

Will you join us in motivating the AVMA to envision a world without Ventilation Shutdown?
From OurHonor.org
June 2022

Join us in Philadelphia at the AVMA Convention, July 29 – August 2

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Historically, it has taken sustained activist effort to encourage the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to adopt policies to protect animals. In 2004, to convince them to condemn forced molting, United Poultry Concerns bought a [full page ad in the New York Times](#) to raise awareness. The New York Times also published a story, and activists protested the AVMA headquarters to motivate them to [amend their policy](#).

The AVMA has historically been on the wrong side regarding [gestation crates](#), [declawing](#), animal protection legislation like [Prop. 2](#), [Prop. 12](#) and [Foie gras](#) production. It's been the grass roots efforts of activists, leading the way, encouraging adoption of more compassionate policies-- but we need your help! We can't do this alone.

This was our letter to the AVMA leadership recently that received no response:

Dear Dr. José Arce, Dr. Janet Donlin, and Dr. Cia Johnson,

The public and the veterinary community are concerned about the recent use of ventilation shutdown to kill tens of millions of birds en masse. This morning, [Kenny Torrella of Vox published](#) another piece covering the avian influenza outbreak that has now killed more than 37 million birds across the country.

This comes after coverage from [The Intercept](#), [The Guardian](#) and others highlighting the cruelty of ventilation shutdown. We are concerned that our reputation as caring advocates for animals is tarnished each time our profession is used to lend legitimacy to this brutal practice.

The case of Rembrandt Farms is particularly troubling as just one example of the hundreds of farms affected by avian influenza across the country. Owned by billionaire Glen Taylor, Rembrandt Farms was affected by avian influenza 7 years ago and received \$11.3 million in taxpayer subsidies for depopulating their flock of 5.5 million birds. Positioned on the Mississippi flyway, with millions of migrating birds flying overhead, another avian influenza outbreak was to be expected yet the farm failed to change their housing structure or put a plan in place to use AVMA preferred methods of depopulation before repopulating their facility. An emergency plan that uses whole house gassing for such a facility or retrofitting their housing so other more preferred options would be viable would be an improvement.

While even preferred methods cause a great deal of needless suffering of the animals, workers and veterinarians involved, we believe reclassifying ventilation shutdown as a not recommended form of depopulation and encouraging producers to put a plan in place for using preferred methods before they repopulate their facilities would prevent the large scale suffering that occurs during these depopulation events.

All veterinarians entered this profession because we love animals and want to help them. No one wants to see animals suffer. While there are many barriers to change, advocacy groups have been instrumental historically in overcoming hurdles to raise awareness about the plight of animals,

and we hope you can join us in an ongoing effort to work together to improve the lives of the animals we all love and care for.

Several animal advocacy groups have reached out to you to engage in a friendly dialogue. We encourage anyone from the AVMA to join in this discussion to envision a future without ventilation shutdown. Those in attendance will include: the Humane League, Animal Outlook, Mercy for Animals, Animal Equality, the HSVMA, Our Honor, Direct Action Everywhere, Compassionate Bay, United Poultry Concerns, the Better Science Campaign and Center for Biological Diversity, but other groups are expected to attend as well. With open compassionate dialogue between groups of differing backgrounds and perspectives, innovation can flourish.

We hope we can work together with our shared goals of protecting humans, animals and the planet, and ensure that animals in the future do not have to endure the suffering experienced by tens of millions of birds across our country.

Please feel free to reach out anytime if you have any questions!

C. Heath, DVM

Previously, an [open letter](#) was sent October 26, 2021, as well as this [open letter in 2020](#). We spoke to AVMA President Dr. José Arce at the AVMA Convention in January, who said he would read our letter and get back to us, but he never did. [Animal Outlook](#), and [Animal Welfare Institute](#) have also sent letters and received no response.