

## Animal Recovery Mission records undercover video of 'steer tailing' in Okeechobee County

'Animals are dying from this,' Richard Couto says

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**OKEECHOBEE, Fla.** — The Animal Recovery Mission, a private group of animal cruelty investigators, said Tuesday it has recorded new footage and evidence of cattle being abused in Okeechobee County.

The group says the abuse is occurring at illegal, underground events known as "Coleaderos" or steer tailing.

The violent game entails slamming cattle to the ground by their tails.

The Animal Recovery Mission said steer tailing is banned in parts of the U.S as well as in South and Central America.

In the undercover footage, people can be seen chasing the cattle on horseback, wrapping their tails around their foot and slamming the steer to the ground.



ARM founder Richard Couto was the one who recorded some of this video after being tipped off by concerned residents in Okeechobee.

Couto said he went to the games for nearly a year and a half.

"Animals are dying from this. They're breaking their necks. They're breaking their limbs. The tails on the animals are breaking in various spots of their bodies," Couto said.

He said cows are often exhausted after running for up to eight hours without water.

Couto also said the horses are whipped and at times suffer broken legs -- far different from legal, regulated rodeos.

"Things like a veterinarian would be required to be at these events. There's no such thing," Couto said.

"They're being prodded and electrocuted nonstop by drunk adults and juveniles. We had 6-year-olds with cattle prods."



WPTV

ARM founder Richard Couto says not only are the cattle abused during the steer tailing events but also the horses.

He said more illegal activity is also occurring at these events.

"There's no business license. There's no insurance. They're selling liquor illegally. They're selling food illegally. They're running a business illegally," Couto said.

He said he turned over all of his evidence to the USDA and Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office said it does have an active investigation for steer tailing. Couto said he's speaking