

# Avian Flu Outbreak in NYC Live Animal Markets Sparks Renewed Calls for Their Closure

From [Donny Moss, TheirTurn.net](#)


November 2022

In a letter to the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets, local and national animal protection organizations are calling on Commissioner Richard Ball to suspend operations at the 87 live animal markets across the state that sell live animals to the public and slaughter them on the premises. The calls come amid an avian flu outbreak at a Queens live poultry market that led to the temporary closure of 34 similar markets in New York and New Jersey. Approximately 170 birds were killed in the Queens facility where the flu was found.



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The screenshot shows a letter with the following content:

  
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November 20, 2022

Commissioner Richard Ball  
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets  
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**Re: Avian Flu Detected in Multiple Live Animal Markets  
in New York - Inadequate Protocols Put  
Public Health at Risk**

Dear Commissioner Ball:

We write as a group of individuals and advocacy groups concerned about the spread of avian flu in New York State. For the reasons set forth below, we ask that the Department of Agriculture and Markets immediately suspend operations of the live markets in the state.

New York's live animal markets are storefront slaughterhouses that are open to the public. Anyone can enter these live animal markets, without any protective gear, and walk among the tightly confined animals, selecting the animal they wish to have slaughtered. Among the animals slaughtered in these markets are chickens, ducks, quail, turkeys, guinea hens, lambs, goats and bulls. The sidewalks and streets in front of these markets are often contaminated with blood, guts, body parts and feces. People, including elementary students who attend schools near the markets, step in and track these materials all over the city and state, on to the subways and into their homes, potentially exposing themselves and their families to all sorts of diseases, including avian flu, E coli and salmonella. The stench of these markets permeates the air to such a degree that area residents, as well as

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In the letter, the advocacy groups urge Commissioner Ball to “cease operations” at the markets in order to prevent “the next pandemic” from originating in one of them. COVID, the advocates note, was transmitted from animals to humans in a live market in China and spread throughout China before health authorities were even aware of it. Like the live markets in China, many of those in New York City are located in densely populated neighborhoods, where a virus could rapidly spread before being detected.



## 170 Birds Dead After New York Live Bird Market Hit With Avian Influenza

Philip Gruber, [pgruber@lancasterfarming.com](mailto:pgruber@lancasterfarming.com) Nov 15, 2022 Updated 1 hr ago

A live bird market in New York City has been depopulated after avian influenza was found there.

Chickens, ducks and guineas tested positive at the live market. After depopulation, the carcasses were disposed of in a sanitary manner, according to the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets.

The [current outbreak](#) of a highly pathogenic strain, one of the worst in U.S. history, has led to the loss of 50 million birds across 46 states.

*Lancaster Farming was the first media outlet to report on the outbreak of avian flu in a New York City live poultry market*

**EYEWITNESS NEWS** abc 7  
abc7NY WABC-TV

CORONAVIRUS NEW YORK CITY  
**Coronavirus News: Mounting calls to close live animal markets amid COVID-19**

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

16' 16' 00"

**SHUT DOWN NYC WET MARKETS!**

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Danielle Leigh reports a growing number of people are calling for an end to live animal markets in urban areas amid the coronavirus pandemic after early cases of the virus were traced to a wet market in Wuhan, China.

When COVID-19 reached New York, mainstream media outlets reported on the ongoing efforts of the advocacy group Slaughter Free NYC to shut down the City's 80+ live animal markets

While the current strain of avian flu is not easily transmitted from birds to humans or among humans, some cases have resulted in “severe disease that resulted in death,” according to the CDC. Young children and infants are at higher risk. Scientists are concerned that a mutation in the virus could create a pathogen that could sicken and kill humans in far greater numbers. According to infectious disease experts, live poultry markets, which house multiple species of birds, are a breeding ground for mutations.

When COVID-19 reached New York, mainstream media outlets reported on the ongoing efforts of the advocacy group Slaughter Free NYC to shut down the City’s 80+ live animal markets. Professor KF Shortridge, a microbiologist at the University of Hong Kong who studied a 2005 avian flu outbreak that originated in Hong Kong, describes live bird markets as an “[avian influenza melting pot.](#)”



*Over 80 markets in New York State sell and slaughter live animals. The storefront slaughterhouses are open to the public*

In April 2022, parents of New York City public school children sent a [letter](#) to Governor Kathy Hochul and NYC Mayor Eric Adams asking them to suspend the operation of live animal market due to an avian flu outbreak elsewhere in New York state. In the letter, Brooklyn resident Irma Labiosa expressed particular concern about the close proximity of a live animal market to her son’s elementary school. “The sidewalk in front of the live animal market next to my son’s school is often contaminated with chicken feces and blood,” said Ms. Labiosa, who signed the letter to Mayor Adams and Governor Hochul. “He could be tracking this waste into his classroom, onto the subway and into our home.”

Calls to suspend operations at live animal markets began in 2018 when public health and animal rights activists with the advocacy group Slaughter Free NYC began conducting educational outreach about the health risks in front of markets in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. Despite the fact that the outbreak of COVID lent credence to Slaughter Free NYC’s mission, New York designated the state’s live markets as “essential businesses” which could remain open during the statewide lockdown.

Angered by the state’s failure to protect the public health, NY State Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal and NY State Senator Luis Sepulveda [introduced legislation](#) to shutter the markets until a safety assessment could be conducted. “We should have learned after the COVID-19 pandemic struck and claimed millions of lives that live animal markets are breeding grounds for zoonotic diseases,” said Assembly Member Rosenthal. “When chickens, ducks, rabbits and other animals are kept in crowded cages and in unsanitary conditions, the risk of disease spread is great and the impact on public health can

be tragic. As avian flu outbreaks proliferate around the world, as well as right here in New York City where dozens of live animal markets operate just steps from apartment buildings, schools and playgrounds, it is irresponsible to do nothing. It is time for swift action by the City and State to protect public health. I also look forward to passage of my bill, which would pause the operation of these live animal markets so the state can conduct a thorough evaluation of the safety of these markets.”

# DAILY NEWS

CORONAVIRUS

## N.Y. lawmakers propose bill banning live markets to prevent animal-borne diseases

By Denis Slattery  
New York Daily News • May 05, 2020 at 6:39 pm



Chickens sit inside a cage at a live-animal (wet) market on April 21, 2020 in the Queens borough of New York City. (JEENAH MOON/Getty Images)

ALBANY — A pair of New York lawmakers want to shut down New York’s live animal markets to help stem the spread of diseases and prevent future pandemics.

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D-Manhattan) and State Senator Luis Sepulveda (D-Bronx) introduced a bill Tuesday that would bring an end to live animal or “wet” markets in response to the coronavirus crisis.

NY State Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal and Senator Luis Sepulveda introduced legislation in May 2020 to suspend the operation of live animal markets





Amid COVID-19 outbreak, public health and animal rights activists are calling on New York City and State officials to shut down the approximately 80 live animal markets in NYC

In an April 2020 interview about COVID on Fox News, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, weighed in on the controversy surrounding live animal markets, stating, “I think they should shut down those things right away. It boggles my mind how, when we have so many diseases that emanate out of that unusual human/animal interface, that we don’t just shut it down. . . . I would like to see the rest of the world really lean with a lot of pressure on those countries that have that because what we’re going through right now is a direct result of that.” Fauci, the public face of the COVID pandemic, made no specific reference to the wet markets in the United States.