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2011 Hurricane Season is Underway

On June 1 the official “2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season” opened in Florida. It ends on November 30. The opening typically promotes a scuffle of thoughtful preparedness activities, particularly this year when as FDEM State Meteorologist Amy Godsey notes, experts are “forecasting an above-average year for tropical development.”

The term “tropical development” is weather-speak for weather systems (aka “storms”) that originate over the Sahara Desert, flow west with the rotation of the earth and then spin anti- or counter-clockwise northward in the northern hemisphere. This is a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that “tropical development” could bring much-needed rain (see article on Florida’s Keetch-Byram Drought Index under [News & Notes](#)), what state FSA Director Tim Manning calls a “nice, gentle, slow-moving tropical wave.” Or it could bring what Godsey calls “dangerous and devastating storms.”



Amy Godsey,
Florida State
Meteorologist

Hurricane Griffin exercise follow-up

Florida ESF-17 Coordinator Joe Kight Joe.Kight@freshfromflorida.com says the May 23-26 Hurricane Griffin exercise allowed agencies involved in hurricane response to work together at the new back-up Emergency Operations Center at Camp Blanding, east of Starke in Clay County. Kight said he was impressed with the facilities and its capabilities.

Camp Blanding is a 73,000-acre military base in Clay County that functions as the back up EOC for the State of Florida and is also a primary training location for the Florida National Guard, counter-drug units and law enforcement agencies.

For the Hurricane Griffin exercise, the hazards were a hurricane, tornados, flooding and wind damage. Once the hurricane made landfall in Broward County, the focus shifted to response, recovery and restoration of services for southeast Florida.

The ESF-17 goal in this table-top exercise was to see how quickly it could establish a temporary companion animal shelter in the affected area using one of the MARE units and perhaps a SARC team. Additional challenges were to exercise the ESF-17 ability to respond to a 1,000-head dairy hit by a tornado associated with the hurricane.



Joe Kight, Florida
ESF-17 Coordinator

“We’re working on the follow-up reports about the exercise now,” Kight says, “but it did just what it ought to do. It exposed communications issues we would have in a real emergency and forced us to scramble to improvise. It really made people think about how they would stay in touch when the electricity is off and cell phone towers are damaged, how they have to balance responsibilities to their family and the public. So this part was a success.

“I can also say that Sumter County DART and the SART group working with Ronnie Graves set up a 150-crate small animal rescue operation in about three hours. They were terrific.”

Kight said another issue was exotic animals in the state. The table-top emphasized that SART needed to be more involved with the state’s Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

On the Gold Coast

Hurricane Griffin came ashore in Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale) which has a population of about 1.75 million people and therefore almost certainly has a companion animal population of well over a million. With an average elevation above sea level of only six feet, Broward’s 1,205 square miles would be prone to devastating flooding from any significant and sustained tidal surge, the type that Hurricane Griffin might have delivered.

County ESF-17 Susan Pierce (Bravo shift: Cynthia Chambers handles the Alpha shift) said the exercise seemed very successful. There was 100 percent participation by the ESF coordinators and the ESF-17s have scheduled a follow-up table-top exercise to review and update their procedures in mid-summer.



Pierce says the county is now in the process of developing a full report on the Griffin exercise, and that her Function’s role was divided between large and small animal response.

- Local veterinarians and livestock owners were involved in the exercise to locate storm-safe shelters – perhaps the two area racetracks – and areas of

higher ground in the county. “You don’t want a horse standing in knee-deep water for days on end.” The Florida Farm Bureau says there are 14,000 horses in Broward County, but according to Pierce the equine community is a fairly close-knit and active group.

- On the small animal side, the county has only one pet-friendly shelter now, and Pierce says this is a “low capacity issue.” Hence they are working to develop at least one additional small animal shelter within the next two-to-three years.

[Another problem in the Broward and south Florida area during a major storm is mobile homes, which are especially susceptible to storm damage. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000, there were 849,304 mobile homes in Florida. This ranked the Sunshine State #1 – more mobile homes than any other state in the nation – with 10 percent of the U.S. total.]



A hurricane can be especially damaging to mobile homes. With nearly a million such housing units, Florida has more than any other state in the nation.

A few Florida-specific hurricane factoids passed along by Greg Christy, DVM at FDACS/DAI allow us to present the self-test below.

It’s OK says Greg to use these at parties, even claim they are from your own research, because the more people are invested in thinking about storms the more they are likely to prepare! (Answers appear at the end of this month’s *SART Sentinel*.)

