensive and may present health risks.

Beetle-and-fungus have been discovered in Okeechobee County and it seems to be making its inevitable way toward Miami-Dade and the heart of Florida's small, but vital avocado industry.

A 2008 IFAS report titled "Florida Avocado Production and Profitability Analysis" by Edward Evans is available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FE575>. It begins:

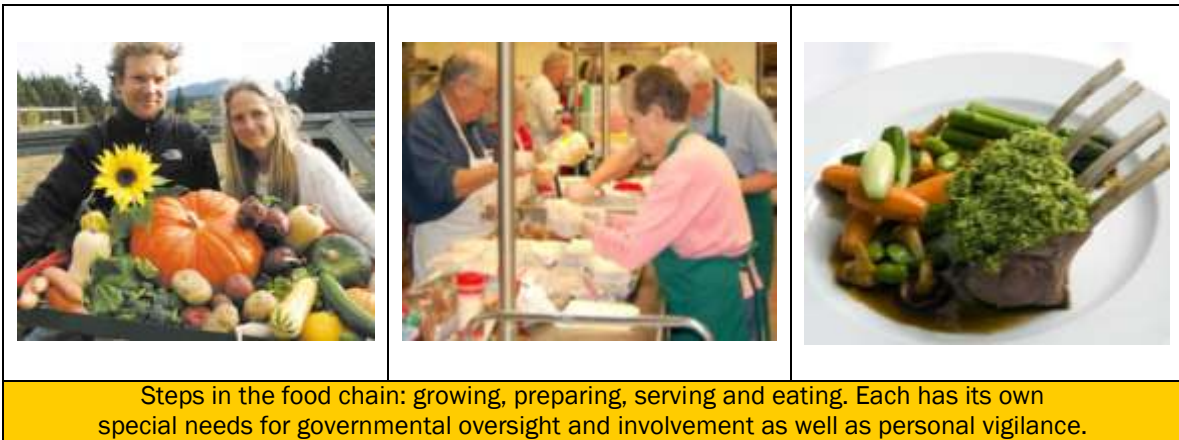
The Florida avocado industry consists of about 6,400 bearing acres, 737 growers, and 35 registered avocado handlers and shippers (Census of Agriculture, 2002). Of the 6,400 acres, more than 99% are located in southwest Miami-Dade County. In the 2004/05 season (from May 2004 to March 2005), an estimated 1.12 million bushels (61.6 million pounds) of avocados were produced, valued at approximately \$14.45 million. Since the bulk of the avocados produced are sold outside the state, the industry is an important revenue generator for Florida. However, sustainability of the industry requires that it remain a profitable enterprise.

Citing more recent data, the AP article noted that avocados were a \$30 million industry in Florida.

Regional Food Protection Conferences

The Issue: When a food advisory, food recall, or other incident develops concern for a food product or food category, it is important that consumers receive clear, accurate, reliable and science-based information and education.

Overview: This conference will explain and explore the educational needs of consumers and industry before, during and after a food protection event. It will also strengthen current interagency coordination and communication efforts.



The Conference: Three regional conferences will be offered in 2009:

University of Minnesota – June 30

Penn State University – October 27 - 28

University of Kentucky – November 18 - 19

Who Should Attend: Extension professionals, food processors and individuals from state and federal agencies and organizations with a vested interest in food protection.

The goals: By the end of this conference, attendees will be better prepared to understand and participate in food protection education and communication to improve consumer safety while reducing negative industry impact. Participants will have a working knowledge of and be able to identify:

- The roles of federal, state and local agencies and organizations
- Appropriate consumer actions
- Food protection communication issues
- The roles for Cooperative Extension and other university experts

These conferences are being offered with support from Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN), with support from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). <http://eden.lsu.edu>

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.