

Thousands of Chickens Die of Hypothermia During Kaporos in Brooklyn

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

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In fact, many of the chickens were already dead — before even being used in the ritual. “In past years, when Kaporos took place in September, thousands of chickens slowly roasted in the crates. This year, they froze to death.”

Thousands of chickens stacked in crates on the streets of Brooklyn died of hypothermia over the course of two days during Kaporos, a ritual animal slaughter that takes place each year in the days leading up to Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of atonement. After being delivered to Hasidic neighborhoods in Williamsburg, Borough Park, Crown Heights and Midwood, hundreds of crates filled with chickens were left outside in the rain, soaking tens of thousands of chickens who were being stored without shelter on public streets.

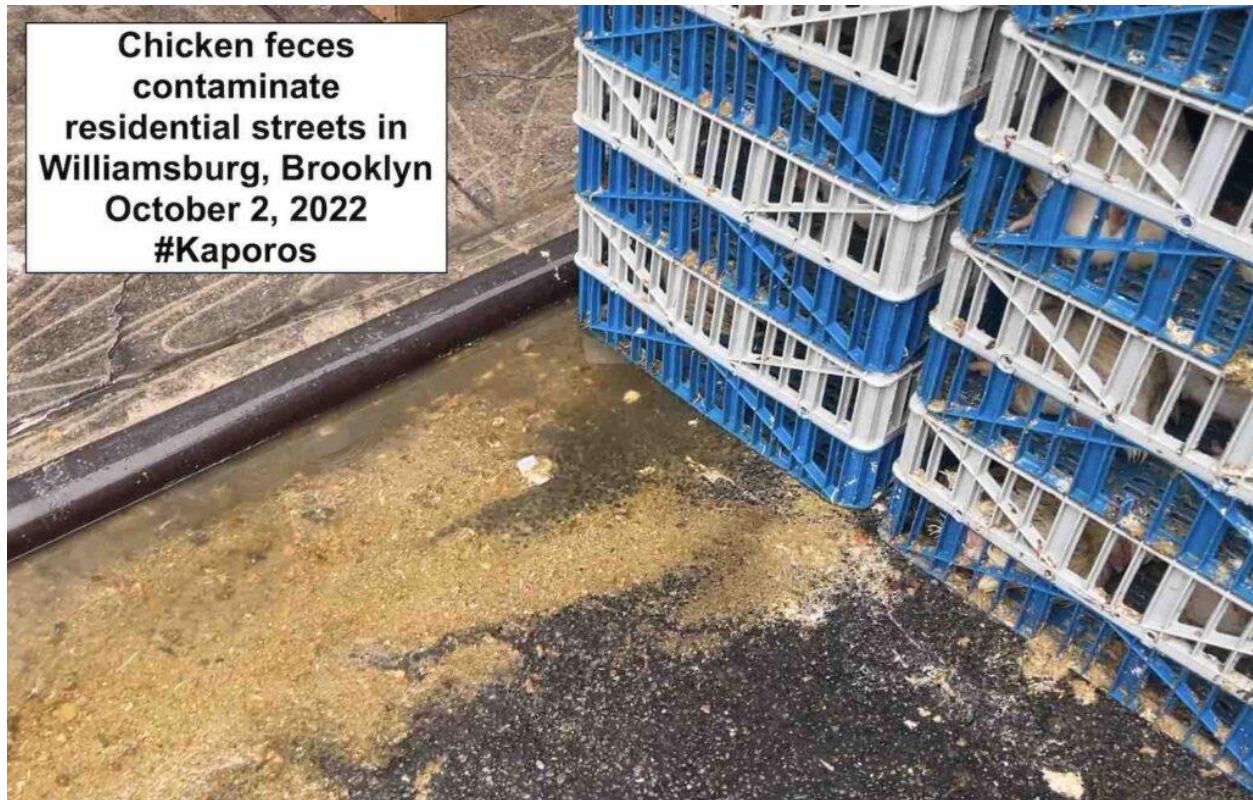
According to Michael Dolling, who rescues and rehabilitates farm animals, young chickens have difficulty regulating their body temperature. When they are exposed to cold temperatures, wind and rain, they quickly become hypothermic. Upon seeing the wet and shivering animals at several Kaporos sites in Williamsburg, Dolling said that thousands of chickens at those sites alone would be dead within hours. In fact, many of the chickens were already dead — before even being used in the ritual. “In past years, when Kaporos took place in September, thousands of chickens slowly roasted in the crates. This year, they froze to death.”

