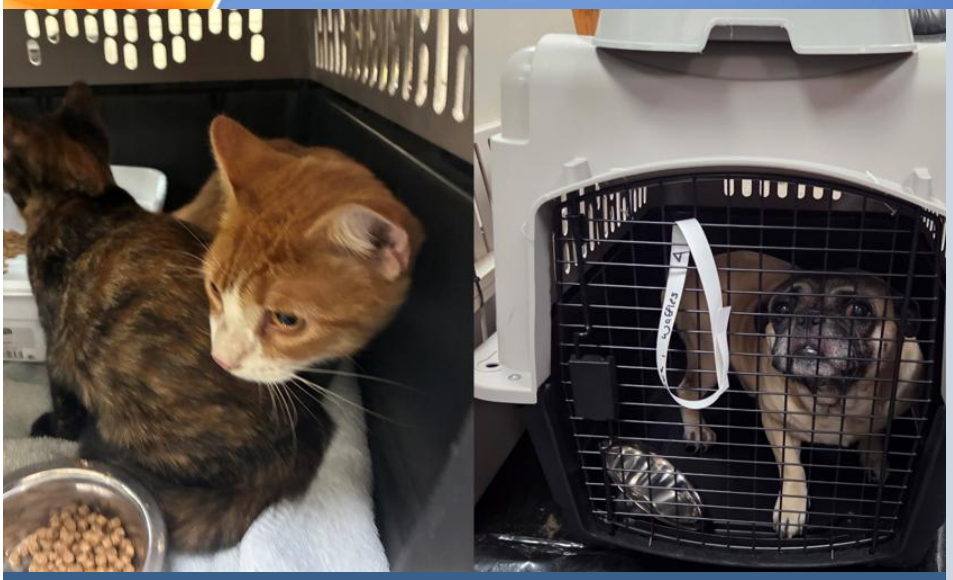
The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Florida State Agricultural Response Team



Animals sheltered safely at the Okaloosa County pet-friendly shelter during Hurricane Isaias. Photo Credit: Brandy Sydow

Special Features of this Issue:

- *Florida Cattlemen's Association Mobilizes Disaster Relief Effort Following Hurricane Isaias*
- *Florida SARC Supports Hurricane Isaias Response and Recovery*
- *Food Safety for Holidays and Festivals*

Special Edition: Hurricane Isaias Response

SART Supports Okaloosa County Pet-Friendly Shelter During Hurricane Isaias

When Hurricane Isaias threatened Florida communities, the importance of pet-friendly shelters became evident as families sought safe refuge without leaving their beloved animals behind.

Demonstrating the value of preparedness and partnership, the State Agricultural Response Team (SART) enhanced emergency sheltering capabilities in Okaloosa County by providing 20 animal crates from one of its Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) Units for use at the county's pet-friendly shelter. SART MARE Units are enclosed trailers stocked with small animal response necessities such as plastic and metal animal crates, leashes, water and food bowls, and cleaning equipment.

The shelter welcomed 21 animals, including both dogs and cats, during the storm. According to Okaloosa County Animal Control Officer, Brandy Sydow, pet owners were extremely grateful for the opportunity to remain safe while keeping their pets close.

"The owners were all incredibly grateful to have a pet-friendly shelter to feel safe from the storm," Sydow shared.

Continued, next page.

"The owners were all incredibly grateful to have a pet-friendly shelter to feel safe from the storm."

— Brandy Sydow
Animal Control Officer
Okaloosa County, Florida



SART Supports Okaloosa County Pet-Friendly Shelter During Hurricane Isaias (continued)

The shelter operation also provided valuable experience for the newly established Okaloosa County Animal Control Department, which had been in operation for less than 30 days at the time of the event. Staff members worked diligently to support both residents and their animals despite the challenges that come with emergency sheltering.

Sydow noted that the event offered important learning opportunities and highlighted the value of preparedness, partnerships, and resource sharing among emergency response agencies. The successful shelter operation demonstrated how coordination between local responders and SART can help communities meet the needs of both people and pets during disasters.



Photo: A Florida SARC equipment trailer (left) and a Florida SART Mobile Animal Response Equipment (MARE) Unit (right) deployed in Washington County for the Hurricane Isaias response.

