



REPORT

By-law Services Department

TO: Administration and Emergency Services Committee
FROM: Hilary Williams, Director of By-Law and Animal Services
DATE: March 18, 2024
REPORT: BL-05-24 **FILE NO.**

SUBJECT: Backyard Chickens

BACKGROUND:

On March 4th, 2024, the report “Chickens within Urban and Rural Settlement Areas” went to Council from the Durham Agricultural Committee (DAAC) and the Region of Durham. Council motioned and moved that the report be referred to staff for consideration. The report is attached for review.

DISCUSSION:

DAAC purpose is to “provide advice to the Region of Durham on agricultural matters and rural matters as they relate to agriculture”. The DAAC terms of reference are attached to this report.

This report presents the findings and recommendations regarding the proposition of permitting chickens in both urban and rural settlement areas (which includes towns, villages and hamlets), as discussed by the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) and the Durham Regional Council. The report advised *against* allowing chickens in these areas due to the potential spread of Avian Influenza, attraction of pests and predators, and increased risk of disease transmission to livestock, particularly poultry farms.

Concerns:

- 1. Potential Spread of Avian Influenza: Permitting chickens increases the risk of introducing and spreading avian influenza, posing threats to both poultry populations and human health.**
- 2. Attractions of Pests and Predators: Chickens attract pests and predators, leading to nuisance, property damage, and conflicts with humans and other domestic animals.**
- 3. Additional Spreading of Disease to Livestock: Introducing backyard chickens near commercial poultry operations heightens the risk of disease transmission, potentially causing outbreaks and economic losses.**

By noting this recommendation, the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Durham Regional Council have prioritized public health, protection of agriculture, and minimizing the negative impacts associated with backyard chicken keeping.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Good Governance

A Vibrant and Growing Economy

Community Engagement

Community Well-Being

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report BL-05/24 of Hilary Williams, Director of By-Law and Animal Services be received for information;

AND THAT based on the information provided by the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) and the Durham Regional Council, it is recommended that the Council does not permit backyard chickens within urban and rural settlement areas, which include towns, villages, and hamlets.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Hilary Williams
Director of By-Law and Animal Services