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Russian Farm Investigated for Brutally Sawing Off Cow's Horns

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Cows look on during feeding at a livestock breeding complex and collective farm in Stavropol.

A cattle farm in Russia's Far East is under investigation for crudely sawing off its livestock's horns without the use of anesthesia, causing the animals tremendous suffering, a news report said.

Prosecutors are conducting checks into the Zarechnoye farm on the Kamchatka peninsula after receiving a complaint from the farm's labor union head, a spokeswoman for the regional prosecutor's office, Larisa Shunina, said Monday, Interfax reported.

Dehorning, or removing cattle horns, is a widely used procedure that is believed to reduce the risk of injury to farmers and other cattle. The procedure can be highly painful to animals because it affects a nerve that runs to the base of the horn, and various animal rights groups either denounce dehorning in its entirety or demand the use of anesthetics.

The Zarechnoye farm's management had its workers "sawing off cows' horns without painkillers, over bare flesh, using an angle grinder and a saw," labor union chief Svetlana

Gavrilchenko said in her complaint to the prosecutor's office, according to the text quoted by the region's trade union association, Interfax reported.

"The animals suffer pain, lose a lot of blood, and after that suffer terribly and get ill," the complaint added.

Gavrilchenko said that in the past the farm had only occasionally cut off the tips of cattle horns — where there are no nerve endings — but later switched to having the "horns sawed off at the root," according to her complaint, Interfax reported.

"People are working to the sound of the constant horrible moaning of the animals," she added, Interfax reported.

The farm's director declined immediate comment, the report said.

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