SART's contribution of pet sheltering supplies helped ensure animals could be housed safely and comfortably throughout the emergency. By supporting pet-friendly shelters, SART continues its mission of helping Florida communities protect animals and strengthen disaster preparedness capabilities statewide.
As hurricane seasons continue to present challenges for Florida residents, partnerships such as these serve as an important reminder that disaster response includes caring for the whole family, including the four-legged members.



Florida SARC Supports Hurricane Isaias Response and Recovery
Story by Jeremy Hillengas, Florida SARC Program Manager

As Hurricane Isaias approached Florida's Panhandle, the Florida State Animal Response Coalition (FL SARC) deployed to Washington County at the request of the Florida Division of Emergency Management through ESF-17 to support pet-friendly evacuation sheltering operations.

FL SARC responders assisted Washington County Emergency Management and Animal Control with animal intake, shelter operations, and supporting evacuees with their pets at Roulhac Middle School in Chipley. When power and cellular service were lost during the storm, FL SARC's emergency response trailer provided generator power for essential lighting and fans.

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Florida SARC Supports Hurricane Isaias Response and Recovery (continued)
Following the storm, FL SARC transitioned into recovery operations. Through its partnership with Greater Good Charities, the program secured more than 40,000 pounds of donated pet food and animal care supplies. Alaqua Animal Refuge in Freeport served as the regional distribution partner, helping get these resources to affected communities. Together, the organizations supported 16 shelters, rescues, and agencies, including five county government agencies, distributing approximately 27,800 pounds of pet food as of October 15.

FL SARC's response and recovery efforts supported more than 980 animals, including dogs, cats, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens. Additionally, FL SARC provided Washington County with emergency animal sheltering supplies to strengthen its preparedness for future disasters.

This response demonstrated the importance of partnerships, trained volunteers, and coordinated efforts between state and local agencies and animal welfare organizations.

Learn more about Florida SARC at www.flsarc.org.

Florida Cattlemen's Association Mobilizes Disaster Relief Effort Following Hurricane Isaias





Photo Credit: Florida Cattlemen's Association

In the aftermath of Hurricane Isaias, the Florida Cattlemen's Association Disaster Relief and Recovery Task Force worked alongside agricultural producers to support recovery efforts in impacted communities. The task force coordinated assistance and provided emergency fencing supplies to help ranchers repair damaged pastures, secure livestock, and restore operations as quickly as possible.

Through its disaster relief network, the association also helped connect producers with resources and recovery support, demonstrating the cattle industry's commitment to assisting fellow farmers and ranchers during times of crisis.

New World Screwworm

Story provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Florida Updates Animal Import Requirements Amid New Detections

As of October 27, New World Screwworm (NWS) detections in the United States has risen to 66 cases in 2 states, 65 in domestic animals and 1 in wildlife, which was found in an Elk marking the first detection of NWS in a wild animal. Several infested zones have also been cleared dropping the total to 19 confirmed counties.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) temporary rules for animals coming from areas affected by NWS remain in effect. Any warm-blooded animal that originated in – or spent time in – an infested zone within 14 days before reaching Florida must now meet additional entry requirements. Until further notice, owners or transporters must apply for a Florida Certificate of Animal Movement and obtain a prior permission number at least two days before the animal arrives at the Florida border. Infested and High-Risk counties for each affected state are listed in the table below. NWS has not been detected in Florida.



NWS larva next to a nickel, for size comparison. Source: CDC.gov

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.

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).

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New World Screwworm (continued)

