# The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team

*Animal Technical Rescue training class.*

## Florida Agencies Team Up for Unusual Wildlife Rescues Using Specialized ATR Gear

In a series of dramatic rescues last month that spanned everything from a mud-soaked cow to a trapped manatee and an injured horse, Florida's fire-rescue units, wildlife officials and private contractors have demonstrated the flexibility of the Florida SART Animal Technical Rescue (ATR) Units that are staged across the state at select fire and law enforcement stations and the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.

The operations, carried out over the past two weeks, underscore how inter-agency cooperation and purpose-built equipment can turn potentially tragic animal-injury incidents into success stories.

***Cow rescued from mud in Volusia County***

Volusia County Fire Rescue responded to a call about a cow stuck in deep mud near Orange City. Using the full suite of ATR gear—including mud lances to break suction, a protective head shield for the animal, and an A-frame anchored with a high-point system—the crew lifted the bovine out of the mire without injury.

"We used every tool in the trailer," said Brandi K. Phillips, director of University of Florida Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service's (UF VETS) Animal Technical Rescue branch. "It was a textbook example of how the ATR system works in a ground-based rescue."

*Continued, next page.*

**Special Features of this Issue:**


- *Have You Heard the Buzz?*
- *FDA Issues Emergency Use Authorizations for Drugs to Treat New World Screwworm in Dogs and Cats*
- *Florida Division of Emergency Management Celebrates the Grand Opening of Florida's New State Emergency Operations Center*


***"Preparedness is one of the most important investments we can make for Florida's future."***

— Wilton Simpson
Commissioner of Agriculture
Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

*Read more on Page 4.*

## Florida Agencies Team Up for Unusual Wildlife Rescues Using Specialized ATR Gear (continued)

***Manatee extraction highlights multi-agency effort***

*Responders pose with the rescued manatee.*

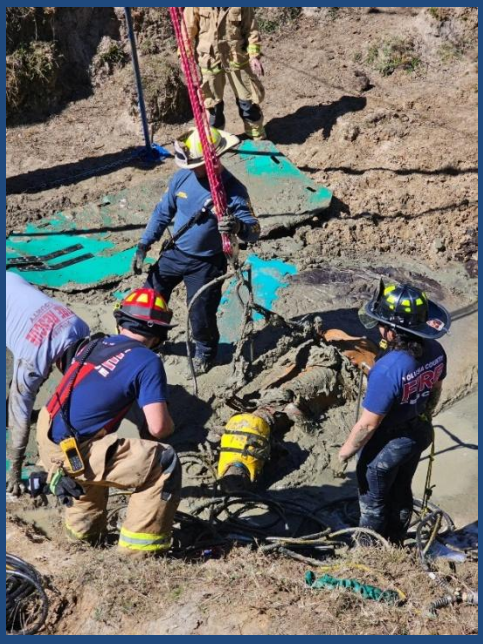
During a UF VETS training session with Brevard County Fire Rescue and the sheriff's office, a manatee became trapped in a storm-drain junction box. The situation quickly escalated into a joint operation involving the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Jack's Towing and Brevard County Public Works. Responders removed a section of roadway to reach the animal, then transported it to SeaWorld for medical care.

The rescued manatee is now gaining weight for eventual release back into the wild—a story featured in *National Geographic* (see https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/manatee-rescue-melbourne-florida).

***Equine rescue wraps up intensive training***

Two days after the manatee rescue, another incident unfolded during the UF VETS training session. A horse in distress required immediate assistance, prompting the same ATR equipment to be deployed. "The team proved they could handle animal incidents of any kind," Phillips noted, emphasizing the value of hands-on practice under real-world conditions.

As UF VETS wrapped up its 2025-26 SART training at the Florida State Fire College last week, officials say the recent successes will shape curriculum updates and reinforce the importance of preparedness across the state's emergency-response network.



*First Responders rescuing a cow in mud.*

## Have You Heard the Buzz?

Hummingbirds are more than just beautiful visitors, they play a vital role in Florida's ecosystem, especially in agriculture. These tiny birds are essential for pollination and seed dispersal, helping maintain and increase plant biodiversity across the state.

