

# **“How Does ACF (Inc.) Promote Ethical and Responsible Breeding”**

## **Introduction:**

The purpose of this presentation is to show that ACF (Inc.) Member Bodies have in place comprehensive strategies to promote responsible and ethical cat breeding. An overview of their **Breeders’ Codes of Ethics** will be presented. Whilst ACF does not have a National code each Member Body has developed its own. The Australian Cat Federation has 10 members representing 6 States and 2 Territories.

**Australia** is a big country; it would stretch from Northern Europe to North Africa. Each state therefore is to a large extent self-governing, with a long history of individuality. The fragile nature of the Australian environment means that the protection of indigenous fauna is a top priority for many state and local Government Agencies. Feral cats are among a myriad of threats to wildlife not least, of which is man and his motorcar.

The **ACF (Inc.)’s PRACTICES ON BREEDING** will also be mentioned.

**Regulation and Legislation** varies in each State. For example, in New South Wales, legislation pertaining to cat ownership and cat breeding includes:

- Companion Animal Act
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations
- Animal Welfare Code of Practice – Breeding cats and dogs
- Local Government Act

Some states have more far-reaching legislation while some are less stringent.

ACF Member Bodies **CODES OF ETHICS** cover all aspects of breeding and breeders registered with them must sign and comply with these Codes.

In States with specific legislation relating to cats and cat breeding; compliance is included in Member Codes of Ethics.

Some of the requirements relating to **BREEDING STOCK** are

- Lines are to be free from any known genetic fault affecting the health and wellbeing of the cat.
- This may be ascertained by a number of DNA test now available.
- Tests relating to health issues are encouraged. It is recommended results be recorded in registry databases.
- Breeding stock not display any generally accepted genetic fault that affects the appearance of the cat such as white spotting or kinked tails.
- These are faults that do not have a detrimental effect on the cats' health and wellbeing but are unacceptable for Show Cats.
- Any kitten born with a defect should be euthanized by a veterinarian if in the opinion of the veterinarian it would be unable to lead a healthy and comfortable life.
- ACF(Inc.)'s Practices of Breeding stipulate that **like to like matings** between breeds carrying lethal or debilitating genetic diseases such as Rumpy Manx and Scottish Fold are not permitted.

In the sections relating to **GENERAL CARE** minimum requirements essential to the health and wellbeing of breeding cats and their offspring are described

- **Minimum sizes for pens and outside runs are given.**

Also entire males or females should not be allowed to roam free.

Especial emphasis is made of the containment of 'calling' female cats.

- **The essentials of a balanced diet** are described for cats and kittens, including breeding queens and studs.
- **The importance of human contact** and cats including stud cats and young kittens receiving a lot of attention is emphasised.

**Emphasis is placed on the HEALTH of all cats**

- All cats to be vaccinated and treated for external and internal parasites according to current veterinary advice.
- Queens must not be overbred - maximum of 2 litters per year.
- Minimum age for the sale of a kitten is 8 weeks with the recommended preferred age of 10 to 12 weeks.
- All kittens must be healthy at time of going to a new home with breeders responsible for their continued health up to two weeks after the relocation.
- The breeder is responsible for ensuring pet kittens are desexed by the age of 5 months.

**The ETHICAL treatment of all stock requires breeders do NOT**

- Sell kittens to commercial cat wholesalers or retail pet dealers.  
ACF (Inc.) has been instrumental in raising Government awareness in Australia to the pet trade to Asia.
- Rehouse a cat more than 3 times to prevent cats being excessively sold-on or leased.
- Breeders must desex all non-breeding stock.

Also

- Entire pet cats (pedigreed or non-pedigreed) are not permitted in shows over the age of 6 or 9 months depending on the Member Body.

**All Breeders must COMPLY with state legislation and/or Member Bodies Code of Ethics**

- And micro-chip all kittens before sale.

**FUTURE PLANS:**

- Accreditation of Catteries is also being foreshadowed by some Member Bodies.

**Conclusion:**

ACF Member Bodies have in place many strategies to ensure ethical and responsible cat breeding by their members. Their Codes of Ethics are augmented by Government Legislation and advisory papers in both electronic and hard copy for breeders, kitten buyers and members of the public.

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