

ARRESTS MADE AFTER BRUTAL ILLEGAL SLAUGHTERHOUSE DISCOVERED IN SOUTH MIAMI-DADE

BY KYLE MUNZENRIEDER THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015 | 10 HOURS AGO



On a wooded plot of land in South Miami-Dade, animals were allegedly stabbed, hooked, and dragged regularly. Some would even be boiled alive. The site has been dubbed an "animal house of horrors." Now, after a seven-and-half-month investigation into the illegal slaughterhouse, officials have arrested two people on multiple animal cruelty-related felony charges.

Several pigs, many looking malnourished, were rescued from the farm this morning, and suspects Angel Ricardo Vargas, 45, and Mayelin Rodriguez, 41, were led away in handcuffs. The investigation brought together the resources of the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, the Miami-Dade Police Department, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the non-governmental Animal Recovery Mission (ARM).

Beginning this past May 1, undercover investigators visited the slaughterhouse, located at 19400 SW 136th St. That's a residential area just west of Kendall and north of the Redland. They visited the home on four occasions and witnessed and documented the brutal treatment of animals.

In a comment on Facebook, ARM called it "one of the most vile, animal abusing, slaughter farms we've seen."

The animals were sold for food, but because of the ghastly and grotesque conditions of the slaughterhouse, investigators are also worried that tainted meat might have been sold.

"Anyone involved in the food industry knows that there are easily performed, painless ways to slaughter livestock for food. At these illegal slaughterhouses, it seems to be too much trouble to render the animals senseless," State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said in a statement. "Instead of following Florida's laws, Angel Ricardo Vargas, and his wife, Mayelin Rodriguez, turned a part of their home into an animal house of horrors. I applaud the partnership which allows my prosecutors, the Miami-Dade Police Department, and the Animal Recovery Mission to effectively shut down such ghastly operations. Now we need to know if the meat from this site has been entering our local food chain. That state and federal investigation is now ongoing." The State Attorney's Office released several pictures showing the unkempt state of the operation.

ARM also posted this image of bloody and rusty instruments left on a workshop table.

Animals found onsite were taken into custody by ARM, which hopes to rehabilitate them. Vargas faces four counts of cruelty to animals and one count of conspiracy to commit cruelty to animals. Rodriguez faces a single count of each charge. All are third-degree felonies.