*Photo: A Ruby-throated hummingbird (iStockphoto)*

Florida's official hummingbird season runs from March through September, but sightings often begin earlier. If you live in Florida or visit during this time, you're likely to spot these dazzling creatures and in southern regions, you may see them year-round.

The ruby-throated hummingbird, Florida's most common species, typically arrives in late February or early March. Some pass through on their way north, while others stay to nest during the breeding season, which begins in April. Migratory hummingbirds return south in late summer and fall, heading to Central and South America. In southern Florida, some remain all winter, and rare species like Rufous or Black-chinned may appear during cooler months.

If you're interested in attracting hummingbirds you can add the following to your garden at home:

- **Feeders**: Put out sugar-water feeders in February (Mix 4 parts water to 1 part sugar. No sugar substitutes. Skip the food dyes).
- **Native Plants**: Grow nectar-rich flowers such as firebush, trumpet vine, salvia, and mallow.
- **Shelter**: Provide trees and shrubs for nesting and protection.

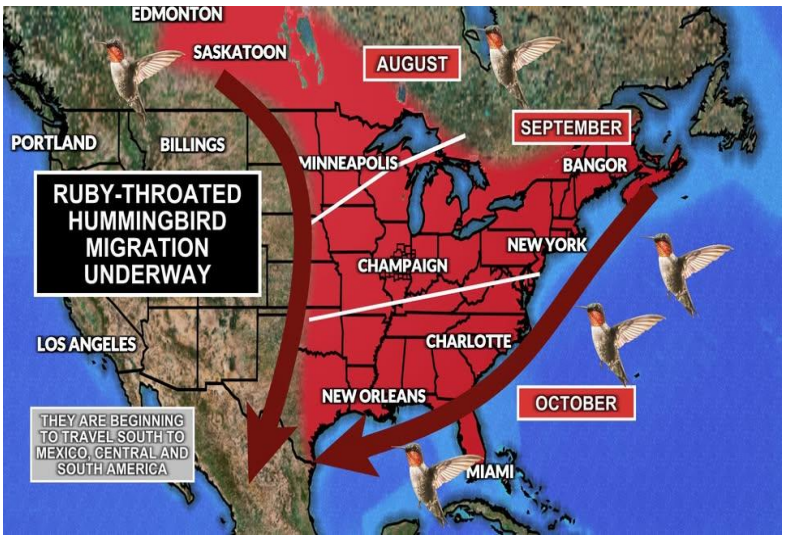



*Image: Migration map*
*Credit Meteorologist Jacob Dickey*

## Florida Division of Emergency Management Celebrates the Grand Opening of Florida's New State Emergency Operations Center

On February 24th, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) unveiled Florida's new State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). This high-tech, state-of-the-art facility will significantly enhance disaster response and recovery efforts across the state. Designed with resilient infrastructure and expanded operational space, the new SEOC will enable FDEM to coordinate more effectively and collaborate seamlessly with state, local, and federal partners when disasters strike.

"The new State Emergency Operations Center is a bold investment in Florida's future," **said Executive Director Kevin Guthrie**. "This facility was designed not just for today's challenges, but for the evolving threats of tomorrow. It strengthens our ability to unify partners at every level, harness innovation, and lead with speed and precision when disasters strike. More than a building, it is a symbol of Florida's proactive approach to preparedness and our continued commitment to setting the benchmark for emergency management nationwide."

*Photo: State officials attend the ribbon cutting event of the new SEOC. Provided by State of Florida.*

**Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson said,** "Preparedness is one of the most important investments we can make for Florida's future. As Senate President, I was proud to help secure the initial and subsequent funding to replace and upgrade our State Emergency Operations Center, giving emergency managers the modern tools and space they need to protect lives and property across our state.

