



## 2 arrested after discovery of illegal Southwest Miami-Dade slaughterhouse

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SOUTHWEST MIAMI-DADE, Fla. (WSVN) -- Two people were charged with felonies relating to operation of an illegal slaughterhouse on their property.

The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, the Miami-Dade Police Department, undercover investigators from the Animal Recovery Mission (ARM) and officers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, raided the home of 45-year-old Angel Ricardo Vargas and 41-year-old Mayelin Rodriguez, Thursday morning. Police arrested them after an eight-month-long investigation discovered animal cruelty taking place at their residence, at 19400 S.W. 136 St.

7Skyforce flew over the scene, where police cars could be seen surrounding the property. According to ARM, pigs, ducks, chickens and turkeys were being illegally slaughtered. They described the slaughter procedures as barbaric, inhumane and

extremely illegal. Photos from inside the residence showed messy and unsanitary conditions.

The on-site investigation led to a variety of additional findings, which may include the directing of potentially unhealthy meat into the food chain and the discovery of industrial ovens at the site. ARM also gave authorities graphic video from inside the slaughter house, in which pigs were repeatedly stabbed, hooked, dragged and boiled alive in front of undercover operatives with the non-profit organization who were posing as purchasers.

ARM also claims the couple was selling animals for ritualistic purposes. "They were putting pigs alive and drowning them into boiling water," said ARM's Richard Couto, "really some of the most monstrous, horrific crimes that we're seeing around the country. Basically, what our goal is, is to send a strong message to the community that illegal slaughter houses and animal cruelty in this area will not be tolerated. Period."

Some of the animals have been rescued, but most of them will have to remain on the site to be tested for diseases.

Angel Ricardo Vargas was charged with four counts of cruelty to animals and one count of conspiracy to commit cruelty to animals. Mayelin Rodriguez was charged with one count of cruelty to animals and one count of conspiracy to commit cruelty to animals.