Over the course of six days, advocates rescued and saved the lives of 238 chickens who would have otherwise died of exposure or been killed during the Kaporos ritual. The rescuers used car heaters, towels and blankets to warm the shivering birds while rushing them to a triage center for first aid. There, they used heat lamps, heat plates, hair dryers and warm water bottles to raise their body temperature while administering subcutaneous fluids and medicines to stabilize them.



During Kaporos in 2022, animal rights activists in Brooklyn rescued and saved the lives of 238 chickens who would otherwise have died of hypothermia or been slaughtered.

During Kaporos, ultra-Orthodox, or Hasidic, Jews twirl a live chicken around their head while reciting a prayer asking for forgiveness for their sins. After the ritual, the chickens are killed in one of dozens of makeshift slaughterhouses erected on public streets without permits in violation of 15 city and state health and animal cruelty laws.



During Kaporos, a ritual slaughter of chickens before Yom Kippur, residential streets in several Hasidic neighborhoods in Brooklyn are contaminated with chicken feces in violation of multiple city and state health codes.

Instead of shutting down the slaughterhouses and issuing fines, the NYPD provides the Kaporos vendors with barricades, floodlights and a police presence to help facilitate the ritual killing. At some of the Kaporos sites, the NYPD closes down entire public streets. Despite the health code and animal cruelty violations and the lack of permits, the city government subsidizes Kaporos because the Hasidic communities in Brooklyn are a powerful [voting bloc](#).



In 2018, animal rights activists brought dead Kaporos chickens left on the streets of Brooklyn into the NYC Department of Health.

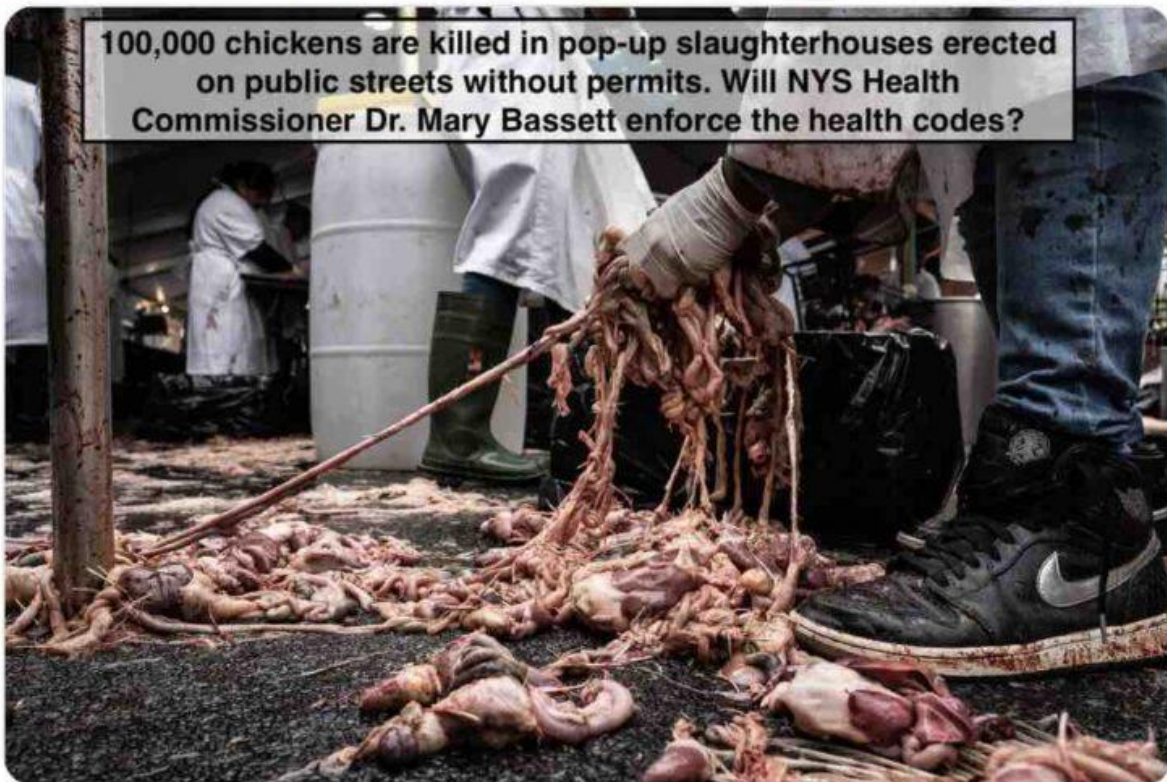
For many years, animal rights activists with the Alliance to End Chickens as Kaporos protested Kaporos, calling on practitioners to perform the ritual using coins, a commonly used alternative to chickens. Over time, however, the protests, which did not appear to be effecting change, morphed into “chicken care vigils” during which activists provide food and water to the chickens in the crates.

