



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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Allow slaughtering of poultry in wet markets

The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) urges the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) to allow the slaughtering of poultry in the market as consumers should have a choice between dressed poultry and those that are freshly slaughtered in wet markets.

The reasons for doing away with the slaughtering poultry are not good enough because there are ways to circumvent the existing problems than arbitrarily brushing away the practice as unhygienic and also the issue of unhealthy disposal of waste. Such problems can be addressed

Our call comes as a response to the Penang Island City Council (MBPP)'s construction of a poultry distribution centre at the Batu Lanchang market. It is expected to be completed next year, slowly phasing out the slaughtering of poultry in wet markets with this distribution centre delivering dressed poultry to the 126 poultry sellers in 26 markets on Penang Island.

It might appear hygienic, but the time taken for a processed poultry until the time of their delivery to the retailer has to be considered as it might take hours to do so. Any unsold poultry have to be frozen, if kept under in the refrigeration section, they can only last for one to two days according to the food safety information provided by U.S. government agencies Their quality will remain relatively well if kept frozen at -18°C but if exposed to repeated and prolonged exposure to elevated temperatures such as an increase of 6°C, they will experience a significant quality loss in terms of the tenderness, flavour, aroma, juiciness, and colour of the meat.

Such increase in temperature is not impossible, considering the declining performance of a freezer over time, and customers opening and closing of the freezer to select the poultry to buy.

We have to consider the time taken for a freshly slaughtered chicken in the market till the time it goes into the pot as compared to a 'factory' dressed chicken that had been slaughtered hours or perhaps a day ago, assuming that both chickens are cooked soon after arriving home from the market.

The other factor that we have to look at is that frozen poultry does not mean that they are bacteria-free. Freezers only slow the proliferation of microorganisms such as salmonella and campylobacter that commonly cause food poisoning.

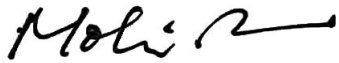
As for the dirty and unhygienic condition of the current wet market's poultry section can be addressed.

As of the current system, poultry are mostly slaughtered on the floor and hence dirty and unhygienic. Although the floor is washed at the end of the day, congealed blood, fats, and remnants of the poultry parts inevitably get into the drain. For the innards and other parts of the poultry, they are most discarded into huge uncovered bins and these attracts scavenging birds and animals.

Thus, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recommended albeit for abattoir, that blood from, which in this case is the slaughtered poultry, is collected and coagulated into a solid mass to prevent

it from blocking up the drains. The blood can be used for stockfeed production or fertilisers. The lids of the oversized bins can be modified to incorporate a smaller opening with a flip lid to prevent scavenging animals' access. Poultry sellers are reluctant to close the lid of such bins because they are huge and heavy. Install grease traps to help clear the bits of fatty tissues in the wastewater.

The existing problems of 'unhygienic' poultry retailing section of the wet market are not insurmountable; it just need some ideas to restructure the system without 'reinventing the wheel'. As such CAP would call on the MBPP to introduce facilities that enable poultry sellers to continue slaughtering poultry the traditional way but cleanly and hygienically.



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