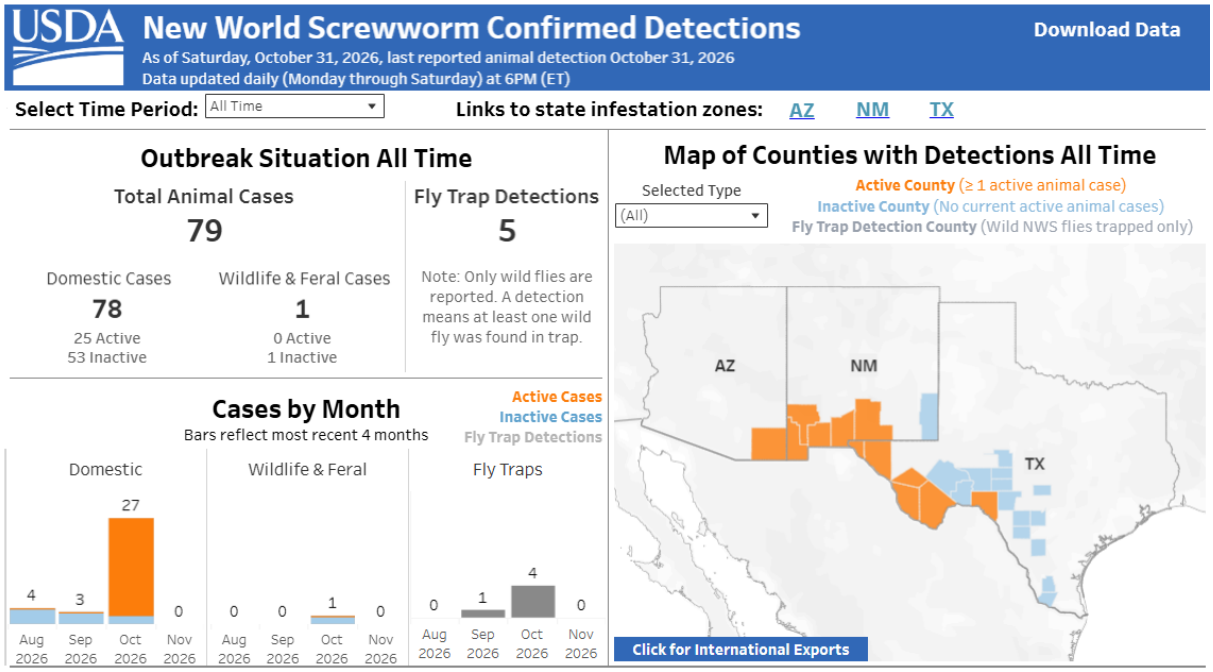
Separating Fact from Fiction
Understanding the facts about New World Screwworm is critical to containing the spread of NWS and addressing public concern. The USDA's NWS Myth Busters fact sheet identifies and dispels common misconceptions related to Screwworm. For example, presence of fly larvae is not necessarily indicative of a Screwworm infestation. Botfly and blowfly infestations present similarly to NWS and may coexist with NWS in some instances. Examination of a specimen by an entomologist is necessary to positively identify the fly larvae species. Additionally, the publication explains that NWS is not contagious, is not a food safety concern, and that culling an entire herd due to the presence of NWS is not necessary.

More details may be found at:
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/nws-myth-busters.pdf

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 submit a report to the Wildlife Health Team at their new app: Wildlife Health Public Reporter v1.



Source: USDA/APHIS, October 31, 2026.

New World Screwworm Resources

- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Issues Emergency Rule to Further Protect Florida from Threat of New World Screwworm
- USDA APHIS – Information on the Screwworm Eradication Program
- FDACS – New World Screwworm Information Page
- FDA – New World Screwworm Information for Veterinarians

NEW WORLD SCREWWORM(NWS) ENHANCED PROTOCOLS

September 2026

ANIMAL MOVEMENT **WITHIN FLORIDA**

No enhanced NWS protocols, visit FDACS.gov/AnimalMovement for existing animal movement requirements.



ANIMAL IMPORTS **FROM NON HIGH-RISK NWS AREAS**

No enhanced NWS protocols, visit FDACS.gov/AnimalMovement for existing animal movement requirements.



ANIMAL IMPORTS **FROM HIGH-RISK NWS AREAS**

- **Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI), valid for 5 days from date of inspection, documenting that all animals have been inspected and found free of disease and pests, including NWS.**
- **Without a valid OCVI, imports will be quarantined and fines will be levied.**

ANIMAL IMPORTS **FROM NWS INFESTED ZONES**

- **All warm-blooded animals originating from designated infested zones within the previous 14 days must receive a Florida Certificate of Animal Movement and prior permission number, applied for 2 days in advance of arrival.**
- **Certificate will require an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI), valid for 5 days from date of inspection, documentation of inspection, documentation of effective treatment for NWS.**
- **Without a Florida Certificate of Animal Movement and required documentation, imports will be turned away at the border.**

For the latest information on the New World Screwworm, zone designations, and animal movement protocols, visit FDACS.gov/NWS or scan the QR code above.

