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Russian Police Investigate Siberian Horse Herd Slaughter

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Video that circulated online showed dozens of snow-covered horse carcasses in the Altai region. **Video screenshot**

An entire herd of horses has been shot down in Siberia over what local lawmakers call a bitter dispute between farmers, Russian media has reported.

Shocking video that circulated online this week showed dozens of snow-covered horse carcasses in the Altai region 3,500 kilometers east of Moscow.

"They were cornered and shot twice on the shoulder and the heart," the herd's owner, Nikolai Drokov, told the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid Tuesday.

A total of 53 free-range horses were killed, most of them mares and foals.

The regional prosecutor's office said the incident took place sometime between Jan. 1-8. The local police district said it will try to find the shooters by examining spent bullet casings or data from nearby cell towers, according to Komsomolskaya Pravda.

The tabloid estimated Drokov's losses at 5 million rubles ($67,000).

Drokov told the tabloid that the incident follows the deadly shooting of seven horses in 2021. He said police were unable to find the perpetrator.

"We think it's one of our own [but] I don't think they're competitors. There's only three or four of us engaged in horse breeding, we don't bother each other," he was quoted as saying.

Still, Altai regional assembly deputy Sergei Serov called the incident an act of revenge by a disgruntled rival.

"Innocent animals suffered because of the personal rivalry... This is the noblest of animals, and a here a whole herd with small foals was shot down," Serov said in a statement on the assembly's website.

"Drokov has been engaged in animal husbandry for many years, this is a huge loss for him, not so much financial as moral, which all of us have suffered in the region," Serov added.

Russian lawmakers have vowed to take up the issue on a federal level.

"They're shooting horses now, who are they going to shoot tomorrow?" Vladimir Burmatov, deputy chairman of the parliament's environmental committee, told the Daily Storm news website.

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