



ARM busts illegal slaughterhouse in southwest Miami-Dade

Slaughterhouse owner, wife arrested on animal cruelty charges

By Amanda Batchelor - Senior Digital Editor Posted: 11:54 AM, December 17, 2015



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, Fla. - A slaughterhouse owner and his wife were arrested Thursday on animal cruelty charges after an eight-month investigation by the Miami-based Animal Recovery Mission.

The farm at 19400 SW 136th St. has no official name, but is owned and run by Angel Ricardo Vargas, who lives in a house at the front of the property. Vargas, 45, and Mayelin Rodriguez, 41, are charged with cruelty to animals and conspiracy to commit cruelty to animals.

According to investigators, the slaughter farm business is operated at the rear of the property where Vargas keeps his pigs, chickens, ducks and turkeys.

"Ricardo has been seen harshly stabbing pigs in the heart, followed by what might be the worst part of the killing process. Ricardo uses a gaff hook (a long pole with a sharp hook attached at the end, which is used to stab, hook and lift a large fish) into the pigs' mouth and drags it from the holding area to the slaughter area," ARM officials said in a news release. "Then, often while the pig is still alive and showing evident signs of life, Ricardo will drown it in a tub boiling water where the suffering pig eventually suffocates or burns to death."

Investigators said Vargas' wife was also charged because she helped in the butcher and cleaning process and was aware of the entire operation.

All animals at the farm were seized Thursday, which included several endangered species, and the business will be permanently shut down.

Authorities said 100 pounds of suspected horse meat was also confiscated.

"Anyone involved in the food industry knows that there are easily performed, painless ways to slaughter livestock for food. At these illegal slaughterhouses, it seem to be too much trouble to render the animals senseless," State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said. "Instead of following Florida's laws, Angel Ricardo Vargas, and his wife, Mayelin Rodriguez, turned a part of their home into an animal house of horrors. I applaud the partnership which allows my prosecutors, the Miami-Dade Police Department and the Animal Recovery Mission to effectively shut down such ghastly operations. Now we need to know if the meat from this site has been entering our local food chain. That state and federal investigation is now ongoing."