

I. INTRODUCTION

Cats are the most popular household animal in the United States, with approximately 88 million kept as pets. Their popularity reflects the fact that cats generally are easier to care for than dogs, and many owners have more than one.

Even if your store does not sell kittens, the information in this chapter will be useful in helping customers diagnose problems and care for their pets.

Learning Objectives

This chapter will give you a better understanding of kittens and cats and increase your confidence when selling these animals and related products.

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Examine kittens and identify possible health problems.
- Care for the kittens in your store.
- Communicate basic needs to customers.
- Recommend equipment and add-on sales items for kittens and cats.

II. EXAMINING KITTENS

Every morning, all kittens should be visually inspected. Use a morning checklist to prevent overlooking a problem. If you find something wrong, notify your supervisor or immediately so proper action can be taken.

Throughout the day, you should monitor:

- Alertness and activity level.
- Amount of food and water consumed.
- Litter box use, including consistency of fecal matter and amount of urine.

Kittens typically sleep a great deal during the day and night due to their young age. When awake, a healthy kitten will be alert, playful and curious about its surroundings.

If food or water appears untouched, the kitten may be experiencing a serious problem. Feces should be evident in all litter boxes and should be well-formed, not runny or discolored. Kittens that have diarrhea or bloody feces may have a problem that requires immediate attention.

Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after handling each kitten.

Veterinary Examination

Some states require that a licensed veterinarian check all kittens and issue health certificates before they can be sold in pet stores. Depending on state regulations, any kitten not sold within a certain time period (typically three to four weeks) must be re-examined by a veterinarian, who will issue a new health certificate. Even if not required by law, many stores have a vet examine kittens as a standard practice.

Your store vet will examine each kitten carefully, listening to the heart and lungs, taking a temperature and checking a stool sample for internal parasites. Even if the fecal exam is negative, in most cases the vet will give a dewormer to be on the safe side.

Depending on the kitten's age, the vet also will administer initial vaccines or booster shots. Kittens normally receive their first vaccinations at around 8 weeks of age, with additional vaccines and/or boosters given at 12 and 16 weeks. Vaccines almost always will include distemper, feline leukemia and rabies. Most vaccines must be re-administered annually.

Initial Examination

Before the vet comes to check new kittens, you should give them an initial

examination to identify any obvious problems or health issues.

Area to Examine: Eyes

What to Look for: Should look clear and bright with pupils of equal size. Check that there is no white or yellow discharge or any swelling around the eye.

Possible Problems: Infection or systemic disease

Area to Examine: Nose

What to Look for: Nasal passages should be clear and clean, with no white or yellow discharge.

Possible Problems: Infection or systemic disease

Area to Examine: Mouth

What to Look for: Gums should be a healthy pink color and return quickly to pink when pressed on lightly. Also look for abnormal tooth development (abscesses, pits, etc.) or swelling.

Possible Problems: Anemia, internal parasites, Infection

Area to Examine: Ears

What to Look for: Should be smooth with no hair loss. Ear canals should be clean and odor free, with no brown gunk or debris inside.

Possible Problems: Ear mites, yeast infection, parasitic infection

Area to Examine: Head

What to Look for: Top of the head, facial and muzzle areas should be fully furred with no hair loss, bumps, scabs or sores. *Possible Problems:* Infestation or infection, ring worm

Area to Examine: Throat/Chest

What to Look for: The hair coat should appear normal, with no sores, hair loss or signs of parasites. Check for abnormal or labored breathing. *Possible Problems:* Infestation, Infection, ringworm, Respiratory ailments

Area to Examine: Nape of Neck/Back

What to Look for: The hair coat should appear normal. Black, grainy specs or discomfort when the back is stroked may indicate fleas, ticks or lice. When gently pinched, skin on the nape (back) of the neck should return quickly to its original position. *Possible Problems:* Infestation, mange, Ringworm, Dehydration

Area to Examine: Undercarriage

What to Look for: Check for symmetry in chest and abdomen (belly) and for any swellings or bumps. Inspect the hair coat for any abnormalities, such as pustules (small, wet and odd colored areas), and for fleas and ticks. Make sure belly is not bloated and ribs are not clearly visible under the skin.

