



Couple Arrested in Illegal Slaughterhouse Case in Miami-Dade

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A husband and wife have been arrested after an undercover investigation found several acts of animal cruelty were committed at an illegal slaughterhouse in Miami-Dade, authorities said Thursday. Angel Ricardo Vargas, 45, and Mayelin Rodriguez, 41, were arrested Thursday after a 7-month investigation, the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office said.

Vargas faces four counts of animal cruelty and one count of conspiracy to commit animal cruelty. Rodriguez faces one count of animal cruelty and one count of conspiracy to commit animal cruelty. Information about their attorneys wasn't immediately available.

The State Attorney's Office, Miami-Dade Police, the Florida Wildlife and Conservation Commission and investigators from the Animal Recovery Mission began the undercover operation on May 1 at the couple's home at 19400 Southwest 136th Street.

Investigators visited the home on four different occasions and filmed acts of animal cruelty including repeated stabbing, hooking, dragging and boiling alive of animals, authorities said.

"They were putting pigs alive and drowning them into boiling water. Really some of the more monstrous and horrific crimes," said Richard Couto with Animal Recovery Mission.

The animals were sold to purchasers who visited the home, which was in a residential area and didn't allow the activities due to health and zoning laws.

Other findings include the "directing of potentially unhealthy meat into the food chain," industrial ovens and filthy conditions that need further investigation, authorities said.

Several animals were recovered from the home, including some endangered species, Miami-Dade Police said.

"Anyone involved in the food industry knows that there are easily performed, painless ways to slaughter livestock for food. At these illegal slaughterhouses, it seem 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."