

Fair Oaks Farms animal abuse: Ex-worker bonds out, never leaves jail as ICE steps in

Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier Published 5:43 p.m. ET July 24, 2019 | Updated 7:58 a.m. ET July 25, 2019



A video released by the Animal Recovery Mission shows animal abuse and drug use by employees at Fair Oaks Farms. Mykal McEldowney, IndyStar

A former Fair Oaks Farms worker, the only one arrested so far after undercover video showed animal abuse, bonds out of jail only to have immigration take him to a detention center.

KENTLAND, Ind. – Two days after his girlfriend persuaded a Newton County judge to lower his bond so he could afford to get out of jail and start working again, Edgar Gardozo-Vasquez – the only person arrested, so far, in connection to animal abuse allegations at [Fair Oaks Farms](#) – was in federal immigration custody.

On Friday, Newton County Jail officials transferred Gardozo-Vasquez, 36, to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, Nicole Alberico, an ICE spokeswoman, confirmed Wednesday.

Alberico said Gardozo-Vasquez – who is from Mexico and had been arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol in 2005 – would remain in ICE custody, pending the outcome of his immigration case and accusations that he is in the United States illegally. An ICE database showed Gardozo-Vasquez was being held at the Kenosha County Detention Center in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Gardozo-Vasquez had been in the Newton County Jail since his arrest June 12. He was one of three former workers at Fair Oaks Farms – the largest dairy operation in Indiana, about an hour north of Lafayette – wanted in connection with abuse of calves. The charges came after graphic, undercover videos shot in 2018 were released June 4, 2019, by the [Animal Recovery Mission](#), a Miami-based animal rights group.



Edgar Gardozo-Vasquez (Photo: Newton County Sheriff's Office)

Gardozo-Vasquez was the only one of the three arrested on misdemeanor charges of animal cruelty and felony charges of torturing or mutilating a

vertebrate animal. As of Wednesday, Newton County police had not reported arrests of Santiago Ruvalcaba Contreros, 31, and Miguel Angel Navarro, 38.

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What the federal immigration case will mean for Gardozo-Vasquez's charges connected to animal abuse at Fair Oaks Farms was not immediately clear. Newton County court records show he is scheduled to appear again in Newton Superior Court on Aug. 12.

On July 17, Newton Superior Judge Daniel Molter cut the bond in half for Gardozo-Vasquez, from \$20,000 to \$10,000. That gave him the opportunity to pay \$1,000, instead of \$2,000, to get out of jail. That day, according to a report in the Newton County Enterprise, Gardozo-Vasquez's girlfriend testified that he had a job waiting for him at a factory in Illinois and that he would return for future court dates.

Media reports after that day said Gardozo-Vasquez was released from jail. But ICE has the authority to put holds on suspects to keep them in local custody for up to 48 hours to give federal officers time to pick up someone they believe is eligible for deportation. That's what ICE did in Gardozo-Vasquez's situation.