Hurricane Test

1. How many “named storms” officially become hurricanes each year?
2. Which is the most “hurricane-prone” state: Florida or Texas?
3. In 160 years, how many Category 5 hurricanes have hit the U.S. and of those how many hit Florida?
4. Hurricane season begins June 1 but historically, what is the busiest month for hurricanes in Florida?
5. What parts of Florida are the most hurricane-prone?
6. What was the most active decade for hurricane landfalls in Florida?
7. How much rainfall can a hurricane bring in 24 hours?
8. How much storm flooding is possible in – arguably – Florida’s most vulnerable coastal area?

2011 Agroterrorism Preparedness Classes

FDACS' Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness collaborates with several training partners to offer DHS-certified courses in Florida. All courses are open to United States citizens and are free of charge through DHS grant funding.

Training partners include the Western Institute of Food Safety and Security at the University of California-Davis (WIFSS), the Center for Agriculture and Food Safety and Preparedness at the University of Tennessee-College of Veterinary Medicine, the University of Florida-Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences, and the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.

WIFSS-PRESENTED COURSES

To register for one of the AWR courses or for more information:

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

AWR-156

Principles of Planning and Implementing Recovery

A 1-day course focusing on the fundamental framework for orchestrating the recovery from an incident of agroterrorism. The course covers critical factors for success in a community recovery effort: identification of the components of a recovery plan targeted at minimizing the economic impact to the community and its citizens, and the identification of community resources and assets available for building partnerships. *This training has been approved for 6.0 CEUs for Certified Environmental Health Professionals.*

Wednesday, June 8

Seffner

Hillsborough County Extension Office, 5339 S County Road 579

Thursday, June 9

Sanford

Seminole County EOC, Dept. of Public Safety, 150 Bush Blvd.,

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE-PRESENTED COURSES

To register for an MGT course or for information <http://flsart.org/mgtcourses/>.

MGT 259

Sharing Information and Intelligence Related to Food Importation and Transportation

A 1-day course (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with one hour for lunch) to prepare participants to utilize and implement effective sharing of information and intelligence to enhance food safety and security related to food importation and transportation. This course is targeted for law enforcement, state Fusion Center

personnel, emergency managers and responders, extension, public health, food and agriculture professionals, the transportation industry and federal, state, local, tribal and regional officials. Registration through John Burkette, FDACS Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness: (850) 245-1387
John.Burkette@freshfromflorida.com or go to <http://flsart.org/mgtcourses/> for information and links to online registration.

Tuesday, June 28

Jacksonville

At the FDLE facility, 921 N Davis Street, Bldg. E.

UT Brochure for MGT 364

If you would like to read the University of Tennessee's MGT 364 brochure, click [here](#). This brochure is in use at this time for "Use of a Standardized Credentialing Program for Management of an Animal Emergency Response and Recovery."

Course Goal: To encourage the development of compatible credentialing programs for Animal Emergency Responders in all states to facilitate sharing of people resources in the event of a disaster.

Partners Departing for new Horizons

SART members will be interested to learn that two state leaders in the initiative to prepare Florida's agriculture and animals (and its citizens) to plan for and respond effectively to disasters are moving forward with their careers.

Dr. [Jenifer Chatfield](#), DVM is no longer with the Department of Health and has begun veterinary clinical work in Pasco County. She will also be teaching SART-related courses in Florida for the Western Institute of Food Safety and Security at the University of California-Davis (WIFSS) and the Center for Agriculture and Food Safety and Preparedness at the University of Tennessee-College of Veterinary Medicine and thus could remain a great resource for responder organizations.

"Jenifer quickly became a leader in Florida SART," said Joe Kight, Florida ESF-17 with FDACS. "She has been very helpful, very involved, and has that rare ability to explain complex ideas in ways that people can readily understand. We hope that she'll continue to work with SART and the emergency response community because she has the skills to bring people together in a solid working and communicating group."



Jennifer Chatfield, DVM speaks during the 2011 SART Planning Meeting.

Art Johnstone will leave his job as Program Planning Coordinator for the Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness on June 30th to manage a non-profit corporation which he has developed called Grant Partners, Inc. Grant Partners is structured to work with groups to locate funding sources which, in a time of severe economic pressures, should prove to be challenging and ultimately perhaps quite rewarding.

“Art has worked very hard to make sure SART has a steady funding basis for its ‘all hazard’ mission,” Joe Kight said. “He is somehow able to balance a lot of points of view – some of them even opposed and antagonistic – and help a group move toward a positive and successful outcome. In our increasingly restricted budget environment, that becomes more of a challenge every year. SART is definitely going to miss him and his talents.”

Art said he believes there “is opportunity out there” and will continue to teach agro-terrorism and preparedness courses for WIFSS and UT.