Possible Problems: Infestation, mange, Internal parasites, Underweight

Area to Examine : Legs and Paws

What to Look for: The hair coat should look normal with no sores or bumps, especially on the pads of paws. Also check that toe nails are present and the kitten walks normally without limping. *Possible Problems:* Unsanitary living conditions, Infection, Malformation, Injury

Area to Examine : Tail/ Rear

What to Look for: Tail should appear normal (not broken) with no discharge, abnormalities or swelling around the rectum or vulva. Look for worms or other parasites shaped like grains of rice. Normal rectal temperature should be between 100 and 102.5 degrees F. *Possible Problems:* Malformation or injury, Prolapsed rectum, Internal parasites or infection, ring worm

Ongoing Examination

After the initial examination, part of your job may be to observe and record each kitten's general health conditions on a daily basis until it is sold. This will help ensure the kittens in your store are as healthy as they can be.

Weight—Kittens should be weighed every week or so. Normal kittens will gain weight

steadily. Stable weight or weight loss can indicate anything from internal parasites to severe intestinal disorders.

Behavior—A kitten's behavior can be a good reflection of its general health. When observed and noted daily, changes are easily spotted and further evaluations can be made.

Eating—Food intake is essential to disease resistance and development. Poor eating or not eating at all can lead to rapid deterioration unless someone notices and takes action. Lack of appetite often is an early indicator of stress, infection or an internal parasite problem.

Urine—Kittens should urinate every day in their litter box. Urinating outside the box or urine with a reddish color or strong smell may indicate an infection. Excessive drinking (leading to more frequent urination or larger quantities of urine) and changes in urine color should be brought to your supervisor's attention.

Bowel Movements—Bowel movements that deviate from normal may indicate problems. Changes in condition, color and odor of stools are important to note and report to a supervisor or your store veterinarian.

Vomiting, Coughing, Sneezing, Nasal Discharge, Ocular (Eye)

Discharge—All of these are danger signals and can indicate rapidly developing or already advanced disease. If you notice any of these symptoms, let your supervisor know so immediate action can be taken to isolate the kitten for further examination and treatment.

Common Parasite Identification

While many of the parasites that are common to kittens will require consulting with a veterinarian, there are some basic measures you can take to keep common parasites from infesting the kittens in your store. This is also great information to pass along to your customers.

When treating parasites, always follow the package directions carefully and only apply medications safe for use with kittens. Thoroughly dry kittens after applying a treatment and keep them in a warm location. Read all labels carefully and beware of potential side effects of pesticide use for kittens and humans.

Here are some common parasites and the steps you can take to prevent further infestation:

Ear Mites

Overview: Ear mites live in the ear canals, are fairly common in kittens and

very contagious.

What to Look For: These tiny mites cannot be seen by the human eye but cause inflammation and irritation. Symptoms include excessive head shaking or ear scratching, brownish-red gunk-like material inside the ears, or an unpleasant odor emitting from the ear.

What to Do: To treat ear mites, first confirm the diagnosis your store manager or vet. Then apply a veterinarian-recommended ear mite remedy according to package directions.

Fleas

Overview: Fleas are the most common parasite found on kittens and cats. Fleas feed on their host's blood and generally will not leave unless forced to do so. Fleas move quickly and can jump very long distances.

Female fleas can lay up to several hundred eggs in their lifetime. These eggs fall off the host pet, then go through a larva and pupa form in some sort of crevice, carpeting or other soft material. Once they become adults, fleas then jump on the next available host. Finding and eliminating fleas quickly before they infest other animals in your store is critical.

In addition to irritating their host, infected fleas can cause tapeworms if eaten, so kittens with flea infestations may need to be treated for tapeworms.

What to Look For: The most common symptom is scratching, followed by hair loss on the tail, head or groin area. If fleas are suspected, spread the kitten's fur and carefully look for adult fleas (small, dark, flat, hard-shelled and wingless insects) or flea excretions (dark spots that will turn a wet paper towel blood red). A flea comb with very fine teeth also can be used.

What to Do: Your store likely offers many types of flea eradication products, including flea drops, shampoos, dips, powders and flea spray for the pet, along with sprays and bombs for areas where the infected kitten has been kept. A combination of products should be used to treat infested kittens, kennels and enclosures, as well as protect other animals in the store.

Many flea products are safe only for adult animals, so be careful that all products used are kitten safe.

Ticks

Overview: The biggest problem with ticks is the threat of Lyme disease spreading to the kitten or its owners. A tick

must be attached for at least 24 hours before it can infect a cat with Lyme disease, so finding and removing them quickly is important.

