



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner
The Capitol • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

September 19, 2005

To Our Florida Partners:

Many residents of Florida and our neighbors to the west have again experienced a catastrophic natural disaster. I commend the efforts of the many Florida first responders who work hard to prepare for this kind of tragedy, and who have now joined forces with other state and federal partners to preserve life and property in Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana.

As you know from news reports, the devastation has been overwhelming. Resources and personnel are currently stretched thin, and first responder exhaustion is likely to become a serious issue over the next few days and weeks.

With this in mind, I want to take a moment to remind you that the Department of Homeland Security continues to warn of the potential of a terrorist attack in the United States. As incomprehensible as it may seem, there are adversaries of this great country who may be tempted to strike our nation when our strength is focused on responding to this unprecedented tragedy. Although the Homeland Security Advisory System remains at Condition Yellow (Elevated), and while there is no information indicating Florida is a target of any specific threat, I am asking all citizens of this state to maintain a high level of vigilance.

While the efforts of our law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency management, and public health personnel are focused on recovery efforts, please help cover some of the day to day vigilance that they accomplish so well. As you go about your business, please be mindful of the following points:

- Be aware of unfamiliar persons in your neighborhoods, places of business, schools, farms, and other important places
- Be aware of suspicious persons who give undue attention (including questioning, videotaping, or note taking) to fences, security plans, building plans, entrances, etc.
- Be aware of persons unfamiliar to you who attempt to buy fertilizers, pesticides, diesel fuel, or other potentially dangerous substances in large quantities



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- Be aware of unfamiliar persons around animal populations or crop storage facilities
- Report any unusual pests or diseases affecting animals or plants to the proper authorities
- If you work in an access-controlled facility, make sure doors and windows remain locked, and be aware of people without appropriate security access trying to follow behind you into secure buildings
- Be aware of trucks, buses, or other large vehicles that appear out of place, and that are in the vicinity of large groups of people or around critical facilities
- **Report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement. If you come across activities around agricultural facilities that seem out of place, also contact the Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement at 800-342-5869**

While I am confident Florida's security and agricultural interests remain a top priority with those charged with protecting the public and the food supply, the potential for adversaries targeting food and water supplies, agricultural production facilities, livestock and crops is always a concern. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us all to remain vigilant during this stressful period of recovery.

Thank you for your partnership in working to keep the people of Florida safe from terrorism.

Sincerely,



CHARLES H. BRONSON
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE