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Raid fallout: Police to inspect Paso Fino farm

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By Susan Salk on December 8, 2015



A Florida judge has ordered that a horse-farm owner, who was arrested in Florida this summer and charged with possession of horsemeat, submit to weekly inspections by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department, according to Richard "Kudo" Couto of the Animal Recovery Mission.

Orlando Vazquez Guzman, owner of G.A. Paso Fino Farm, of Palm Beach County, appeared before Judge Glenn Kelley Dec. 3 following his arrest earlier this summer on unlawful possession of horsemeat. He has pleaded not guilty to the charge, and is due back in court in March, according to a press release. As he awaits a second court appearance, the judge ordered weekly inspections to account for the animals remaining on his property, Couto said.



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If you know an off-track thoroughbred who deserves a writeup in this blog, please send me an email (see email button below), and please include a photo, and the best way to reach you.

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Sponsor a T'bred

Richard Couto saved Freedom's Flight from an illegal slaughterhouse. And he has been working ever since to help end horse slaughter.

G.A. Paso Fino Farm, which is a quick walk from the fabled Wellington show grounds, was raided along with two others by local, state and federal officials following a six month undercover investigation led by Couto and the Animal Recovery Mission. Couto then turned over evidence of animal cruelty, abuse and illegal slaughter to the authorities, who immediately launched a tactical strike.

News of the raid grabbed national headlines, and some 750 animals, including dogs, cats, goats and pigs were saved. However, the horses who were housed at the G.A. Paso Fino Farm were allowed to remain.

During his court appearance last week, Guzman was asked to provide information on the six horses and assorted animals still living on the farm so that law enforcement officials can make weekly site inspections, Couto said.



One of the six horses still residing at the G.A. Paso Fino Farm in Florida, the site of a major raid by law enforcement.

“Although it’s unfortunate that he was allowed to keep these horses on his property, it is a victory that the judge ordered the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office to conduct weekly animal inventory counts and property checks,” Couto said. “I know these officers, and I have a tremendous amount of respect for them, and the work they do.”

As charges against two other farms caught up in what Couto termed the “largest tactical strike on extreme animal cruelty operations in the United States history” progress through the court system, outrage has spilled over into the horse show world, Couto said. (Please read earlier story here: <http://offtrackthoroughbreds.com/2015/10/16/cuoto-illegal-butchers-killed-show-horses-too/>)

Since news of the busts at G.A. Paso Fino, Rancho Garcia and Medina Farm spread, Couto has received numerous calls from show barns and international polo players, many pledging financial and sponsorship support, he said.



A horse spotted at G.A. Paso Fino Farm at the time of the raid.

During months spent working undercover to document the operations at the three farms, Couto and a team of ARM personnel took footage of livestock animals slaughtered inhumanely, and led lawmakers to a freezer at the Paso Fino Farm containing meat that has tested positive as equine, Couto said.



Quite Rightly— The great-grandson of Triple Crown winner Affirmed, Quite Rightly has a serious allergy that requires daily medication and a special diet. Other than the allergy, this 17 year old gelding is an active, healthy, and happy member of the TRF herd at the Central Maryland Correctional Facility’s Second Chances Farm.

Stocking Stuffer



This Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation pendant, available in sterling silver and gold, makes a thoughtful gift. And proceeds help the horses in the TRF’s herd! (Click the photo to visit the shopping page).

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- Sir Prize Birthday, 35, dies; an iron horse

Couto has led dozens and dozens of similar raids on illegal slaughterhouses in the Miami-Dade region of Florida since 2010. He founded the Animal Recovery Mission after being inspired by an OTTB he rescued from the butcher's blade. He discovered the chestnut gelding Freedom's Flight, sired by Pulpit, tied to a tree, the next in line to be slaughtered in an illegal slaughterhouse.

After nursing the Thoroughbred ex-racehorse back to health, he vowed to fight to end the illegal slaughter of horses in the state. Please see that original article here:

<http://offtrackthoroughbreds.com/2014/04/14/liberated-from-illegal-butcher-a-horse-inspires/>

"I vowed to that horse that I would seek redemption for him. One day, I told him, I'll do it," he said in an earlier interview.