The 208,400-square-foot facility features more than double the operational space on the Emergency Operations Center floor, enhancing coordination among local, state, and federal partners. Key features include:

- SEOC wing infrastructure built to withstand wind speeds of up to 200 mph.
- Three backup generators providing redundant power to ensure continuous operations during severe weather.
- A 95-by-13-foot video wall capable of displaying multi-source live data feeds, weather monitoring, GIS mapping, and real-time incident tracking.
- Two loading docks accommodating 53-foot trailers to streamline resource distribution and deployment.

For more information, visit: https://www.floridadisaster.org/news-media/news/20260224

## FDA Issues Emergency Use Authorizations for Drugs to Treat New World Screwworm in Dogs and Cats

*Photo of a dog and cat (Pixabay)*

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued two Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) – one for NexGard (afoxolaner) chewable tablets for the treatment of New World screwworm (NWS) infestations (myiasis) in dogs, and the second for NexGard COMBO (esafoxolaner, eprinomectin, and praziquantel topical solution) for the treatment of NWS myiasis in cats.

For NexGard, the agency has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that NexGard may be effective in the treatment of NWS myiasis in dogs and puppies, and the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks.

For NexGard COMBO, the agency has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that NexGard COMBO may be effective in the treatment of NWS myiasis in cats and kittens, and the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks.

NexGard and NexGard COMBO are available only by prescription from a licensed veterinarian because professional expertise is required to monitor for and respond to potential adverse reactions. Detailed product information about NexGard for veterinary practitioners can be found in the Fact Sheet for Veterinarians: Emergency Use Authorization of NexGard (afoxolaner) Chewables for New World Screwworm (NWS) for dogs. Detailed product information about NexGard COMBO for veterinary practitioners can be found in the Fact Sheet for Veterinarians: Emergency Use Authorization of NexGard COMBO (esafoxolaner, eprinomectin, and praziquantel topical solution) for New World Screwworm (NWS) for cats.

Related Information

- NexGard for Dogs
  - Freedom of Information Summary: NexGard (EUA 006685)
  - Letter of Authorization: NexGard (EUA 006685)
  - Fact Sheet for Veterinarians: Emergency Use Authorization of NexGard (afoxolaner) Chewables for New World Screwworm (NWS)
- NexGard COMBO for Cats
  - Freedom of Information Summary: NexGard COMBO (EUA 006686)
  - Letter of Authorization: NexGard COMBO (EUA 006686)
  - Fact Sheet for Veterinarians: Emergency Use Authorization of NexGard COMBO (esafoxolaner, eprinomectin, and praziquantel topical solution) for New World Screwworm (NWS)
- Fact Sheet for Pet Owners and Veterinarians about Potential Adverse Events Associated with Isoxazoline Flea and Tick Products

## New World Screwworm

*Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services*

New World screwworms are fly larvae (maggots) that can infest livestock and other warm-blooded animals, including people. They most often enter an animal through an open wound. They feed on the animal's living flesh and, if not treated, infestations can be fatal. While New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) has not been widely present in the United States since the 1960s, it is still found in most of South America and in five Caribbean countries. Cases began spreading in 2023, heading north from Panama, and have reached southern Mexico, increasing the risk of reintroduction into the United States.

