

CRIME

South Florida slaughterhouse owners open shop in Lee County to avoid law enforcement, ARM says **ARM officials say farm workers were beating, stabbing, skinning alive animals**

By Amanda Batchelor - Senior Digital Editor

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LEE COUNTY, Fla. - Slaughterhouse owners and workers from the Miami area and elsewhere have moved their illegal businesses to Lee County in an attempt to avoid law enforcement, Animal Recovery Mission representatives said Thursday in a news release.

According to the news release, ARM opened an investigation in 2015 regarding the Rancho Las Delicias and Rancho Santa Barbara farms after receiving multiple complaints about illegal animal and horse slaughtering happening at the farms.

ARM representatives said they began investigating a third farm, Rancho Antony & Roman, in March 2017, and a fourth farm, Rancho Cabrera, in December 2017.

The undercover investigations revealed "extreme acts of animal cruelty," which were reported to the Lee County Sheriff's Office and the Lee County State Attorney's Office, the news release stated.

*****WARNING: Graphic footage*****



ARM officials said video footage shows workers at the farms violating the Humane Slaughter Act by beating, stabbing and skinning alive animals. The investigations also uncovered the illegal sale of horse meat for human consumption, officials said.

ARM officials said multiple dogs and puppies, which were believed to be held at the farms for dogfighting, aggression training or to be sold for ritual sacrifice, were found to be deprived of adequate food and water.

Some animals were found to be feeding off blood that was drained into their enclosures, and some sick or dead animals were being kept in the same enclosures as animals that were alive, the news release stated.

Local 10 News has attempted to contact the Lee County Sheriff's Office regarding the investigation and will update this article once we hear back.

WARNING: The following videos are extremely graphic and may contain images unsettling to some.