In 2017 and 2018, animal rights activists in New York City ran a campaign to compel the Health Commissioner at the time, Dr. Mary Bassett, to enforce the health codes violated during Kaporos. In a meeting with Dr. Bassett and other Health Department officials, the advocates presented her with a toxicology report which concluded that Kaporos poses a “significant public health hazard” based on fecal and blood samples taken from the streets. Indeed, several advocates who have rescued abandoned and sick chickens have contracted e. Coli and campylobacter. Dr. Bassett refused to curb Kaporos, telling the advocates that “no disease signals” had been associated with the practice.

After being subjected to ten months of increasingly provocative protests during her public appearances, Dr. Bassett [resigned](#) from her position as Health Commissioner with over three years left in her term and moved to Boston. In anticipation of a protest during a talk that she was giving at the Boston University School of Public Health, Dr. Bassett attempted to defend her inaction on the grounds that her boss at the time, Mayor Bill de Blasio, would not allow it: “Those of us who work in government face the reality of the fact that the people who appoint us have to go back to the public and back to the ballot box to be reappointed, so there’s always going to be a need for advocacy from people outside of government. For someone who is passionately committed to many issues embraced by advocates, it can be difficult to acknowledge the role that I play as a political appointee. I can’t always be at the barricades.”



As NYS Health Commissioner, will Dr. Mary Bassett shut down the #kaporos slaughter that violates 15 city & state health & cruelty laws and puts the public at risk of zoonotic disease outbreak? No more illegal pop-up slaughterhouses. @KathyHochul @mayakauf theirturn.net/2018/11/20/NYC...



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Animal rights activists say that, as NYS Health Commissioner, Dr. Mary Bassett has an obligation to enforce the health codes and protect the public from another zoonotic disease outbreak

After spending three years in Boston, Dr. Bassett returned to New York in 2021, when Governor Kathy Hochul appointed her State Health Commissioner, a position that gives her more power than before to shut down Kaporos. [Activists hoped that the COVID pandemic](#), which is believed to have originated in a live animal market, would compel Dr. Bassett to curb the practice, as tens of thousands of people without PPE physically handle live animals, many of whom are visibly sick and show signs of respiratory distress.

Robson Forensic

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January 17th 2016

Nora Constance Marino, Esq.
Law Office of Nora Constance Marino
175 East Shore Road Suite #230
Great Neck, NY 11023

Re: The Alliance to End Chickens as Kaporos Rina Deych et al.

Dear Attorney Marino:

On Monday September 21st 2015, I conducted an investigation of Kaporos activities taking place at five separate representative sites in the Borough Park and Crown Heights districts of Brooklyn, New York. The five sites were located in the vicinity of the following addresses:

- 1) 1725 43rd St. near the corner of Dahill Rd.
- 2) 1417 50th St. near the corner of 14th Ave.
- 3) 1413 45th St. between 14th Ave. and 15th Ave.
- 4) 298 -338 Crown St. (parking lot behind Associated Beth Rivkah Schools on Montgomery St.)
- 5) 1414 President St. near the corner of Kingston Ave.

Conclusion

Consistent with the findings from my May 26th 2015 affidavit, the first-hand observations that I made during my September 21st 2015 Kaporos inspection as well as the photographs that I took and test results confirming high bacterial contamination and unsanitary conditions confirm and strengthen my opinion that within a reasonable degree of professional certainty the Kaporos activities taking place in the subject locations **constitute a dangerous condition and pose a significant public health hazard.**



Michael J. McCabe, Jr., Ph.D., DABT, ATS

Mayor de Blasio's Health Commissioners have refused to address a toxicology report that outlines the public health risks posed by the slaughter of over 100,000 chickens on public streets during Kaporos. Activists estimate that at least 100,000 chickens are slaughtered in the streets of Brooklyn each year during Kaporos.

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