



Undercover Video Alleges More Animal Abuse At Another Florida Dairy Farm

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BOCA RATON (CBSMiami) — Allegations of animal abuse have hit another Florida dairy farm, just a week after video said to be taken from the state's largest milk producer showed mistreatment of cattle was released by an activist group. The Animal Recovery Mission (ARM) released footage Thursday from a surveillance video acquired by undercover investigators at the Burnham Dairy Farm, located in Okeechobee, Florida.

The video captures alleged torment inflicted on dairy cows at the farms, used to supply some of the largest brands and grocery stores, including Publix. The animals were beaten, whipped and harassed. Sick and dying cows and calves were seen scattered along the property. Newborns were left to wither and die in tiny cages. Dead cattle were dumped in piles.

The organization said they used an undercover investigator to gain employment at Burnham Dairy in August, capturing and documenting the “extensive and widespread abuse and neglect of dairy cows on the farm.”

“I am a very seasoned undercover investigator,” said ARM’s Richard Couto. “I have been undercover constantly for the past 10 years and I’ve seen some of the worst abuse world-wide. I’ve been to eight countries, just about every state in the United States, and all over the state of Florida. And as far as long-term abuse and suffering and neglect, this is one of the worst, most disgusting cases I’ve ever seen.”

ARM Video Footage on Burnham Farm

They were being dragged out of the milking parlor, they were being dragged with tractors, over to the downacow area, and left in mud. In feet of mud,” said Couto. “There were bodies everywhere. The calves were living with the dead.”

Burnham Dairy owner and location boss, Randy Burnham, is involved in the Southeast Milk Cooperative, which represents dairy farmers in the region.

Southeast Milk (SMI) issued a statement saying they’re launching their own investigation into the alleged abuse and placed Burnham Dairy Farm on probationary status.

“Our organization has a zero-tolerance policy for animal abuse, which mirrors the expectations of proper animal care outlined in the National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Animal Care program, the dairy industry’s comprehensive animal care program,” the statement read, in part. “Any employee of a farm marketing its milk through SMI who is found to have violated our animal care guidelines, as well as any employee who witnessed abuse and failed to report it, should be terminated.”

Charges are being sought by ARM against Burnham, the dairy farm workers and their supervisors. However, according to a spokeswoman for the Okeechobee Sheriff’s Department, “the allegation at the Burnham Farm is non-criminal.” The case is being investigated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Okeechobee County Health Department, the department said. In a statement, Burnham said they were appalled by the images.

“While some of them reflect our struggle in the face of historic severe weather in Florida, we also can’t deny that others reflect a failure of our farm policies and management. We are taking immediate action regarding our employees.”

Last week, [video surfaced showing similar animal mistreatment at Larson Dairy](#).

Grocery chain Publix, who ended business with Larson, has done the same with Burnham. The company said they were made aware of the video before its release and suspended their business with the dairy farm.

“Late last week, we were made aware that an undercover video taken at Burnham Farms, Inc. would be released to the media this week. The video was expected to depict deplorable farm conditions and animal abuse. With this information, we made the immediate decision to suspend receiving raw milk product from Burnham Farms, Inc. on Friday, November 10, 2017. Publix is committed to animal welfare and we hold our suppliers to the same standards.”