What to Look For: Look for scratching. Ticks are brown, eight-legged insects that are clearly visible. Although they can attach anywhere, ticks usually are found on the ears, belly or groin area. Check all parts of the animal's body carefully since ticks can vary in size.

What to Do: Ticks must be removed by hand. Use forceps or another tick eradication product to carefully remove both the head (which may be slightly embedded in the skin) and body. Placing a drop of mineral or vegetable oil on the head may cause the tick to pull out, making it easier to remove.

If ticks are found, tick control shampoos, dips, spot on, sprays, powders and/or other products can help treat any overlooked insects. Some products also prevent ticks from latching on long enough to cause a problem and are recommended for outdoor cats in areas with high risk of Lyme disease.

Lice

Overview: Unlike the other parasites in

this section, lice are relatively rare in felines, and typically due to poor sanitation or neglect.

What to Look For: Look for severe scratching and raw skin. Lice are small, white, flat, wingless insects that are barely visible to the naked eye.

What to Do: A dip, shampoo or topical spray is the most common treatment. Follow product instructions carefully and keep the kitten's enclosure thoroughly clean.

Common Stress Factors

Kittens encounter stress from the time they are separated from their mother until after they are sold. Once kittens arrive in your store, the following factors (in sequential order) may cause stress:

- Initial examination
- Veterinary examination
- Vaccination procedure
- De-worming procedure
- Isolation from litter mates
- Different food given at pet store
- Different environment at pet store
- Maintenance routine
- Noise and lighting in pet store
- Handling by different employees and customers

- Transportation to customer's home
- Getting used to new home

Although each event is not a significant stress factor individually, when combined they can lower kittens' resistance to disease by suppressing immunity levels. Stress usually is at the highest during the first three days after kittens arrive at your store.

During this initial period, try to limit stress as much as possible by making sure kittens get plenty of rest, eat high-quality food, have a highly sanitary environment and receive lots of attention. Encourage new owners to do the same to minimize stress as the kitten adjusts to its new home.

III. FEEDING & NUTRITION

Introduction

To stay healthy, all animals kept as pets need a nutritionally balanced and complete diet. A high quality food specifically formulated for kittens will keep them healthier and more resistant to disease.

If your store sells kittens, an important part of your responsibilities will be to feed them and have fresh water available at all times.

Most pet stores have a preferred brand of food, which will include a kitten formula. This should be fed to all kittens in the store and recommended to customers who buy them.

Type of Food

Feeding kittens a high-quality dry formula will keep their teeth cleaner than wet food. For stressed kittens or those not used to eating dry food, it may be necessary to encourage them to eat by adding high-quality canned kitten food to the dry food or adding warm water to soften dry food and make it smell more appetizing.

Older kittens and adult cats should be fed only dry food to keep their gums and teeth cleaner and healthier, which ultimately will lead to a longer life and fewer vet visits.

Feeding Schedule

Kittens should be fed once they have settled in at the store. Kittens and cats generally will regulate their own intake and will eat only as much as they need.

Dry food should be available at all times. If provided, wet food or moistened dry food should be changed regularly, with dry food available at all times.

Lack of interest in eating may be a symptom of a more serious problem and should be brought to your supervisor's attention immediately.

Water

Fresh water should be available at all times, served at room temperature in a clean water bowl.

Kittens and cats should never be given milk as it may cause diarrhea. Once they have been weaned from their mother's milk, kittens should drink only water.

Selling Cat Food

One of the most common questions you are likely to get from customers is what type or brand of food you recommend for kittens and cats.

Keep in mind that brand is less important than formulation. Be sure to fully understand the features and benefits of the formulations of cat and kitten food your store carries and what they are designed to do.

Kittens should be kept on a consistent diet for at least two to three weeks after going to a new home. Assuming they have been fed a good quality food, kittens can be kept on the same diet until they are

ready to transition to an adult formula.

If the owner wishes to transfer the kitten to a different food, this should be done slowly over the course of two weeks or so to prevent diarrhea or other digestive problems. This can be particularly serious for small or young kittens, which can become dehydrated from diarrhea very quickly.

To transition a kitten from one formulation to another, the owner should mix the foods, gradually increasing the proportion of new to old food. The recommended schedule is three parts old/one part new for three to four days, then go to half and half for three to four days, then three parts new food to one part old food for another three to four days, and finally to all new food.

For suggestions on effectively communicating the features and benefits of the pet food and other products you sell to your customers, consult the "Customer Service & Sales" chapter.

Treats

Although kittens and cats may be given treats occasionally, they should make up a very small part of the total diet. Only high-quality treats specifically for kittens or cats are recommended.

Too much variety or inappropriate food (such as people food) may lead to digestive problems or behavioral issues, including stealing food and pickiness.

IV. HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

The kittens in your store should be placed in a housing unit that is large enough for them to move around freely; if space allows, a unit with multiple levels is preferred.

Most kittens do better in the company of their litter mates or other healthy kittens. If housing multiple kittens in the same unit, be sure it is large enough to accommodate them. Kittens kept in the same enclosure should be approximately the same size and monitored to ensure they get along well. An aggressive kitten should be placed in a separate unit.

The area or room where kittens are housed usually is called a kennel and the space where they live most of the time is called a housing unit or crate.

Housing Unit Specifications

Durable and Easy to Clean—The housing unit should be made of a material

that is impervious to water, feces and urine, and constructed so it can be cleaned and sanitized easily. Most units designed for kittens have a solid floor, and may have a large, removable tray on the bottom to simplify cleaning.

Adequate Litter Boxes —One or more litter boxes should be placed at the bottom of the unit and away from any food and water dishes. Litter boxes should have short sides so small kittens can get in and out easily.

V. CLEANING & SANITATION

A clean kitten that looks and smells good is a great way to attract potential buyers. Part of your job may include cleaning the housing units and bathing and/or grooming the kittens. This is a great time to socialize the kittens and also look for possible problems.

Bathing the Kitten

Cats generally are very clean animals and even young kittens will lick their fur to keep it well groomed. Most kittens received in the store will need only to be brushed and/or combed, but some may need to be bathed. It is important to wait until each kitten has settled in and shows no sign of stress.

Remember that this may be the first bath a kitten ever had. Soothing words and gentle massaging will help prevent undue fear; a sponge bath often works better than a tub bath for kittens. If a bath is needed, here are some points to remember when bathing the kittens in your store:

- **Not Too Hot, Not Too Cold**—No one likes a scalding bath or one that is too cold, including the kittens in your store. The water temperature should feel lukewarm, not hot or cold.

- **Follow Instructions to the Letter**—Carefully read and follow all instructions on the shampoo and any parasiticide formulas you use. Be sure any product used is safe for kittens.

- **Be Careful**—Care must be taken to prevent shampoo or parasiticide from entering or irritating the kitten's mouth, nose, eyes or genital area.

- **Rinse Thoroughly**—The kitten should be rinsed at least twice to remove all residue.

- **Monitor Frequency**—Excessive bathing can dry out the skin and coat, leading to other problems. Spot clean kittens as needed and bathe them only when necessary.

Drying the Kitten

First rubbing the kitten with a soft bath

towel will remove excess water and should serve as another comforting experience.

- If a hand dryer is used, gentle brushing or “fluffing” the hair coat will speed the drying process and help prevent snarls or mats. The hot air temperature should not feel uncomfortable on your skin.

- A crate dryer should only be used on a kitten that is well socialized and does not act fearful of the unit's noise. If one is used, the heat setting should be only slightly higher than room temperature and a timer should be used to avoid leaving the kitten in too long.

- Once dry, brushing and/or combing will improve the kitten's coat and make it irresistible to potential customers.

Cleaning the Housing Units & Kennel Area

The housing unit should be cleaned daily. Litter boxes should be scooped or cleaned as needed throughout the day to keep them clean and free of excess feces and urine.

Kittens are vulnerable to a number of diseases and infections. Cleaning crates daily and sanitizing housing units before introducing new animals is important to keep the kittens in your store healthy.

All cleaning equipment should be sanitized after each use by soaking it in a dis-

infecting or bleach solution to kill off bacteria and germs.

Equipment that you need to clean and/or sanitize the housing units and kennel areas in your store includes:

- Quality detergent or soap
- Disinfecting liquid and/or bleach
- Cleaning cloths
- Hot water
- Scrubbing pads
- Stiff bristle brushes
- Buckets
- Aprons or smocks and gloves
- Paper and cotton towels

Routine Maintenance Procedures

Kennel areas, housing units, and food and water containers must be cleaned and/or sanitized daily. Use only soaps and detergents that are safe for use around kittens and strictly follow label instructions. Follow your store's procedures, which likely will include the following steps:

1. If the housing units in the kennel area are stacked above each other, begin cleaning at the top and work your way down to avoid contamination from dirty water dripping into clean units. An apron (or smock) and rubber gloves are recommended.

2. Visually inspect the unit for symptoms of potential problems and examine the kittens to verify they look healthy, then temporarily relocate them to a petting room or another housing unit.

3. Remove dirtied newspaper, other absorbent material and all litter boxes. Scrub the housing unit tray or crate floor with soap and water. Rinse and dry, then place new absorbent material in the unit. Empty litter boxes, wash them with soap and water, dry and then fill with new litter. This will eliminate the majority of odors that have accumulated during the night.

4. Check carefully and if needed, use detergent to clean walls, bars or other areas inside the housing unit. Wipe with plain water to remove all soap residue, then dry the unit before returning the kittens.

5. Housing units should be sanitized at least twice a week and before using for new kittens. After completing steps 1-4, thoroughly scrub all surfaces (walls, ceiling, floor, tray, etc.) and litter boxes with a disinfecting solution safe for cleaning around kittens and/or a 5% bleach solution (1 cup of bleach in 2 gallons of water). Follow instructions on the disinfecting solution regarding appropriate dilution and use.

Note that the disinfecting solution should

not be mixed or used together with the bleach solution. If store procedures call for using both, use one, rinse well, then use the other.

6. Food containers and water dishes should be cleaned daily by scrubbing with soap and water, then rinsed thoroughly.

Food dishes and water containers should be sanitized as needed or required by store policy. Allow metal and ceramic dishes and water bottles to soak in a 5% bleach solution for 10 to 15 minutes, then scrub and rinse well until no bleach smell can be detected. New kitten arrivals always should be given sanitized dishes.

Once food dishes and water containers are completely clean and free of any soap, bleach or other cleaning material, fill dry dishes with new food and containers with fresh water. Discard and replace any dishes that are chipped, rusty, cracked or pitted.

7. After the housing units are cleaned and/or sanitized, clean or sanitize the kennel, petting rooms and other places where kittens may go. This should include any surfaces that kittens come in contact with, especially floors, lower walls, outside walls of housing units, glass windows, partitions, etc. Upper walls, ceilings, tops of units and other less accessible

places also should be cleaned periodically. Always remember: If it's dirty, clean it!

8. Check that air flows properly through kennel areas and housing units. Clean or replace air filters as recommended.

9. Clean isolation and quarantine areas where unhealthy animals are being kept last. Always use separate maintenance supplies to prevent transferring disease from isolation areas to display units, including aprons (or smocks) and gloves. Always wash your hands thoroughly after handling each kitten and before and after cleaning different areas of the store.

10. Sanitize brushes and other cleaning products by soaking in a bleach or other disinfectant solution. All cloth aprons and towels must be machine washed in hot water with quality detergent. Properly dispose of all trash immediately by placing it in garbage cans with full liners, then putting tied off bags in designated receptacles or areas, preferably outside the store.

VI. SOCIALIZATION & GROOMING

Introduction

Socialization is a very important process to accustom kittens to human contact so

they feel comfortable around people.

The socialization process begins at the breeder before they are weaned. Kittens stay with their mother and litter mates, and receive individual attention to acclimate them to handling and petting. It is important for you to continue socializing kittens in the store and encourage new owners to continue the process at home.

Daily Socialization

- Pet each kitten daily and talk to it during feeding, watering and cleaning routines.
- Customers can be very helpful in socialization by providing additional attention and acclimating the kitten to people besides those that work in the store.
- Most kittens enjoy being touched and cuddled. Although rare, kittens that appear reluctant to be held or petted require special attention to overcome their anxiety, including more frequent and gentle handling.

Grooming

- Remember that in a pet retail setting, you must make the animals as appealing as possible to potential customers. Regular brushing and/or combing of the kittens in the store is a must.
- In addition to keeping kittens looking their best, grooming provides an excel-

lent opportunity to socialize them and monitor for health issues.

- As part of the socialization process, make sure you talk to kittens in a kind, gentle voice during the grooming process.
- Kittens that are in the store for a longer period may need their nails trimmed. Because over-trimming can hurt the kitten and make it fearful of grooming, never trim nails unless you have been trained to do it correctly. Clipping off too much will cut the quick (the blood vessel inside the nail), causing pain and requiring a blood coagulant powder to stop the bleeding.
- Grooming kittens prepares them for future brushing, combing, nail trimming and other care they may experience throughout their life.

VII. GENERAL BREEDS & CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

Although cats kept as pets come in many different colors, hair lengths and sizes, they are the same species. Experts believe that all domestic cats are descended from a common ancestor, the African wildcat.

Over time, isolated locations and human intervention resulted in different breeds of cats with distinctive characteristics.

Offspring of purebred cats typically match the size, color, hair coat and body type of their parents, also referred to as “breeding true.”

Most cats kept as pets are not pedigreed purebreds and are considered “mongrels” or mixed breeds. Most pet stores and veterinary clinics classify these cats by the length of their hair coat, referring to them as Domestic Shorthair (DSH) or Domestic Longhair (DLH); a designation of Domestic Mediumhair (DMH) is used less commonly.

Cats can range greatly in size from breed to breed, but male cats generally will weigh more than females of the same breed. For the purpose of this chapter, cats are classified by size as follows:

- Small—Less than 7 lbs.
- Medium—7 to 10 lbs.
- Large—More than 10 lbs.

General Characteristics & Care

All cats share similar traits whether they are mixed breed or purebred.

Cats generally are very clean animals that lick their fur to keep it well groomed. Regular combing or brushing will help

keep the hair coat looking its best and is essential for cats with longer hair.

As a result of their own grooming, cats may vomit up mats of hair, commonly called “hairballs.” Hairball remedies are available to help move clots of hair through the digestive tract and are recommended for cats with medium to long hair.

Most kittens are trained by their mothers to use a litter box before they are weaned. For smaller kittens, litter boxes should have short sides to allow them to get in and out easily. A hooded litter box can help keep the area around the box cleaner and smelling better, but may need to be used without the hood until the cat is accustomed to the box.

Many cats do not like using a dirty box and may even break their litter training if it does not meet their standards. Feces should be scooped at least daily and the entire box changed regularly. For households with more than one cat, multiple litter boxes (usually one more than there are cats) are recommended.

Some cats can be picky about cat litter, refusing to use those with strong deodorants. “Clumping” litters, which bind urine into solid clumps, usually are easier to clean and can be used longer than other litters.

Adult male cats, also known as “toms”, may spray urine to mark their territory. Adult females, also called “queens”, also may spray. To prevent spraying and other behavioral problems, neutering (for males) and spaying (for females) is recommended at around six months of age. Cats that have been “fixed” will generally live longer and healthier lives.

Health Concerns

Cats are generally hardy animals and, unlike dogs, purebreds are not prone to breed-specific genetic disorders or health problems.

Cats and kittens can contract a number of diseases from each other, such as distemper, leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), commonly known as Feline AIDS. Like dogs, cats also can contract rabies, Lyme disease and various intestinal parasites. Regular vet checkups and vaccinations are strongly recommended to keep cats healthy throughout their natural lives.

Keeping cats indoors will prevent them from contracting many diseases, as well as protect them from attack and injury by cats or other animals. For very longhaired breeds like Persians that are prone to matting, keeping them indoors will minimize grooming requirements.

Cat Breeds

Purebred cats are classified based on their heritage and history and typically grouped as Natural Breeds, Established Breeds, Mutations or Hybrids. Although most cat organizations use the same general categories, specific breeds may be classified differently by various associations.

Most cats kept as pets are classified as “Random” or “Mixed”, generic terms used to indicate non-purebred breeds. Since all domestic cats are the same species, cats of any breed can mate with any other domestic breed, with the resulting litters considered mixed breeds.

Non-purebreds also may be referred to as alley or barn cats, although these terms are most accurately used to describe feral cats that have not been socialized. Alley cats are generally considered to be feral urban or suburban cats, while barn cats are rural cats that literally may live in barns.

Regardless of breed, white-haired, blue-eyed cats are often deaf. Calico cats are almost always female, with male calicos called “money cats” because they are so rare.

Purebred Classifications

For the purpose of this chapter, breeds are grouped based on classifications from the Cat Fancier’s Association (CFA), the largest registry organization.

• **Natural Breeds**—These breeds generally have evolved over long periods of time through generations of breeding among the cat population of a specific geographic area. Parents of the same breed generally will “breed true”, producing kittens with the same body style, size, hair coat and coloration. Natural breeds include Siamese, Chartreux, Maine Coon and Persian.