**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.

*Continued, next page.*

# New World Screwworm (continued)

*Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services*

**Treatment**

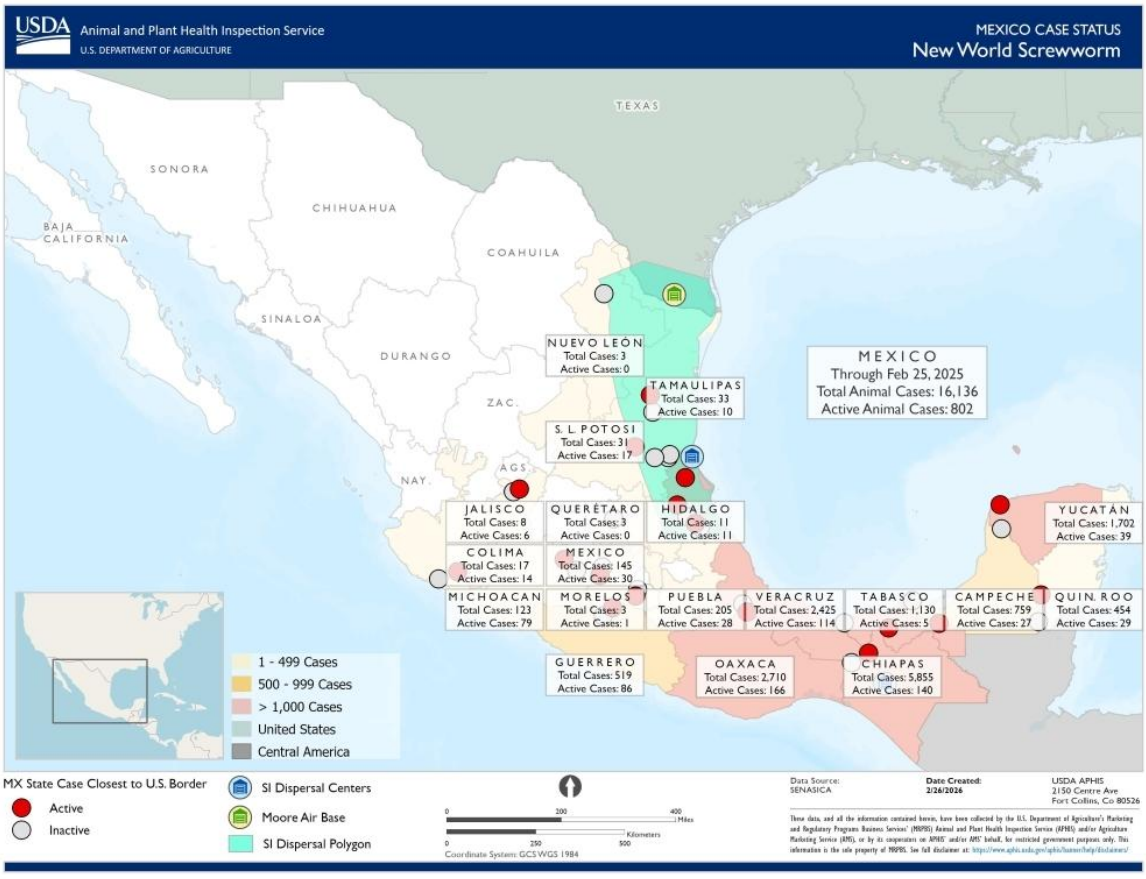
Screwworm infestation is treated by cleaning the site and topical application of a pesticide or other medication effective at killing the screwworm larvae. Treated wounds should be inspected daily until completely healed. The examining veterinarian will remove larvae from the wound with tweezers, place them in alcohol, and report to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Animal Industry (State Veterinarian's Office).

**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 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 (Updated 2/28/2026)*

**New World Screwworm Resources**

- Information on the Screwworm Eradication Program (USDA APHIS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson, FDACS Urge Vigilance as New World Screwworm Threat Increases
- FDACS – New World Screwworm Information Page

# 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 |
|---|---|
| • March 6, Charlotte County<br>• April 10, Highlands County<br>• May 6, St. Lucie County<br>• June 5, Seminole County<br>• June 12, Miami-Dade County | • March 19, Jefferson County<br>• April 28, Hernando County<br>• May 7, St. Lucie County<br>• May 27, Sarasota County |

To register, visit: https://flsarc.org/training-classes-events

## ASAR Swiftwater Rescue & Boat Operations Training

Incidents that involve animals trapped in Flood and Swiftwater require special considerations and knowledge. This class covers both the ASAR Swiftwater Rescue skills and the ASAR Floodwater Boat Operations.
**Dates**: June 11th-13th and June 14th
**Location**: Lee County Animal Services; Fort Myers, FL
To register, visit: https://asartraining.com/event/asar-fort-myers-2026

## 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-In-Person Meeting – March 25, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. (Alachua County Extension Office)

