

FLORIDA

Video shows abuse of hens at farm that provides eggs to Walmart, Publix, ARM says Cal-Maine Egg Farm manager arrested on animal cruelty charges

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Posted: 9:05 AM, January 16, 2018

Updated: 2:24 PM, January 16, 2018



LAKE WALES, Fla. - The Animal Recovery Mission released video on Tuesday, which they said shows hens being abused and living in deplorable conditions at the Cal-Maine Egg Farm in Lake Wales.

Cal-Maine is a public company and is the largest producer and marketer of shell eggs in the U.S., ARM officials stated in a news release.

The company sells its eggs to numerous retailers around the country, including Walmart and Publix.

ARM officials said an undercover investigator, who is a retired U.S. Army serviceman, captured surveillance footage of battery-caged hens over a two-month period.

The hens were in overcrowded cages, where they were "trampled and strangled to death after becoming wedged in the cages," the news release stated.

Some small cages contained up to 10 birds and "walls of cockroaches" were spotted within the cages, officials said.

ARM officials said the hens were also living among dead chickens and many died regularly from dehydration, starvation, egg binding and illnesses that were contracted from living in the unsanitary conditions.

The undercover investigator said he witnessed the hens being tortured by being kicked, punched, thrown and slammed on the ground. He said some hens were also beaten to death with sticks, pulled apart alive and were jammed in cage doors, causing them to be crushed to death.

"These brutal actions are being executed by both employees of the facility and managers alike and are clear violations of company codes of conducts and animal welfare policies required to be a humane certified business," the news release stated.

ARM officials said since their investigation was brought forth to law enforcement authorities, a Cal-Maine manager, known as Matthew, was arrested on charges of animal cruelty.

ARM officials said they are currently working with an investigator from the Polk County Sheriff's Office to assist in any way needed during their investigation.