

Animal rights group claims workers abuse cows at Florida dairy farm

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BOCA RATON, Fla. (WFLA) – An animal rights group based in Florida claims cows are being abused at an Okeechobee dairy farm.

The Animal Recovery Mission said that one of its undercover investigators got a job at the Larson Dairy Farm. ARM says the investigator captured and documented extensive and widespread abuse at the farm.

ARM claims that its investigation found that workers are instructed by supervisors to use any means necessary to increase production.

Steel rebar is allegedly used as a weapon to force cows into their milking stations.

Employees and managers allegedly used rebar to spear and beat dairy cows repeatedly in the torso and head. The organization claims the cows were also punched and kicked by employees.

ARM claims that Jacob Larson, who is the owner and supervisor at Larson Dairy, witnessed the abuse on multiple occasions but did not make any attempt to discipline the employees through suspensions, firing or notifying law enforcement about the abuse. The farm has since said the employee featured in the video was terminated.

At a press conference on Thursday, a local law enforcement official said the Larsons would not tolerate this behavior, and likely will not be under investigation, however, he said there will be a criminal investigation that could lead to criminal charges being filed.

ARM wants felony charges filed against Larson. ARM also wants charges filed against the dairy farm workers and their supervisors.

WFLA.com reached out to Larson Dairy Inc., which provided us with the following statement:

We are deeply saddened and appalled by the actions witnessed in this video, which first came to our attention this morning. The unusual use of force is simply unacceptable on our dairy or on any other farm.

We have strict protocols involving animal care and clearly the behavior shown in this video goes against everything we stand for and will not be tolerated. The employee involved and featured in the video has been terminated. Further corrective action will be taken if necessary as we continue to analyze the video and conduct an on-farm investigation.

We are equally concerned about the manner in which this video was brought to our attention. Had the “undercover” employee brought this to our attention when it occurred we may have been able to prevent it earlier.

Dairy farmers have the utmost responsibility to compassionately care for our animals and this is not an adequate reflection of how we do that on a daily basis.”

The Animal Recovery Mission is a non-profit animal cruelty investigative organization based in Miami Beach. ARM says it is dedicated to eliminating extreme animal cruelty operations worldwide.