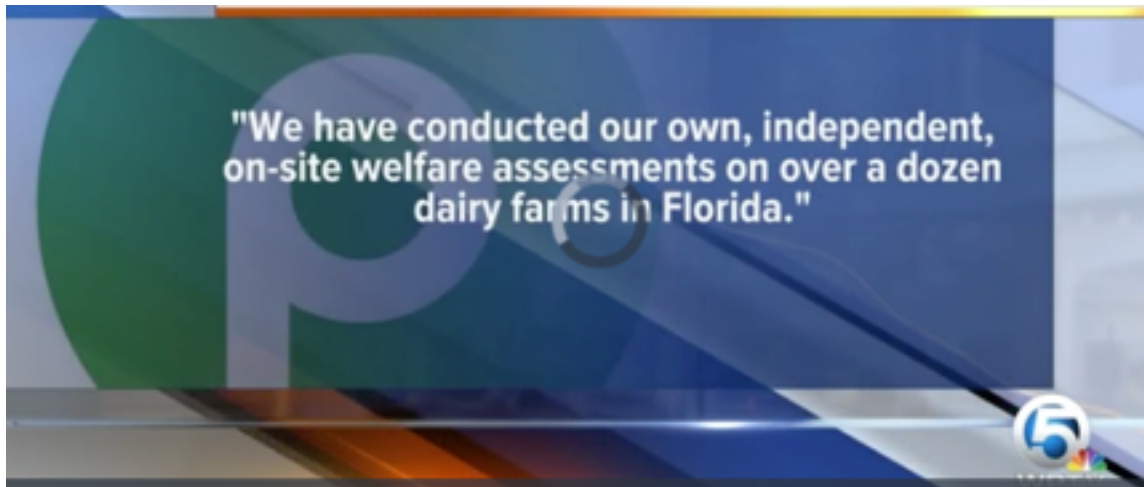


Animal Recovery Mission claims animal abuse at Burnham Dairy Farm in Okeechobee

10:26 AM, Nov 16, 2017

7:04 PM, Nov 16, 2017



An animal rights group has released undercover video from a second Florida dairy farm that they allege shows the abuse of cows. The group, The Animal Recovery Mission, is calling for charges against the dairy owner and workers captured on the graphic video.

The nearly 10-minute long video, which has not been independently verified by WPTV, shows piles of dead cows, along with workers prodding and whipping cows as they are moved into what appears to be milking pens.

ARM said the video was recorded at the Burnham Dairy Farm in Okeechobee and said it supplies milk to Publix.

The grocery chain later said it was made aware of the undercover video last week and on November, 10 suspended receiving raw milk product from Burnham Farms.

Statement from Publix:

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.

Today, the undercover video taken at Burnham Farms, Inc. was released. We remain disturbed by the images and shocked by the cruelty shown toward the animals. Over the past week, we have continued to work with Southeast Milk Incorporated (SMI) Cooperative and we have remained in close contact with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. In addition, we have conducted our own, independent, on-site animal welfare assessments on over a dozen dairy farms in Florida.

At Publix, we believe animals should be treated humanely during all phases of their lives. We recognize the importance of the well-being of animals used to provide food to our customers. We also appreciate the trust our customers place in us to do the right thing, and we work hard to live up to that expectation. We remain focused on working with suppliers who share our values and working collaboratively with the Florida agriculture community to advance efforts that continuously improve the safety and well-being for all animals.

Randy and Douglas Burnham responded to the allegations by releasing the following statement:

“We were appalled to see those 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 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.”

The National Milk Producers Federation issued the following statement on behalf of NMPF member cooperative Southeast Milk, Inc. and its member farm, Burnham Dairy.

Southeast Milk, Inc., a cooperative of family-owned dairies, was made aware on Nov. 15, 2017 of allegations of mistreatment of dairy cows at Burnham Dairy Farm of Okeechobee, FL, which is one of our members. Working in collaboration with national animal care experts, we immediately initiated our own review to assess the validity of the report of mistreatment.

Animal abuse of any kind is never tolerated at SMI. While some of the conditions depicted at Burnham Dairy reflect our farming community's struggle to deal with the aftermath of the historic Hurricane Irma, others clearly show a breakdown in the adherence to our SMI protocols, as well as our broader dairy community standards.

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. 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.

SMI is working with the FARM Program, which has activated its official protocol for Willful Mistreatment requiring an inspection by an outside, 3rd-party auditor. The program has placed Burnham Dairy Farm on probationary status, pending the completion of any and all corrective actions deemed necessary by the third-party auditor and the FARM Program. These actions demonstrate SMI's ongoing commitment to the proper care and responsible treatment of our member farms' animals. Animal care and well-being is paramount to our operations at SMI and its dairy farmer owners and we will work with our member dairies to do better, for our customers, our community and our cows.

[Earlier this month ARM claimed it found animal abuse at Larson Dairy Farm in Okeechobee County.](#)

According to the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office, warrants have been issued in the Larson Dairy Farm investigation and suspects are being sought.