Updated HPAI Temporary Restrictions on the Importation of Dairy Cattle



On September 1, 2026, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) updated restrictions on imported dairy cattle following confirmed detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in herds in Texas and Utah. Dairy cattle entering Florida from a state not cleared by USDA of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) must have an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI) that includes:

- Whether the cow is lactating or not.
- If lactating, proof she tested negative for H5N1 influenza within 7 days before arrival, including test date, lab name, and test number.
    - Herds in a "Voluntary HPAI Monitored Unaffected Herd" don't need individual cow tests, but the OCVI must say so and include the date of the herd's last test.
- If non-lactating, the OCVI must be issued within 10 days of arrival in Florida.
- Dairy cows from a herd that had HPAI in the last 120 days are banned from entering Florida.
- Exception for slaughter-bound cows:
    - Lactating cows heading directly to slaughter don't need the H5N1 test—just a valid OCVI or owner-shipper statement issued within 10 days before crossing into Florida.

For more information, visit: https://flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=31328204

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
• November 7, Lee County • November 21-22, Online Live	• TBD

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

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 Virtual Meeting – November 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. (Microsoft Teams)

In the News…

- Commissioner Wilton Simpson Launches Loan Program for Florida Farmers Impacted by Hurricane Isaias (FDACS)
- $3.1M NCI award fuels canine cancer research as model for rare human cancer (UF/VetMed)
- UF researchers secure USDA-NIFA Rapid Response grant to address pasture mealybug invading Florida sugarcane (UF/IFAS)

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.

Mary Jo Maruca

Hillsborough County, Florida

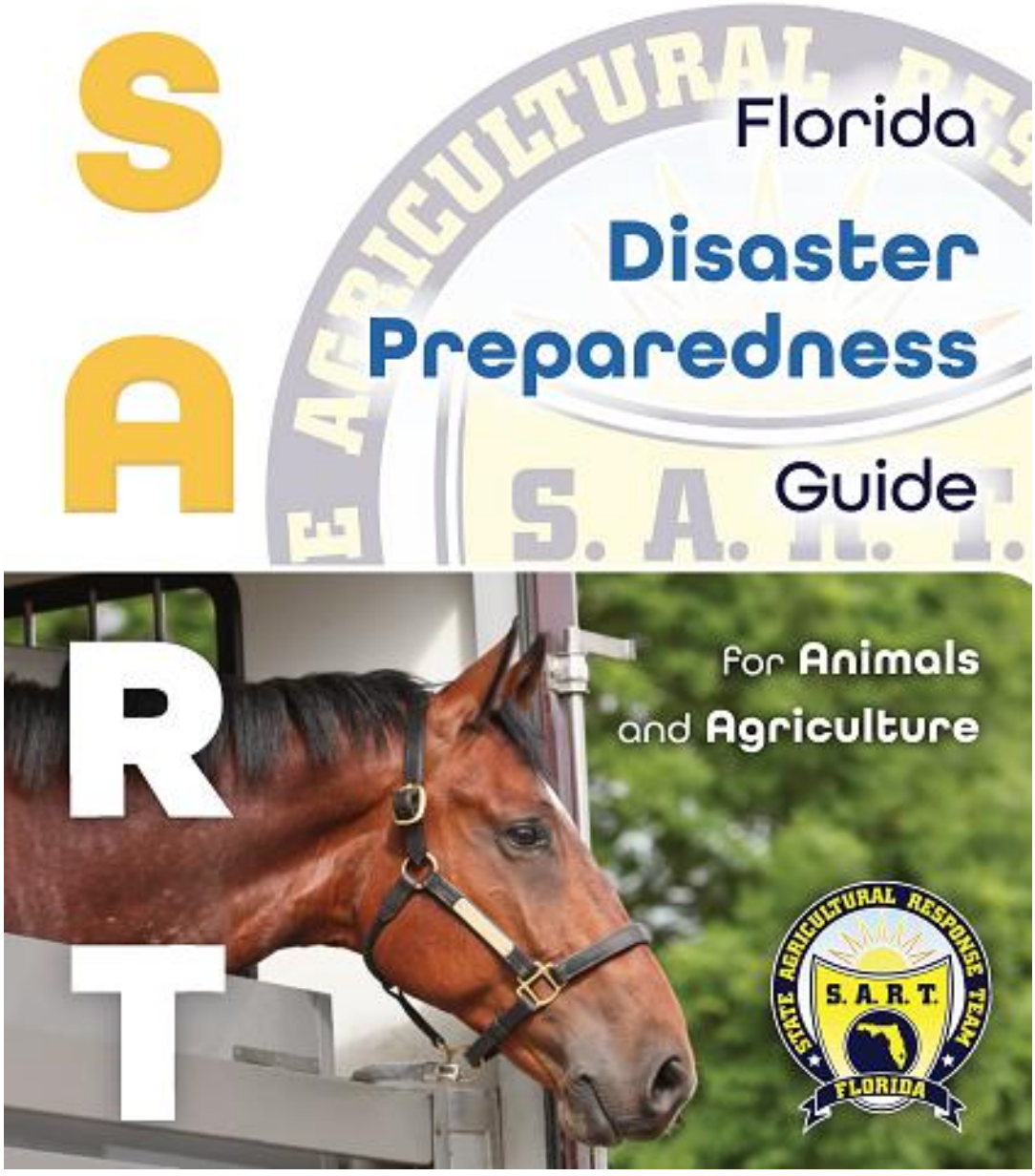
"The Toolkit provided after taking the training is amazing! It is packed full of information so anyone would be able to set up a pet friendly shelter regardless of level of experience."

