



Illegal animal slaughterhouse uncovered in NW Miami-Dade

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NORTHWEST MIAMI-DADE, Fla. (WSVN) -- Police have uncovered an illegal animal slaughterhouse, and according to officials, residents in Miami-Dade County have eaten deceased animals that came from the farm.

7Skyforce flew over the scene along 41st Street and Northwest 118th Avenue in Northwest Miami-Dade. Alfredo Ramirez of Miami-Dade Police's Economic Crimes Bureau said the slaughterhouse was tucked away not too far from likely unaware county residents. "It is shocking to me that nearly 50 yards away from this property is modern civilization, greater Miami-Dade County, and right under our nose it's medieval behavior."

Officials raided the illegal slaughterhouse Thursday after a five-month investigation in conjunction with the State Attorney's Office and a nonprofit organization called Animal Recovery Mission, which executed most of the investigation's undercover work.

The brutal killing of animals was captured on video recorded during the undercover operations. Some of the primary animals involved were pigs, goats, and guinea hens. Due to starvation, some animals turned to cannibalism to survive.

Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said the footage was disturbing. "If you look at any of these scenes, there isn't a single person I know that wouldn't be absolutely repulsed by these images," she said.

Richard Couto of the Animal Recovery Mission said thousands of animals were affected, and he detailed some of the abuse that occurred on the property Thursday at a press event. "The pigs were being stabbed to death, boiled, drowned in boiling water, and there are things that we've seen on the property behind us that we have never seen in our lives," Couto said. "We're looking at numbers well over 3,000 animals, many of them sick, emaciated, dying as we speak behind us."

According to Couto, deceased animals were sold to the public. "This is not just an animal cruelty issue, this is a public safety issue," he said. "Much of this meat was going into our food chain. The animals were deceased. They were sick. They were being butchered in some of the most vile, disgusting areas possible."

Couto continued, "I can assure you, many people in Miami-Dade County have eaten this meat [and] did not know it was from Coco Farms."

The two owners, 69-year-old Gregorio Santa Ana and 35-year-old Jose Armando Solis, have been arrested, and face charges of animal cruelty and improper confinement. "The hammer was dropped on these people. They are going to jail and hopefully prison," Couto said.

Ramirez said the animals' suffering was apparent. "You could see in the eyes of these animals the misery, the starvation, the torture that they went through, and I can tell you that these people are going to be brought to justice," he said.

There is a warrant for the arrest of a third suspect, Ruben Rodriguez, 67. Police will return to the property to pick up the animals, which are going to different sanctuaries across the state. Many of them are not expected to survive.