



Animal rights group accuses Lee County farms of animal cruelty

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LEE COUNTY, Fla. -- An animal rights group based in Miami Beach is accusing four Lee County ranches of operating as illegal slaughterhouses.

The [Animal Recovery Mission](#) says that after receiving citizen complaints of illegal animal and horse slaughter in Lee County, they set out to four farms. Following their undercover investigation they say revealed extreme acts of animal cruelty, reports were given to the Lee County Sheriff's Office and State Attorney's Office.

According to an ARM press release, *"The video footage provided will demonstrate criminal acts occurring on the property including violating the Humane Slaughter Act (the beating, stabbing, skinning alive without stunning), severe animal cruelty and the sale of horse meat for the purpose of human consumption. Several dogs and puppies were being contained and*

deprived of adequate food and water, presumably for dog fighting, aggression training, or to be sold for ritual sacrifice. Some animals were found to be feeding off the blood which drained into their enclosures, while other sick and dead animals were kept in the same enclosures as live animals, who were to be sold for human consumption.”

Owners and workers of the farms have not been charged with any crimes, so we won't be naming them. But Fox 4 was there Thursday when animal activists confronted the farm owners they've been secretly recording.

“You know who I am. I've been under cover with you, sir, for 3 years watching you butcher horses.” Richard Kudo with ARM is making explosive allegations against the four farms.

He runs the organization and says the farms are slaughtering animals without a license, and inhumanely. He also says one of the farms is illegally selling horse meat.

One undercover video shows a man slitting a goat's throat while still alive. Kudo says the man in that video was right there. We asked the man if it's him in the video. “(In Spanish) in that picture, yes, but in that photo, we've already shot the goat dead. We then take them outside for preparation.”

We spoke with the owners at two of the farms, who say all the allegations are false. “It's not true, what they're saying. It's not true.”

When we asked about licensing at one of the farms, we were shut down.

Kudo says Lee County's local government isn't doing anything about the alleged animal cruelty and violations. However, the State Attorney's Office released a statement Thursday, stating that the group "utilizes techniques which appear to violate felony statutes," and says the evidence is inadmissible in court.

They have repeatedly advised the group of their inappropriate conduct. The Lee County Sheriff's Office, who has also been involved, agrees with the State Attorney's Office.

Regardless, the ARM revealed details of their investigation at a press conference Thursday.