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.

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!



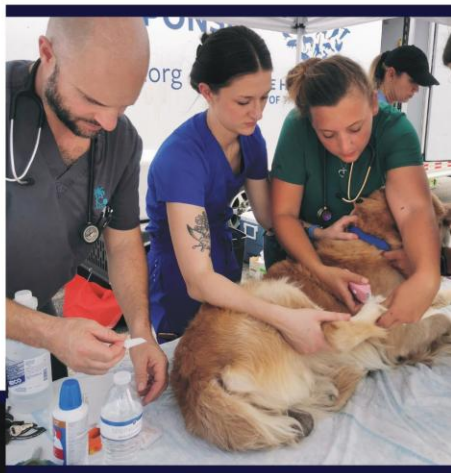
Florida veterinarians and veterinary technicians have volunteered to assist local and state emergency management officials in responding to animal emergencies. The Florida Veterinary Corps is recruiting more volunteers to help protect our state.

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

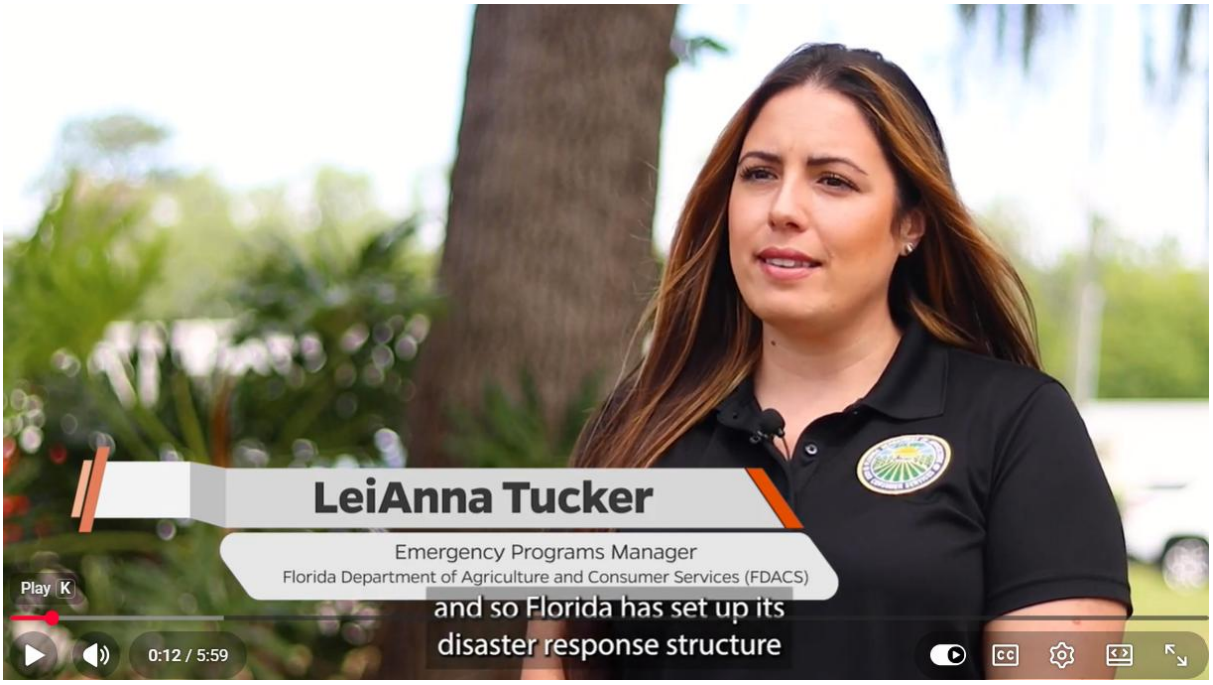
To apply to the Florida Veterinary Corps, visit **www.FLSART.org**

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.

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



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 November - 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.

Food Safety for Holidays and Festivals



Spending time with friends and family over a meal is part of many holiday traditions. Help reduce foodborne illness by following these tips:



Holiday Roasting Temperatures Cheat Sheet

Prevent foodborne illness during the holidays by roasting your holiday meat to safe minimum internal temperatures. Use a food thermometer to check the temperature in several areas of thickness to ensure it is thoroughly cooked for safety and quality. Allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming.

Learn more about roasting your holiday meat from FoodSafety.gov.

Holiday Meat Roasting Chart

RED MEAT, TYPE	OVEN °F	TIMING	MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURE & REST TIME
BEEF, FRESH			