Art Johnstone discusses SART coordination and funding with Kendra Stauffer (I) at a 2010 Advisory Board meeting.

About the Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness

The mission of FDACS’ Office of Agricultural Emergency Preparedness www.freshfromflorida.com/aep/ encompasses issues in homeland security and emergency preparedness:

- for agricultural and food systems, both animal and plant. This mission encompasses food production, processing, storage and transportation.
- as liaison with other governmental entities and the private sector.

Priority initiatives include:

- **Geospatial data integration:** real-time mapping and analysis of FDACS’ facilities, employee locations, resources and regulated entities.
- **Laboratory construction and renovation:** A suite in FDACS’ Food Laboratory becomes a state-of-the-art Biological Safety Level III laboratory (tests for such diseases as anthrax, foot-and-mouth and BSE) and a new annex at our Animal Diagnostic Laboratory (to defend against agroterrorism and bioterrorism).
- **Border protection:** A new agricultural interdiction station on Interstate -10 eastbound near the Florida/Alabama border. This new facility, joining the 22



In an era when biological and chemical agents can quickly be spread around the world, effective screening for pathogens and unwanted exotic animals, insects and diseases is a critical factor in the continuing health of Florida’s agricultural economy.

existing interdiction stations, was opened in April 2006. The purchase of four portable gamma ray vehicles that can provide an “x-ray view” of an 18-wheel tractor trailer rig in one minute.

- Domestic security exercises: Regular homeland security and emergency preparedness exercises in partnership with industry, law enforcement, fire, emergency management, health and other emergency responders have significantly improved Florida’s terrorism preparedness.
- State Agricultural Response Team: SART is an interagency, coordinated effort of local, state and federal partners dedicated to effectively communicate and plan for agricultural-related emergencies and disasters.

News and Notes

Fire Alarm – KBDI is almost off the charts.

Many Florida counties have now implemented a burn ban. Jim Karels,

Director of the Division of Forestry at FDACS, recently warned, “The danger of wildfire is very high throughout Florida due to lack of rain, low humidity and windy conditions. The entire state of Florida is suffering from drought.”

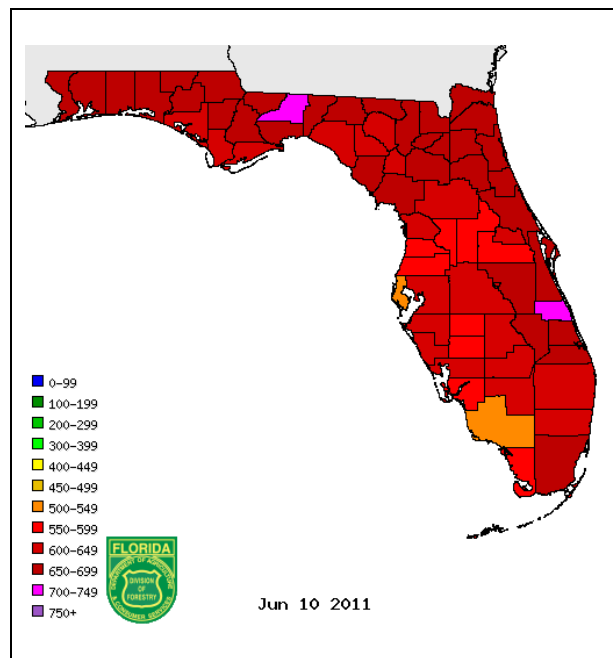
So is this “one of those” weather patterns or is it climate change? Perhaps it is too early to know for sure but what we do know is that on June 10th the statewide average on the Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI: which measures the amount of moisture in the top three feet of soil) was 640 on a scale of 0 (flood) to 800 (desert).

- The statewide average KBDI on June 1, 2010 was 325.
- The statewide average KBDI on June 1, 2009 was 146.

Go here http://flame.fl-dof.com/fire_weather/KBDI/index.html to check the current status of Florida and of your county. As a direct result of dry conditions, a May 27th FDACS newsletter noted that since January 1st 2,664 wildfires had burned 128,675 acres in Florida – twice as much as 2010!

Animal Services Expert Investigator and Animal Control Officers return to Miami after assisting in search and rescue mission in Tuscaloosa, AL

(MIAMI, May 11, 2011) – Miami-Dade Animal Services (ASD) received a call for help from the Florida State Animal Response Coalition (SARC) to assist with the search



and rescue teams in the field after the destructive tornadoes in Alabama and ASD staff volunteered to help the pets and families in need.