## In the News…

- Amid Freezes, Drought, and Wildfire, Commissioner Wilton Simpson Issues Emergency Order to Support Florida's Farmers, Ranchers, Growers (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Announces Recent Freezes Caused Over $3 Billion in Estimated Losses to Florida Agriculture (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Announces $10M in Grants Available to Strengthen Florida's Retail Fuel Supply During Emergencies (FDACS)
- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Announces Agricultural Producers Can Soon Apply for Over $600M in Hurricane Disaster Relief, Asks Federal Government to Use Approved Program to Immediately Fund Relief for the 2026 Ice Storm (FDACS)

# ASAR Swiftwater Rescue & Boat Operations Training

## June 11th-14th, 2026

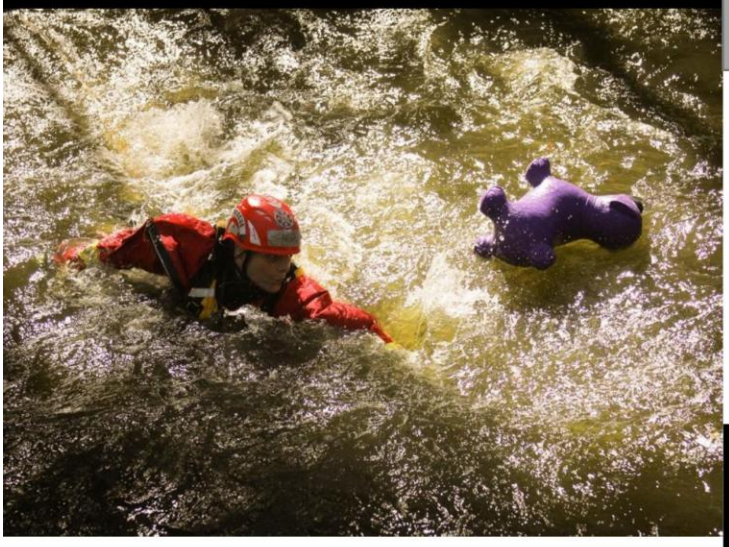
## Daily start time 8am!

Lee County Animal Services
5600 Banner Dr
Fort Myers, FL 33912

For directions, questions regarding lodging, or other area accommodations, contact:
Pete Santana at
PSantana@leegov.com

To register go to: https://asartraining.com/event/asar-fort-myers-2026/ or scan the QR code.

Incidents that involve animals trapped in Flood and Swiftwater require special considerations and knowledge. This training is provided through both hands-on and classroom instruction. This class covers both the ASAR Swiftwater Rescue skills and the ASAR Floodwater Boat Operations. First responders with existing water rescue certification will receive additional certification that meets required FEMA USAR/TF animal rescue competencies. Small animal rescue techniques will be the primary focus, with additional discussion about large animal issues and hazards in floodwater. Participants need to have the ability to swim in moving water conditions.



Class Registration Fee: $650.00
Drysuit Rental (optional): $200.00
Class size limited to 30 people

Registration Deadline
June 6th, 2026

Course Topics include: Hazard Identification, Scene Management, Water Rescue Absolutes, Knots, Low Angle Rope, Mechanical Advantage, Swiftwater Operations, Floodwater Boat Operations, Self-Rescue, Team Rescue, Animal Restraint, Small Animal Rescue Field Practical and MUCH MORE!

Payment due at time of registration. Refunds: 10+ days prior to class = 100%; 5-10 days prior to class = 50%; 0-5 days prior to class = no refund.