Rib roast, bone-in; 4 to 8 lbs	325	23 to 30 min/lb	145 °F and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Rib roast, boneless; 4 lbs	325	39 to 43 min/lb	
Eye round roast; 2 to 3 lbs	325	20 to 22 min/lb	
Tenderloin roast, whole; 4 to 6 lbs	425	45 to 60 minutes total	
Tenderloin roast, half; 2 to 3 lbs	425	35 to 45 minutes total	
LAMB			
Leg, bone-in; 5 to 9 lbs	325	20-26 min/lb	145 °F and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Leg, boneless; 4 to 7 lbs	325	20-26 min/lb	
Crown roast; 3 to 4 lbs	375	20-30 min/lb	
PORK, FRESH			
Loin roast, bone-in; 3 to 5 lbs	325	20-25 min/lb	145 °F and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Loin roast boneless; 2 to 4 lbs	325	23-33 min/lb	
Crown roast; 6 to 10 lbs	325	20-25 min/lb	
Tenderloin; ½ to 1½ lbs	425	20-30 minutes total	
PORK, CURED			
Cook-before-eating, bone-in; Whole, 14 to 16 lbs	325	18-20 min/lb	145 °F and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Cook-before-eating, bone-in; Half, 7 to 8 lbs	325	22-25 min/lb	
Fully cooked, bone-in; Whole, 14 to 16 lbs	325	15-18 min/lb	140 °F
Fully cooked, bone-in; Half, 7 to 8 lbs	325	18-25 min/lb	140 °F
Fully cooked, boneless; 3 to 4 lbs	325	27-33 min/lb	140 °F
Country, dried	325		(see label directions)
VEAL			
Boneless roast, rump or shoulder; 2 to 3 lbs	325	25-30 min/lb	145 °F and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Bone-in roast, loin; 3 to 4 lbs	325	30-34 min/lb	
VENISON			
Round, rump, loin, or rib roast; 3 to 4 lbs	325	20-25 min/lb	165 °F

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.

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