

Three Suspected Slaughter Farms Raided In Palm Beach

October 13, 2015 12:26 PM



MIAMI (CBSMiami) – After a six month undercover operation by the Miami-based Animal Recovery Mission, law enforcement in Palm Beach raided three farms suspected of illegally slaughtering horses and selling their meat.

The farms are located in the western part of the county and the greater Wellington area of Florida, ironically known as the show horse capital of the United States. ARM said Tuesday's raids were the largest tactical strike on extreme animal cruelty operations in United States history.

Undercover footage collected by ARM, reportedly showed additional criminal acts against animals in the form of inhumane handling, dragging, beating, gutting, boiling, skinning and hoisting of horses and other animals alive.

“Operation: Rancho Garcia” focused on a farm owned by Jorge Garcia who is reportedly linked to the black market horse meat trade in Miami where customers are traveling from to get their horse meat. Garcia purchases his horses from animal auctions and Craigslist and has allegedly been butchering them and other animals on his property for decades, according to ARM.

ARM said their undercover footage of Garcia and his employees shows them selling large amounts of horse meat, violently stabbing pigs in the heart and boiling them alive, slitting throats of goats and rams before hoisted them by their hind legs and then skinning them alive.

The second raid was nicknamed "Operation: G.A Paso Fino" and it was conducted at two co-joined businesses on a piece of property owned by Orlando Guzman. He rents a portion of it to Edgar Bica Sr. and his son.

Guzman, the Bicas and an employee of Bica Sr. have reportedly operated an illegal slaughter farm for decades and supply the black market demand for horse meat in the Loxahatchee and greater Wellington areas, according to ARM.

Also located on the property were a puppy mill area, where puppies were kept in small excrement riddle cages with no water, and cock fighting roosters that employees breed and train for fights throughout Palm Beach County, according to ARM.

The final raid was conducted at the Medina farm in Loxahatchee.

ARM said they recorded a number of acts of extreme cruelty including the slitting goat's necks while they are restrained on their backs, forced to suffocate in their own blood as well as severing the throats of cows with extremely dull blades before hoisting them by their hind legs and skinning them alive.

All three farms have been shut down and at least three arrests were made.

In Florida, "The Good Horse Slaughter Act" makes it a third degree felony to buy, sell, transport, kill a horse or possess horse meat for human consumption within the state.