Investigator Gary Boyett, Animal Control Officer Sam Gafcovich and Animal Control Officer Yusniel Yumar voluntarily deployed to Alabama to assist the Humane Society of the United States with animal related search and recovery efforts in the areas devastated by the recent tornadic activity.

The ASD rescue team returned to Miami late last night and were humbled by the experience. At the same time, they were honored and glad to have shared their skills, professionalism and undeniable passion for animals after the tragedy. Their efforts in conjunction with the HSUS have resulted in more than 100 displaced pets being reunited with their owners.

Investigator Gary Boyett will return to Alabama on Thursday to continue the hard and dangerous work that will save many lives and help reunite pets with their owners.



(Photos courtesy Sam Gafcovich)



Miami-Dade County Animal Control officers assisted in the rescue and recovery process this year in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In the photos above, Animal Control Officer Sam Gafcovich holds the bird and puppies; Animal Control Officer Yusniel Yumar crawls under a house to rescue puppies; and Investigator Gary Boyett is on the floor looking under a house with a flashlight.

Animal Services is responsible for enforcing Chapter 5 of the Miami-Dade County Code, as well as Florida Statute 828, which deals primarily with animal cruelty issues. Unlike private shelters that have limitations on the number of pets they accept, Animal Services accepts all dogs and cats. Each year, the shelter impounds 36,000 pets. The goal at Animal Services is to reunite lost pets with their families or find life-long homes for as many animals as possible.

News article forwarded by SART Member Laura Bevan
Courtesy Miami-Dade County Animal Services

Chickens in the Neighborhood

In light of the difficulties experienced recently in Germany – 27 deaths and thousands of people sent to hospitals – apparently as a result of contaminated fresh produce and new mutant strains of deadly E. coli bacteria, the editors thought this podcast from the AVMA would be of interest. Because of the rise of the “eat local foods” movement, it is an especially interesting topic and certainly a part of our “all-hazard” planning and response mandate.



“A couple years ago we took a look at the ins and outs of running a chicken coop in a residential area. Now, with more and more towns and cities allowing people to have chicken coops in residential areas, consumers are asking questions about the safety of the eggs from these chickens. In

this [six-minute] podcast, Dr. Michele Jay-Russell of the UC Davis Western Center for Food Safety discusses what you should know before you buy eggs from the house down the block, instead of the grocery store.”

www.avmamedia.org/display.asp?sid=347&NAME=Chickens_in_the_Neighborhood

Beekeepers Report Losses

Jerry Hayes, FDACS assistant bureau chief of Apiary Inspection Gerald.Hayes@freshfromflorida.com recently told a reporter for the *Palm Beach Post* newspaper that Florida’s beekeepers had about a 30 percent loss of colonies over the winter of 2010-11, a level he regards as unsustainable.

On the other hand, “Because of Colony Collapse Disorder, our numbers of registered residential backyard beekeepers has grown phenomenally, from 700 or 800 to around 2,000,” Hayes said. “They have heard about honeybees. They want to save the world. It is amazing.”

To read the complete article written by staff writer Susan Salisbury, go to <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/money/beekeepers-report-losses-of-30-percent-of-their-1494015.html>.

APHIS Reports on Pilot Project with Iowa

According to a recent newsletter from USDA/APHIS, a project with Iowa's Dept. of Transportation trained law enforcement officers in animal health requirements.

APHIS' Veterinary Services (VS) and Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) trained more than 400 state and federal officers to recognize potential violations related to the transport of livestock. Officers asked drivers for their CVI (Certificate of Veterinary Inspection), restricted movement permits, official animal ID and official USDA seals. This pilot project is part of a larger APHIS initiative known as VS-2015, created to meet animal health needs now and in the future.



Billings, Montana – a tractor trailer hauling cattle rolls over killing two head of cattle – an avoidable accident.

“As a result of this partnership, we have all these extra eyes out there on the highways and back roads that we wouldn't otherwise have,” said Dr. Kevin Petersburg, APHIS' Area-Veterinarian-in-Charge in Iowa. “It leverages our resources and educates truck drivers about moving livestock.”

During the pilot project period, March-November 2010, Iowa law enforcement stopped 66 vehicles hauling livestock. Mostly due to improper paperwork, 47 were noncompliant.

In addition to looking for animal health violations, many officers are also now on the lookout for plant health violations associated

with trucks carrying logs or firewood. The idea is to halt the spread of pests like the gypsy moth and emerald ash borer.

What Is a “Break Stick?”

A break stick is a device inserted into the mouth of a pit bull (behind the molars) to facilitate the release of its grip on another dog.

