

Protesters Call For Coke Boycott Over Animal Abuses

Protesters gathered at Coca-Cola's HQ in Atlanta Monday to call for a boycott over animal abuses by Fairlife brand, which Coke distributes.

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Protesters gathered at Coca-Cola's HQ in Atlanta Monday to call for a boycott over animal abuses by Fairlife brand. (ARM/YouTube)

ATLANTA, GA — Protesters were out in Atlanta and cities across the country Monday fighting against alleged animal abuse at Fair Oaks Farms, supplier to Fairlife brand, distributed by Coca-Cola. Protesters, who gathered at Coke headquarters, in Atlanta, are calling for a boycott of all Coca-Cola products. Protests were planned in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles as well.

The abuse was reportedly documented on camera by Animal Recovery Mission's, or ARM's, three-month long undercover investigation. The video shows workers slapping, kicking and punching calves at the Fair Oaks, Indiana, farm. The farm's owner said the actions broke his heart, the workers were fired and he's working with prosecutors to file charges in the case.

Coca-Cola issued a statement regarding the video:

"Earlier this week, we were disturbed to see a video released from Animal Recovery Mission (ARM) showing acts of animal cruelty at Fair Oaks Farm, one of the dairy suppliers to fairlife," reads the statement. "We care deeply about animal welfare, and these images left all of us at Coca-Cola with a heavy heart. Any form of animal cruelty is simply unacceptable and counter to our company values. We expect all our suppliers to operate with the highest degree of integrity and comply with all laws, including animal welfare laws.

"As Coca-Cola continues to offer different beverage options like dairy, we are taking steps to ensure that internationally recognized animal welfare standards are appropriately enforced through our Sustainable Agriculture Guiding Principles, our Supplier Guiding Principles and our auditing processes," continues the statement. "We know people have high expectations of Coca-Cola's conduct and products, and we can play an important role in improving animal welfare across the dairy industry."

[Read the full statement here.](#)

Fairlife produces ultrafiltered milk that is lactose-free, along with Core Power and Smart Snacks shakes and Yup! flavored milk, reports the Chicago Tribune. Jewel-Osco, Tony's Fresh Market, Pete's Fresh Market and Strack & Van Til removed Fairlife from their shelves after the video's release, the newspaper said. Kroger continued to keep Fairlife in its stores but said it has been in close contact with Fair Oaks since the animal welfare concerns were raised.

According to the ARM press release, Fair Oaks Farms produces dairy products for the Fairlife milk brand, and is owned and operated by Mike and Sue McCloskey. Coca-Cola Corporation produces, markets and distributes Fairlife milk products, both domestically and internationally.



Mike McCloskey, a veterinarian, said in a video posted on YouTube that the footage "broke my heart and created a sadness I will have to endure for the rest of my life." He apologized and announced policies to ensure abuse "will not happen again" and that workers embrace the farm's mission to treat animals with respect. He said three of the workers in the video were terminated several months ago after they were reported internally for animal cruelty; a fourth was fired once the video was seen.

He added that he's working with the county attorney to prosecute any and all cases of animal abuse.

McCloskey plans to install security cameras anywhere on the property animals interact with people and showcase the live feed in an animal welfare exhibit it will create as part of its Dairy Adventure Center visits by the public. He also has contracted with an animal welfare group to conduct unannounced audits of the farm every two to four weeks and plans to hire an employee who will monitor and educate employees on proper treatment of the animals.



The protests are a part of a nationwide action against what the animal advocates called the cruelty of the dairy industry as a whole. The planned protests reportedly were to feature a pile of people imitating a pile of dead calves, one of the incidents discovered by ARM at Fair Oaks Farms.

In New York City, [protesters held](#) a "die in."

[ARM released the video](#) June 4, which was an audit of operations at Fair Oaks Farms and the Fairlife Corporation. The extreme and systematic abuse video has gone viral and has the public outraged.

"The purpose of this hour and half long video detailing the extreme violence at Fair Oaks Farms, is to give the greater public an in-depth insight into the sheer gravity of animal abuse that takes place in the dairy industry," said Richard Couto, of ARM, in the release. "The extended video also shines a light into the drug use, as well as giving a detail look into top management's knowledge of the brutality on the calves and zero action taken upon the abusers and or aiding in the neglect of the baby animals."

ARM is a non-profit animal cruelty investigative organization based in Miami Beach, Florida. ARM says its mission is to be an "uncompromising defending force for the welfare of animals, in addition to putting an end to and preventing pain, suffering, and torture inflicted as a result of inhumane practices."