

Florida SART Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 4, 2012 – 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Alachua Regional Service Center
14101 Hwy. 441, Suite 200, Alachua, FL 32615



Attendance

Robert Behl, Alachua Co. Sheriff
Bianca Blakely, FDACS/DAI, Planner
Laura Bevan, HSUS
Connie Brooks, FL SARC
Dale Dubberly, FDACS/Ag. Env. Svcs.
Kim Duffiney, USDA/APHIS/AC
Tony Duffiney, USDA/APHIS/WS
Joan Dusky, UF/IFAS
Mark Fagan, FDACS/DPI
Paul Gibbs, UF, Veterinary Medicine

Ashby Green, Florida Cattlemen's Assn.
Brandon Jones, Alachua Co. Sheriff
Joe Kight, FDACS/DAI, ESF-17
Larry Mack, Florida Feed Assn.
Richard Miranda, FDACS/DPI
David Perry, FDACS/DAI, Co-Chair
Sue Rantuccio, FDACS/DAI
Rick Sapp, SART Sentinel
Kendra Stauffer, USDA/APHIS/VS

1 Call to Order & Welcome

Florida ESF-17 Joe Kight Called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Dale Dubberly welcomed the group to the Alachua Regional Service Center. It is the first time the SART Advisory Board has met at the building.

2 Update on Invasive Giant African Land Snail

Richard Miranda and Mark Fagan gave a presentation on efforts to eradicate the invasive Giant African Land Snail from Florida. "We have been aggressive in going after invasive pests and work very cooperatively with the USDA and UF/IFAS," Miranda said.

Miranda noted the snail came to the attention of FDACS in September 2011. It took one day to identify, one day to verify and within a couple days, a task force was on the ground in Miami doing "mechanical collection" (searching for the snails and picking them up by hand). They began the search within a one-mile diameter area or core. By October 15th, more than 80 people were on the ground working to locate and eradicate the snails.

"It's a nightmare situation," Miranda said. "Many properties are overgrown and filled with debris." Forestry sent two strike teams to assist in the on-going and very labor

intensive effort. “By December, we had physically removed 32,400 snails. We have now expanded the search to 14 core areas and have removed about 44,000 snails.”

“I think we have this snail contained,” Miranda said, “but the rainy season is beginning in south Florida and snails love a wet, humid environment.” Miranda theorized that we may see an explosion and the development of more core areas. In the best case scenario, we have perhaps 1 ½ years to go for eradication and in the worst case, far longer.

Miranda and Mark Fagan showed a 4-minute, 16-second video produced by FDACS-DPI and USDA-APHIS-PPQ. In the video, Paul Skelly, PhD Entomologist with FDACS, discusses the snail and searches for it around homes in Miami. (This video was referenced in the December, 2011 SART Sentinel and can be watched on YouTube.com at <http://www.youtube.com/usdaaphis#p/a/f/0/Wc8Dx2HcPgg>.)

Mark Fagan said that eradication of the invasive pest “has proven to be a challenge” and noted the transition from Incident Command to Program status, indicating that eradication is a long-term commitment. He and Miranda passed around samples of the giant snails from various stages of growth. Fagan noted that in many temperate climates these snails were kept as “pets,” but in areas with few freezing temperatures like most of Florida, the snails can reproduce and live – indeed, they can thrive – outside.

These snails are invasive and eat everything grown commercially in the state as well as stucco on the sides of buildings. Nothing in Florida considers them food and their potential impact could be in the neighborhood \$18-\$20 million per year if left unchecked. Snails can live to nine years and grow to nine inches or more in length. They can lay more than 1,200 eggs per year. “The parasitic danger to humans is fairly low,” Fagan said, “but the danger to the agriculture of the state is tremendous. We believe they have already migrated northward into Broward County. Eradication is essential.”

It’s important to handle the snails with gloves because they can carry the rat lung disease parasite and transmit a disease to humans similar to meningitis (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angiostrongylus_cantonensis). The telephone hot line to report a giant African land snail sighting is 888-397-1517.

Fagan discussed at length the social relationship between Santería (for a primer read <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santer%C3%A1>) and the giant African land snails. Practitioners of Santería traditionally use the snails in their rituals and new search cores each has a connection to this religion.

“If this got out of control,” Fagan said, “USDA could quarantine Florida produce and the effects would be tremendous.”

