

Judge: Undercover ARM video showing slaughter houses allowed at trial

Alyssa Hyman 7:47 PM, Mar 16, 2016



WEST PALM BEACH, Fla-- Prosecutors saved some key evidence Wednesday for an up-coming animal cruelty case.

It's the case involving the Loxahatchee slaughter houses accused of running illegal horse meet operations.

The whole thing started after an organization called the Animal Recovery Mission (ARM) did an undercover investigation at three slaughter houses and recorded the farms' actions.

The investigation resulted in 6 arrests and 750 animals seized.

That case is preparing to go to trial. However, the farm owners facing charges tried to get some key evidence thrown out. They did not want that video evidence filmed by ARM to be allowed at trial.

Wednesday, the judge ruled against them, which was a big victory for the state. "When we enter into these illegal torture operations for animals, video is everything. It's the entire case," said Richard Couto, ARM's founder and lead investigator. "I'm not surprised they tried to suppress."

Prosecutors presented evidence that the farms' gates were open. The property was easily visible from the roads despite fencing. The key witness testified that there were signs promoting business and sales as well as a lot of people on the property.

The judge said based on witness testimony and from what we could see in the video there was no expectation of privacy on the farms.

The case is set for trial later this month.