

New Mexico

## Coca-Cola Faces Backlash Over Disturbing Allegations of Animal Cruelty at Former Fairlife Supplier

By Thomas Smith



Coca-Cola is under renewed scrutiny after a damning undercover investigation uncovered severe animal abuse at Woodcrest Dairy in New Mexico — a facility previously linked to its Fairlife milk brand.

### What the Investigation Found

Between December 2024 and March 2025, the animal rights group Animal Recovery Mission (ARM) documented widespread mistreatment of cows and calves at the Woodcrest facility, according to World Animal News. Undercover footage allegedly showed:

- Workers using chains to forcibly extract unborn calves from cows not in labor
- Newborn calves dying from blunt force trauma and neglect
- Pregnant and sick cows whipped, punched, kicked, and beaten with metal tools, including shovels and wrenches
- Abuse carried out by a range of staff, from ranch hands to managers and owners

### Coca-Cola's Response

In a statement to The Cool Down, a Coca-Cola spokesperson said Fairlife has not sourced milk from Woodcrest Dairy since 2023 and emphasized the farm was never a primary supplier.

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*“Fairlife is committed to ensuring strong animal welfare at supplying farms and has zero tolerance for animal abuse,” the spokesperson said, adding that all Fairlife suppliers are required to meet rigorous animal care standards and undergo third-party audits.*

Fairlife also reportedly cut ties with several other dairies following earlier ARM investigations, including two Arizona farms exposed in February 2025 for similar abuse. At those facilities, cows were allegedly stabbed, electrocuted, and kept in illegal confinement.

### **A Pattern of Abuse**

This marks the ninth ARM investigation to uncover animal cruelty at dairies once affiliated with Fairlife. The repeated violations have fueled accusations that Coca-Cola, which owns Fairlife, has failed to properly oversee its supply chain.

ARM founder Richard Couto called Fairlife a “habitual offender,” saying

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*“Coca-Cola will be forever known as the global corporate leader in animal cruelty.”*

In response to ongoing criticism, Fairlife has quietly removed its animal welfare marketing claims from its website and severed ties with Select Milk Producers, a cooperative involved in several past scandals.

### **Legal and Consumer Fallout**

Legal troubles are mounting for the brand. In 2019, Fairlife settled a \$21 million class-action lawsuit over false advertising tied to its animal welfare promises. A new class-action lawsuit filed in June 2025 now includes the latest Arizona and New Mexico cases.

Though Coca-Cola has made public pledges toward sustainability — such as its World Without Waste initiative to reduce plastic — these revelations threaten its credibility around ethical sourcing.

### **What’s Being Done**

ARM has submitted its findings to multiple agencies, including the USDA, FDA, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the Chaves County Sheriff's Office. Investigations are reportedly underway.

Consumers can also take action. ARM recommends:

- Opting for plant-based milk alternatives
- Choosing dairy brands with third-party animal welfare certifications
- Contacting Coca-Cola directly to demand higher standards in its supply chain

Though Fairlife claims to no longer work with Woodcrest, critics argue systemic reform is needed to ensure future suppliers meet the ethical standards Coca-Cola publicly endorses.