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9 responses to "Raid fallout: Police to inspect Paso Fino farm"



Cheryl Bowe December 10, 2015 at 8:25 am | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Thank you, Animal Recovery Mission for your dedication....Horse meat in the freezer should have been enough for stronger prosecution.....I am glad to read this report, that at least further follow up was ordered.



Susan Lindberg December 9, 2015 at 1:17 pm | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Thank you Mr Couto for your work! I am encouraged when I read about what you do although sometimes it feels like it is an impossible mission because there are so many bought politicians and people who only care about the money they can make from inhumane and barbaric practice of horse slaughter. I make the calls, send the tweets, share on fb but sometimes it seems like the people that have the power aren't listening to the majority! In the meantime, everyday that goes by means more innocent souls taken from us. Still I will never stop trying!



Irene Filacchione December 8, 2015 at 11:30 pm | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Thank you! Your work is life saving and important



CC December 8, 2015 at 5:34 pm | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Mr. Cueto, thank you from my heart for doing this to help animals and horses that are in danger from humans.

- Historic anti-slaughter vote taken in Md.; it's time
- OTTBs saved from slaughter on Thanksgiving
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Dee December 8, 2015 at 1:54 pm | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Catherine, I think we need to look on the other end of the spectrum...these horses are years gone from their breeders. It is the “average” owner who often puts the horse at risk – meaning the home who picks up a horse for their kid, who then loses interest. The person who sends it to a low end auction, who gives it away to a supposed “good home” – as my youngest gelding was – with no desire to be sure that they are not, in fact, sending the horse into peril. These are the horses who move down the food chain until they end up in places like the ones detailed in this article.



R.A.C.E. Fund, Inc. December 8, 2015 at 11:06 am | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Couto is a hero for sure. Why is Guzman still allowed to keep animals on his property?



Marilyn Lee-Hannah December 8, 2015 at 10:26 am | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

I want to meet this man. There is power in numbers and teamwork!



Catherine Aguilar December 8, 2015 at 9:37 am | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Thank you for posting these articles. And Thank God for Mr. Couto. I could hug him. He is doing so much for our horses. I too have an OTTB that I rescued and could very easily have ended up at the slaughterhouse. Maybe we should hold some of the breeders accountable for this situation as well – just a thought. Thank you, Catherine



Candy December 8, 2015 at 9:24 am | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

Thank you Mr. Couto for all your passion, hard-work, and kindness. You are a very special person.

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Rehoming Organizations

- Akindale Thoroughbred Rescue, NY
- Beyond the Roses Equine Rescue and Retirement
- CANTER
- CANTER Mid Atlantic
- CANTER New England
- CANTER Ohio
- Equine Encore Foundation, AZ
- Exceller Fund, KY
- Florida TRAC
- Little Brook Farm, NY
- Maker's Mark Secretariat Center, KY
- Mid Atlantic Horse Rescue, MD
- New Vocations, Ohio, KY, PA
- R.A.C.E. Fund, Inc., PA
- Race2Ring, NC
- Renaissance Rescue Ranch, MO
- ReRun, Inc., NY, VA
- Second Call Thoroughbred Adoption and Placement Program, NJ
- Sleeping Fox Farm, WV
- Southern California Thoroughbred Rescue
- Thoroughbred Placement and Resources, Inc., MD
- Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation
- TROTT USA, CA
- Turning for Home
- War Horses at Rose Bower, VA

Racing Blogs

- Jessica Chapel/Railbird
- Kentucky Confidential
- Paulick Report
- The Brock Talk
- The Rail

Helpful Links

- Auction Horse Rescue, CA
- California Retirement Management Account (CARMA)

- [CANTER USA](#)
- [Equine Welfare Alliance,IL](#)
- [North American Thoroughbred Society](#)
- [North East Thoroughbred Sporthorse Association](#)
- [NTRA-Aftercare](#)
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