



2nd South Florida dairy farm under scrutiny after video shows cow abuse

[Vanessa Medina](#) | [Nicole Linsalata](#)

Thursday, November 16, 2017



DEERFIELD BEACH, FLA. (WSVN) - A second South Florida dairy farm is under heat after a hidden camera captured workers abusing cows and making them live in unsanitary conditions.

The video showed workers beating and abusing cows at the Burnham Farm in Okeechobee, Fla. An undercover investigator with the Animal Recovery Mission (ARM) captured and released the video, which contains over a thousand hours of footage.

ARM was also responsible for releasing the video showing similar abuse at Larsen Farms nearby, where arrest warrants have been issued for employees.

“In this case, the cruelty is extreme,” said Richard Couto of the Animal Recovery Mission.

The investigation began in August when an activist got a job as a milker and recorded video on the farm for three months.

“The milking barn is a catastrophe,” said Couto. “Covered in feces — the floors, the walls.”

The video showed workers using belts to beat the cattle and forcing them to lay in their own urine and feces for hours.

Some cows were reportedly forced to lay in as much as four inches of feces on the ground.

In the video, Couto said, supervisors would teach new employees to whip and beat the cows into position.

“The cow’s being beat in the face and in the private parts with metal buckled belts,” said Couto. “A full-grown man using all of his might with this belt on a daily basis — on an hourly basis, on almost a minute basis — beating every single cow that entered that milking parlor. Remember, these cows are milked three times a day. They have two crews and two shifts that milk these cows, day and night, seven days a week, possibly over 305 days per year.”

According to the video, once the calves are born, they are ripped from their mothers and placed into muddy pens.

“They were trying to bottle-feed, they wouldn’t take the bottle. They want their mother,” said Couto.

Workers could be seen trying to shove rods down the calves throats to feed them.

“Many times, the rod’s possibly going into the lung area and drowning the cows,” said Couto. “The cows were dying — bodies everywhere. The calves were living with the dead.”

Burnham Farms released a statement which reads, “We are taking immediate action regarding employees. At the same time, we are working with animal care experts in our industry to change our on-farm practices because we need to do better by our customers, our community, and most of all, our animals.”

Milk produced at the farm goes to grocery stores around the state, including Publix, who said once they saw the video, they stopped all shipments of milk from the farm.

In a statement, the company said, “At Publix, we believe animals should be treated humanely during all phases of their lives.”

ARM wants the owners of the farm to face felony charges. They said they knew exactly what was going on at the farm. They also have video footage of the owners seeing exactly what transpired and want this farm to be closed.