Required PPE
Drysuit (Optional)
Water Rescue Helmet
Class V PFD with quick release strap
Water Gloves
Appropriate Footwear

www.asartraining.com

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

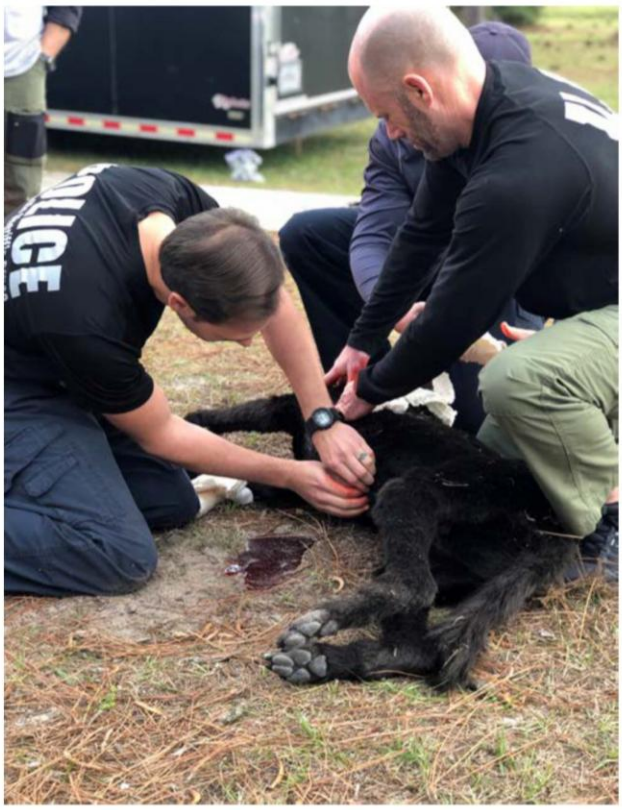
The Pet-Friendly Sheltering Online Training is the first of its kind to be offered in Florida. The Training guidance to private, local, and state entities on how to plan for and operate a pet-friendly shelter to ensure that individuals evacuating from a disaster with their household pets are accommodated.

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.

> **Paula Carroll**
>
> Jefferson County, Florida
>
> "I feel that with this training we will succeed... I am much more equipped."

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.



# FRI-SUN APRIL 17-19 '26
# K-9 FIRST RESPONDER &
# K-9 TACTICAL EMERGENCY CASUALTY CARE
# 3-DAY TRAINING

***Are you a K-9 Handler looking to provide the best emergency field care for your four-legged partner?***

*Learn K-9 Tactical Emergency Casualty Care skills in a hands-on, scenario-based training with expert instructors, on advanced veterinary mannikins, and in a state-of-the-art training facility.*

**BECOME FIELD-READY**

**RECEIVE CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT**

**PAID BY FLORIDA SART FACILITIES PROVIDED BY COUNTERDRUG**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

MARCH 17, 2026

**APPLY AT**

**WWW.K9MEDIC.COM/FL/**

**LOCATION | TIME**

Camp Blanding
Counterdrug – MCTFT
5629 SR16 West
Starke, FL 32091
Enter via main gate, left on Ave. B, after about 3 miles, follow signs to classroom.
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., daily

# K-9 FIRST RESPONDER & K-9 TACTICAL EMERGENCY CASUALTY CARE 3-DAY TRAINING

## Expert instructors from K9 MEDIC® deliver an intense, hands-on training.

**K9 Handler / First Responder Advanced Scope**
This program includes handling K-9 emergencies in both conventional and tactical environments, so you'll be prepared to respond wherever and whenever you need. Topics range from safe K-9 handling and comprehensive assessments to treating the most common emergencies such as heat stroke and bloat/GDV, and tactical injuries such as gunshot wounds. Advanced Scope includes fluid administration and handler assist skills.

**iNTENSIVE/High-Def Format**
This format delivers a hands-on and scenario-based experience, along with benefits of a diversified instructor cadre. In addition to the all-class practice exercises, this format delivers an additional four rotations of hands-on skills stations and solo/team scenarios using advanced veterinary mannikins. Each student receives significant instructor feedback and attention customized to their specific needs. Multi-disciplinary instructors often include a lead expert veterinarian, experienced tactical paramedic, and field-savvy K-9 Handler.

