

## Former employees charged in Fair Oaks Farms animal abuse case identified

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

Officials have identified the three former Fair Oaks Farms employees who now face criminal charges in connection with an investigation into animal cruelty at the northern Indiana farm.

The suspects are 31-year-old Santiago Ruvalcaba Contreros, 36-year-old Edgar Gardoza Vazquez and 38-year-old Miguel Angel Navarro Serrano. According to the Newton County Sheriff's Office, police are still working to locate and arrest the three men on charges of beating a vertebrate animal, a misdemeanor.

Newton County Prosecutor Jeff Drinski said arrest warrants were issued Monday afternoon. He added that Fair Oaks Farms "has cooperated completely in our attempts to identify and interview all persons involved in the videos that we have all viewed over the past week."



Photos from Animal Recovery Mission video released June 4, 2019 of horrific animal abuse that is occurring at the Fair Oaks Farm's Dairy Farm Adventures in Fair Oaks, Indiana (Photo: Provided by Animal Recovery Mission)

Other "persons of interest" are being interviewed in the case, investigators said. IndyStar has reached out to a Fair Oaks spokesperson for comment. The charges come after a graphic video released by an activist group last week showed workers abusing calves and using drugs at the farm, which is the state's largest dairy operation.

Animal Recovery Mission then released a second, longer undercover video that shows additional abuse against animals, more alleged drug use against Fair Oaks Farms employees and poor living conditions for the animals.

After the videos were made public, Fair Oaks Farms' founder Mike McCloskey took responsibility for the abuse in a Facebook post, stating that the company fired four employees and banned a third-party truck driver who were shown on video.

"I am disgusted by and take full responsibility for the actions seen in the footage, as it goes against everything that we stand for in regards to responsible cow care and comfort," McCloskey wrote.

"The employees featured in the video exercised a complete and total disregard for the documented training that all employees go through to ensure the comfort, safety and well-being of our animals."

"Of the four who were our employees, three had already been terminated prior to us being made aware months ago of the undercover ARM operation," McCloskey said. "They were identified by their co-workers as being abusive of our animals and reported to management."

Fair Oaks has more than 10 different locations and farms around northwest Indiana. Its product delivery branch temporarily suspended service to help with the implementation of new policies, training and to protect delivery service drivers who have reportedly been harassed, Fair Oaks officials said Friday.