



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Public Works and Environment

Ministerial Statement
by
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Minister of Public Works and Environment

Addressing Bermuda's Growing Feral Chicken Population

Friday, December 5th, 2025

Mr. Speaker, I rise again to speak about an issue that has been steadily increasing across Bermuda: the fast-growing and uncontrolled feral chicken population. What may once have been seen as a small inconvenience has become a serious concern for our farmers, our environment, our neighbourhoods and even our public health.

Mr. Speaker, while often unacknowledged by the general population, feral chickens are an invasive species with almost no natural predators in Bermuda. This allows their numbers to multiply quickly and the impact is substantial. Our farmers continue to experience major crop losses, driving up production costs and contributing to higher food prices. This threatens the long-term stability of our local food supply. Beyond the agricultural impact, these birds often disturb public areas, scatter garbage, disrupt outdoor dining and cause hygiene issues for residents and visitors.

Mr. Speaker, this issue becomes even more concerning in light of the continued global circulation of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, known as HPAI. While the risk to the public, in Bermuda, remains low, a large unmanaged feral chicken population could act as a reservoir. Therefore, it's essential that Bermuda remains watchful, prepared, and proactive.

At present, **Mr. Speaker,** officers within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources manage invasive bird control, including feral chickens. Using traps, sedative baits and controlled air-rifle operations, they remove more than 1,300 feral chickens each month. Their work is commendable, but the scale of the issue exceeds what the team can manage. For this reason, I am outlining several new actions to strengthen our response.

1. Introduction of a New Reporting and Response App

I am proud to say that the DENR has created an internal app to monitor invasive bird sightings and track control efforts. After successful testing, this tool will soon be made available to the public. Residents will be able to report feral chicken activity directly, allowing DENR to focus resources where they are most needed. The app provides accurate geographic information for staff response while maintaining user privacy.

2. Expanding Operational Capacity

To increase our reach and improve response times, the Ministry of Public Works and Environment is hiring two additional contractors who will be fully trained and

licensed under the Protection of Birds Amendment Act 2015. Their addition will enhance trapping and sedative bait operations almost doubling the capacity for the removal of feral chickens.

3. Board of Agriculture Pilot Programme

Based on the recommendation of the Board of Agriculture, the Government will begin a pilot programme allowing selected registered farmers to address feral chickens on their own properties. Farmers will receive full training and use approved traps and sedative baits under strict safety protocols to avoid harm to pets and prevent accidental captures. All birds collected will be humanely euthanized. The results of this programme will guide future policy and may allow expansion to all trained registered farmers.

4. Public Access to Feral Chicken Traps

To support community involvement, DENR has purchased 100 feral chicken traps, which are now available at the Agriculture Service Centre for \$100 each. Each trap will include detailed instructions to ensure compliance with the Care and Protection of Animals Act 1975.

The new reporting app will also allow residents to notify DENR when a trap has captured birds so teams can respond quickly. I want to reassure the public that once chickens are trapped, residents are not required to take any further action. You are not expected to handle or euthanize the birds. Simply notify DENR through the app or by phone, and trained officers will retrieve and address the animals.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives reflect the Government's commitment to reducing the thousands of feral chickens across the island. However, success requires the cooperation of the public. As we put this Feral Chicken Management strategy into action, we ask residents to follow these guidelines:

- Do not feed feral chickens or pigeons.
- Do not tamper with traps placed by DENR or trained individuals.
- Do not abandon or relocate unwanted chickens; contact DENR for assistance.
- Keep backyard poultry secure and away from wild birds.
- Report large populations through DENR's online system or the new app.
- Dispose of food waste properly in tamper-resistant bags and containers.

Mr. Speaker, with Government, farmers, and the public working together, we can turn what has become an environmental and agricultural challenge into a model of coordinated, responsible action. This is not simply about removing nuisance animals, it is about protecting our food security, our neighborhoods, and our public health.

Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to act decisively, and with the support of the public, we will bring this growing problem under control. Together, we can ensure a cleaner, safer, and more suitable Bermuda for all.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.