**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** MARCH 17, 2026

**APPLICANT SELECTION:** 25 students will be selected. Preference given to early applicants. Selections made as applications are received. **Apply at** www.K9MEDIC.com/fl/

**WHO CAN APPLY?** Only active canine handlers currently employed with a military, federal, state, or local (city/county) agency are eligible to apply. Preference given to canine handlers working in Florida.

**COST:** Full tuition paid by SART! Students are responsible for their own travel, lodging and meal expenses.

**CERTIFICATION:** Upon completion, students receive a K9 MEDIC™ Certificate of Completion and Continuing Education Credit for EMS and law enforcement. This course meets the course prerequisites for admission to the K9 MEDIC® Trainer Academy.

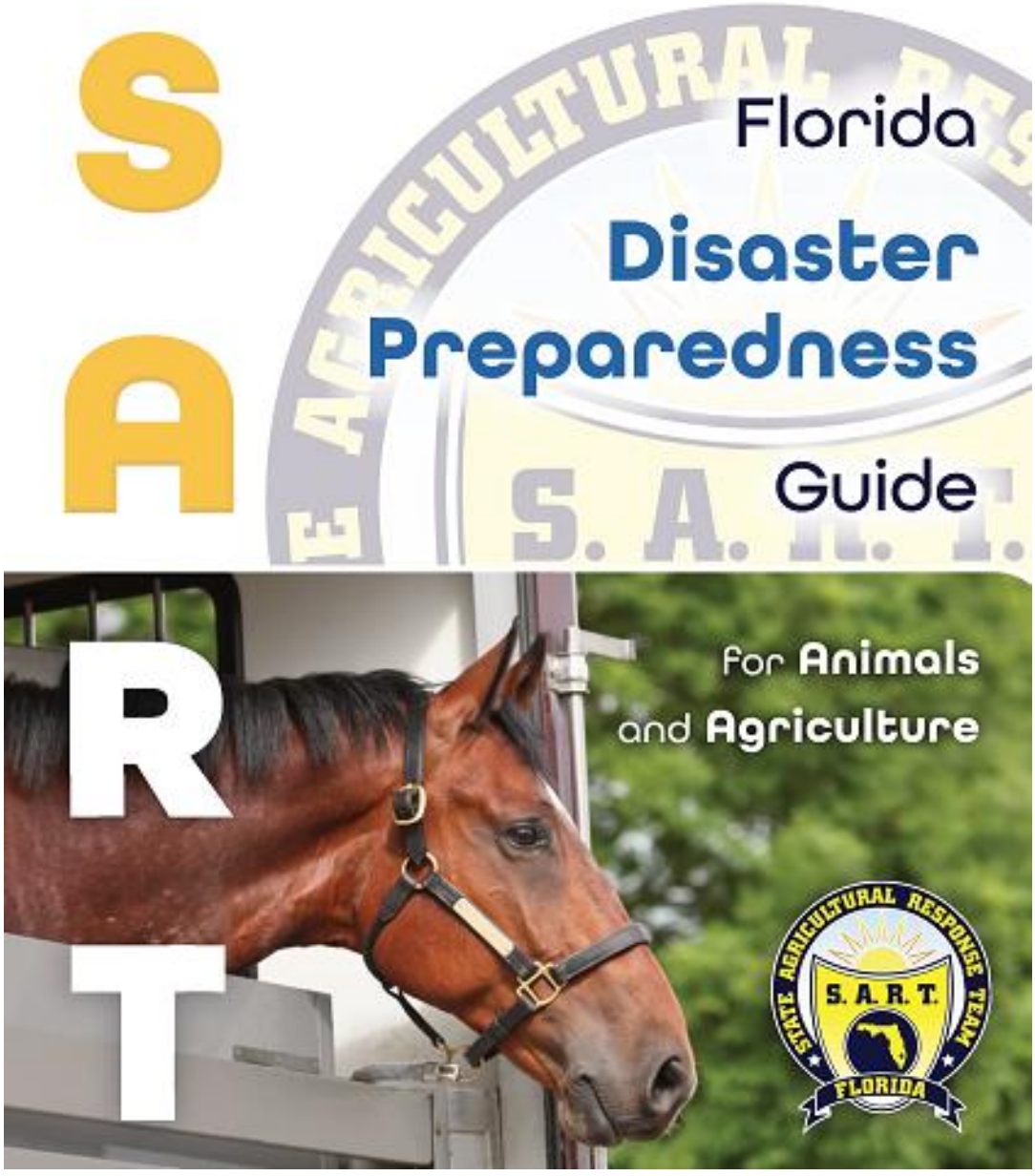
**QUESTIONS?** Contact Ms. LeiAnna Moorhead, (850) 251-2841, LeiAnna.Moorhead@FDACS.gov