Remember: pit bulls do not have a special mechanism or enzyme that allows them to “lock” their jaw, nor do they possess a higher than average “bite pressure.” They simply have the determination of a terrier.

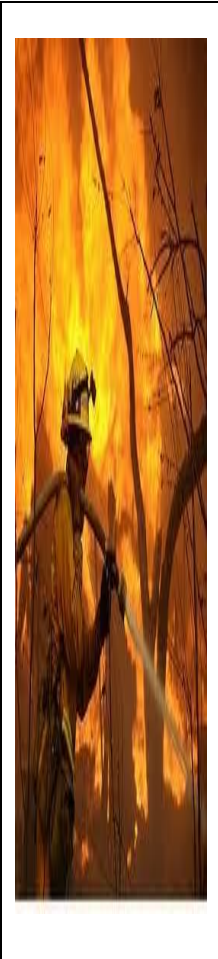
Not all pit bulls are aggressive toward other dogs. But because the breed has a somewhat higher tendency for dog aggression, break sticks are useful tools to have in a multi-dog household.

As terriers, pit bulls will usually bite and hold. Contrary to popular myth, this is not some kind of special pit bull behavior; it is merely terrier behavior. As its name suggests, a break stick is designed to break this determined terrier hold. This is the safest, easiest, and most effective way to stop a fight.



As a responder, should you understand how to use and carry a break stick into an emergency situation such as a hurricane or tornado response? Let us know what you think by sending the editor an email at rsa5@cox.net. (The above information about the “break stick” was adapted from Pit Bull Rescue Central <http://www.pbrc.net/breaksticks.html>.)

NASAAEP: Texas Wildfires & Drought



In a presentation during the May 11 NASAAEP conference call Dr. Holly Poremski, Texas Animal Health Commission, called this wildfire season and drought in Texas “historic.” While the majority of large fires are settling down (only to reappear it seems in the Okefenokee Swamp and in Arizona), Texas will be dealing with the effects of drought for a long time.

This year, Poremski said, 2.2 million acres burned and more than 1,000 people were evacuated. “Most areas are entering the recovery phase now. Animal-related impacts were primarily livestock-related.” Recent numbers suggest that 560 cattle and calves were lost along with 16 sheep and 18 horses. Few impacted families stayed in shelters for long and a number of livestock supply points were set up with the Texas Department of Agriculture assisting with arranging hay transport.

Poremski was asked if there was anything she wished she had known ahead of time that would have made the response better. Finding a silver lining to the dark cloud of fire and drought, she replied that “The push for local animal planning has been ongoing for years now and fires like this may help remind locals how important it is to plan for animals and agriculture.”

Dr. Poremski suggested the following link to a video news story about an impacted rancher. It contains graphic images of burned cattle and is followed by several CNN reports about the effects of the Mississippi River flooding on animals.

<http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2011/04/25/oppmann.tx.ranch.fire.cnn?iref=allsearch>

About the SART Sentinel

The SART Sentinel is an e-mail newsletter prepared monthly by 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.

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Answers to Hurricane Test

1. An average hurricane season (since 1950) produces 11 named storms: 6 are hurricanes. However, since 1995, 14 storms have developed each season and two strike the U.S. each year. Of those six hurricanes, two are Category 3 strength with 111+ mph sustained winds.
2. Florida is the most hurricane-prone state. 40 percent of the hurricanes that strike the U.S. hit Florida.
3. Of the three Category 5 (156+ mph maximum sustained winds) hurricanes that have struck the U.S. since 1851, two hit Florida (1935 Labor Day Hurricane and Andrew in 1992). The 1935 hurricane (middle Florida Keys) was the most intense hurricane with winds at 185+ mph and a minimum central pressure of 892 mb.
4. Most of the 37 recorded hurricanes that have struck Florida since 1851 occurred in September.
 - July – 2
 - August – 6
 - September – 19
 - October – 10
5. Southeast Florida and the Keys are the most hurricane prone regions in the U.S. hosting 15 major hurricanes since 1851. The Keys are struck more than any other area with 19 direct impacts.
 - a. Southeast FL – 15
 - b. Southwest FL – 13
 - c. Panhandle – 13
6. The most active decade of hurricane landfalls in Florida history occurred from 1941-1950 when 12 hurricanes struck.
7. Hurricane Easy, which stalled and looped just north of Tampa Bay before moving ashore in Citrus County in early September 1950, set the state's 24 hour rainfall record with 38.55 inches falling at Yankeetown. The three-day storm total at Yankeetown was 45.2 inches.
8. A Category 5 hurricane making landfall along the Florida Big Bend coast is projected to create inundation in excess of 30 feet in many coastal areas.