[3] Update on Miami-Dade Airport Training Exercise & MIM

Dr. Kendra Stauffer is Area Emergency Coordinator for Florida for USDA APHIS/VS. She directed an exercise at the Miami-Dade airport last year which simulated an accident with an arriving airplane filled with horses. The exercise involved a multitude

of responders, agencies and jurisdictions. One of the knowledge gaps identified was knowing the temperature and humidity during the flights. She is leading a project that is placing heat and humidity sensors in airplanes to help determine this information. This information will then be used to test several different processes to cool off a plane loaded with horses that may be stuck on a tarmac in Miami's heat, such as the scenario in the August exercise. (<http://www.flgart.org/newsletter/sent-11-09.jsp#f1>)

Stauffer's MIM update noted that the test conducted in St. Johns County was effective and considerate of both time and resources. This computerized tracking system will also be tested during the MARE/Shelter exercise on April 28th and they would like to expand awareness of the system's benefits to other counties.

Joe Kight noticed that SART has purchased some gear (less than \$1,500) and worked with USDA which already had a database and electronic infrastructure. (Note Project Recover, reported at <http://flgart.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter/sent-11-10.jsp> for additional information.)

4 SART Courses & Exercises

Joe Kight reported on the two SART-related courses developed by UF and approved by the state: Large Animal Technical Rescue (course # 11-26325) and Small Animal Emergency Sheltering (course # 11-26326).

To date, 56 people have completed the Large Animal course. The goal is to have a trained team available in each of Florida's 7 law-enforcement regions. There are three at present. He noted the train wreck in Charlotte County for which SART provided gear and "local cowboys" and veterinarians did the herding and triage.

For the Small Animal course, 526 people have trained. SART has 7 MARE (mobile animal response equipment) Units available, one for each law-enforcement region. Also available are livestock panels. "The goal is to have 1,000 people trained by the end of the year," Kight said.

Kight also noted that Florida has conducted more exercises this year than any previous year. David Perry noted the beneficial effects of the December 2011 exercise "Operation Bovine Reclamation" in Polk County and the January 2012 exercise "Operation Red Fly" held in Leon County.

In the April 28 exercise in Wakulla and Leon Counties, the teams will not only participate in a tornado exercise, but will physically move animals. "We're trying to simulate the effects of the Joplin, Missouri tornados," Perry noted. Kight noted that the date unfortunately coincided with the FSU graduation and that meant that camping was an attendee's best option.

Regarding county visits, Kight and Perry are trying to visit each county one time a year to press for awareness of agricultural (plant and animal) issues and the need to plan for animal issues in emergencies.

5 Other Agenda Items

- A. Bianca Blakely, SART Planner, discussed the status of the new SART video presentation. It is expected to be a narrated 7-8 minutes and completion date may be as early as mid-June – although depending on emergencies or other unexpected situations it might be as late as mid-December. Blakely filmed much of the Advisory Board meeting from various angles for the use of portions in the video or elsewhere.
- B. The 2013 SART Planning Meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place at The Shores www.shoresresort.com from Monday, January 28 – Wednesday, January 30, 2013. Kight noted that the SART budget will accommodate paying for the room for two people per county, perhaps one from IFAS Extension and one from Emergency Management. Rooms are negotiated at \$99/night. At this time, 200-250 are expected and certified courses will be taught. “Thanks, Joan [Dusky] for getting county agents involved in SART,” said Joe Kight.
- C. Dr. Paul Gibbs noted that some celebration was in order since this would be Florida SART’s tenth year and the organization had come a long way in meeting its original objectives.
- D. Dr. Joan Dusky noted that several task forces on invasive white flies were in operation around the state. (See <http://pbcgov.com/coextension/horticulture/whitefly/>)
- E. Kim Duffiney noted that Animal Care has established Primary Response Teams around the U.S.
- F. Connie Brooks noted that Florida SARC had participated in the cat hoarding issues in the Caboodle Ranch incident in Madison, County.
- G. Dale Dubberly noted that the coming radiological exercise in Marianna, Florida would involve seven counties.
- H. Ashby Green noted, “This SART organization in Florida is the envy of other states.” He also noted that, “You don’t finish a strategic plan. You keep updating it.”
- I. The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Rick Sapp
April 6, 2012