**Sponsored by the Florida State Agricultural Response Team (SART), and in partnership with K9 MEDIC® and the Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training**

## The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture

The Florida Disaster Preparedness Guide for Animals and Agriculture 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!

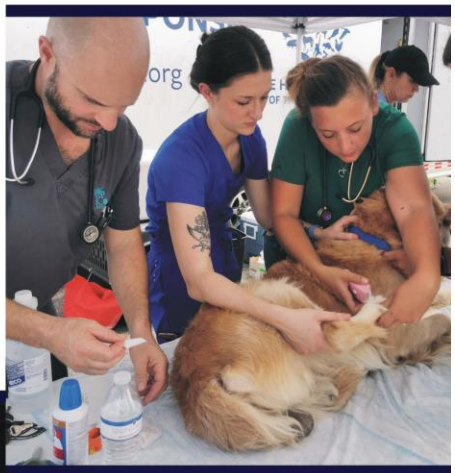
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

**Become A Volunteer**

To apply to the Florida Veterinary Corps, visit **www.FLSART.org**

Florida Veterinary Corps

*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

# Agricultural Losses and Damages from Winter 2026 Freeze Events

**The purpose of this research study is to rapidly estimate the agricultural impacts resulting from the freeze events that occurred during the winter of 2026 in the State of Florida. Survey results will be combined with a detailed baseline database on agricultural assets in Florida to estimate and communicate production losses in support of informed local, state, and federal decision-making processes related to disaster declaration, response, and relief.**

## How do producers access the survey?

Use the web link or QR code at the bottom of this flyer or contact your local UF/IFAS Extension county office to report by phone, receive a paper copy, or request an in-person assessment, where available.

## What if my operation was impacted by multiple freeze events this year?

Within the survey, you will be able to indicate that the agricultural operation has been impacted by multiple freeze events. We are interested in receiving information about the cumulative impacts of all freeze events that have impacted the operation in 2026.

## What does the survey ask for?

The disaster assessment survey requests the general location of the operation (county/ZIP code), commodity-specific details including total acreage, affected acreage, and estimated production losses. In addition, there is an option to supply additional information on infrastructural assets, stored products, or stored agricultural inputs that might have been damaged or destroyed. Respondents are also able to share additional experiences and photos, if they desire.

## How does this effort benefit producers and the agricultural industry in Florida?

This assessment supports informed decision-making at the local, state, and federal levels related to disaster declaration, response, and recovery. More specifically, survey responses and subsequent analyses provide data and insights to industry associations, government agencies, policy makers, and emergency management personnel.

## Other agencies and organizations collect this kind of information. Should producers still complete the UF/IFAS survey along with the others?

Yes. Several agencies and organizations collect much of the same information, but each is using it for a different purpose. The different agencies and organizations often do share insights from the data they are collecting to support the various efforts related to disaster declaration, response, and relief. These efforts are seen as complementary.

See **go.ufl.edu/damage-assessment-faqs** for more FAQs.

UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

**go.ufl.edu/Winter26FreezeAgImpacts**

## 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 March - 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.

**Spring Food Safety**

Get springtime off to a fresh start with our cleaning tips.

## 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.

Editing Services: The Turner Network, LLC under contract with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: flsart@turnernetwork.com

Associate Editor: LeiAnna Moorhead, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry.
E-mail: LeiAnna.Moorhead@FDACS.gov