

ARIZONA

**Undercover video in Arizona alleges ongoing consumer fraud by Fairlife  
Plaintiffs accuse Fairlife of using the cover of night to source milk from two  
Arizona dairies with alleged abusive, inhumane practices.**

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Published: 4:21 PM PDT June 6, 2025 Updated: 4:21 PM PDT June 6, 2025



PHOENIX — A household name in the dairy industry popular for its chocolate milk and “Core Power” protein shakes is under more scrutiny from consumer and animal rights groups.

According to an amended class-action lawsuit submitted this week, plaintiffs accuse Fairlife of using the cover of night to source milk from two Arizona dairies with alleged abusive, inhumane practices.

The new allegations come after Fairlife previously said it would stop sourcing its milk from the two dairies.

**Alleged beatings, suffering and forced separations**

In February, the animal rights organization, Animal Recovery Mission, held a news conference in Phoenix where they unveiled video and photo evidence of alleged inhumane and unsanitary practices at the Rainbow Valley Dairy and Butterfield Dairy near Buckeye. Both industrial dairies were major suppliers of milk to Fairlife’s Avondale processing plant.

The alleged mistreatment at the dairies included routine beatings of cattle with steel rods and electric shock, premature forced separation of calves from their mothers, prolonged suffering of injured and sick cows, and poor housing and transport conditions that caused broken bones to cows. One of the dairies was also accused of polluting a nearby waterway with cattle carcasses. Both dairies are owned by the same family. Both are now under investigation by the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

In response to the videos - allegedly recorded by workers over three months in 2024 - Fairlife issued a statement in February saying it would cease getting milk from the dairies. Fairlife's partner supplier, United Dairymen of Arizona, also said they cut ties with the dairies.

### **'transporting milk late at night while it is dark'**

But the lawsuit, filed in Central District of California, alleges private investigators funded by the nonprofit Foundation for Consumer Protection obtained video and still images between March and May that proves UDA and Fairlife are not fulfilling their promise.

"Instead, these farms appear to have at least predominantly switched from day-time truck transport of milk... to transporting milk late at night while it is dark and the roads are relatively empty," the court records state.

Plaintiffs say investigators conducted sporadic surveillance operations beginning in mid-March. Investigators allegedly observed trucks traveling from the two dairies to the UDA processing plant in Tempe on five different nights, and trucks traveling from UDA to Fairlife in Goodyear on two of those nights.

Raw milk from the dairies is allegedly pumped into a silo at UDA, commingled with raw milk from other locations and then "pumped from UDA, likely from those comingled silos into trucks which then regularly transport the milk to the Fairlife plant," the complaint states. "At the very least, this conduct constitutes bad faith, collusion, deception, and fraud."

The suit was filed by the California-based Waymaker law firm on behalf of several Fairlife customers. It names Fairlife and Coca-Cola as plaintiffs.

### **No Comment From Fairlife or United Dairymen of Arizona**

12News made several attempts to contact Fairlife, the UDA and the owner of Rainbow Valley and Butterfield Dairies. None responded to requests for comment.

Fairlife has built its reputation for more than a decade as upholding a higher standard. It touts "better care for animals" by utilizing an internal animal welfare team to audit the farms where it obtains milk. "All supplying farms must undergo rigorous care standards and adhere to regular audits," Fairlife states on its website.

Fairlife previously settled a 2019 class action lawsuit in the Northern District of Illinois for similar allegations resulting in a \$21 million payout. Without admitting fault, the company agreed at the time to implement oversight changes.

ARM alleges the 2024 video from the two Arizona dairies showed "the worst, most widespread, egregious, systemic, frequent, and extreme cruelty and neglect yet."