• **Established Breeds**—When two specific but separate breeds of cat are paired, they produce kittens with distinguishing characteristics different from the original pair. These kittens can be bred with others of the same heritage to establish a separate breed with consistent characteristics that will breed true. Established breeds include Burmese, Ragdoll and Tonkinese.

• **Mutations**—Cats of the same breed may occasionally produce a litter or an individual kitten that varies in some recognizable ways from the parents and other cats of the breed. When cats with the same

mutations are bred together, they can produce kittens that display the same mutation as their parents. Continual breeding of these cats with each other over time creates an entirely new breed. Mutations include American Curl, Cornish Rex and Scottish Fold.

• **Hybrids**—When humans deliberately pair cats of different breeds or species (i.e., other than domestic cats) to achieve kittens with a different body style, hair coat or features than possessed by either parent, the offspring are called hybrids. When kittens with the desired characteristics are bred to each other, this will result eventually in true breeding and a new breed. Hybrids include Bombay, Javanese and Ocicat. Bengal is a popular hybrid not recognized by the CFA.

Extensive information about specific groups and breeds is available online and through other resources.

VIII. EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

- High quality kitten food
- Food and water bowls
- Treats
- Catnip
- Miscellaneous toys
- Brush and/or comb

- Kitten shampoo (if needed)
- Flea and tick treatment (if needed)
- Litter box and litter
- Scratch post or pad
- Cat bed (preferably enclosed) and bedding
- Travel carrier
- Collar, leash and identification tag (if needed)
- Kitten care books and literature

IX. COMMON BREED IDENTIFICATION

Natural Breeds

Abyssinian

- Medium, ticked hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Colors include blue, fawn, red, ruddy.
- Well-muscled, agile, curious, even tempered feline breed that enjoys human companionship.
- Possibly originated in Egypt, but more likely parts of Southeast Asia. Name of breed originated from country of export, Abyssinia.
- Believed to be brought to England in the late 1860s.

American Short hair

- Short, thick coat.
- Medium to large in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Known to be easy going and friendly.

- Came to the United States from Europe with early settlers.

Chartreux

- Medium to short, double coated hair coat.
- Medium to large in size.
- Bluish gray in color with gold to copper eyes.
- Has been noted as far back as the 16th century and imported from France.
- Can act very “dog-like” following owners and learning how to fetch.

Egyptian Mau

- Medium, spotted hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Available in bronze, silver, and smoke colors with light green eyes.
- Intelligent and affectionate.
- This breed is shown in ancient Egyptian artwork.
- Possibly the oldest breed of domestic cat.
- Mau means cat in Egyptian.

Japanese Bobtail

- Short or long hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Very active and intelligent.
- Easily recognized by corkscrew or kinked tail, which resembles tail of cottontail rabbit.

- Imported into Japan from China in 600; imported into the United States in 1968.

Korat

- Short, glossy hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Silver blue color with green or amber eyes.
- Gentle and affectionate.
- Very ancient and rare breed from Thailand and believed to bring good luck in their homeland.
- Imported into the United States in 1959.

Maine Coon Cat

- Long, shaggy and heavy hair coat with tufted ears.
- Medium to large in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Intelligent with a good disposition.
- One of the oldest natural breeds in North America, the Maine Coon generally is regarded as native of New England and Southern Canada and is the official Maine State Cat.

Manx

- May have short or long hair.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Known for lack of tail, although not all variations are tailless. Those without tails are called “rumpies”; those with short tails are called “stumpies.”

- Hindquarters higher than forequarters, causing body to resemble a rabbit.
- Very fast and playful.
- Thought to originate from Isle of Man in the United Kingdom.

Norwegian Forest Cat

- Shaggy, long coat.
- Large in size.
- Available in various colors, with green to gold eyes.
- Needs a great deal of care after weaning to socialize into family environment.
- Originated in Scandinavian forests; very old breed used by the Vikings as mousers.

Persian

- Coat is long and flowing.
- Medium to large in size. Compact and sturdy build.
- Available in various colors, including solid, silver and golden, shaded and smoke, tabby, particolor, bicolor and Himalayan. Various eye colors; Himalayans have blue eyes.
- The popular Himalayan is considered a color variation of Persian rather than a separate breed.
- Grooming is required to maintain impressive hair coat.
- Has round, flattened face with short snub nose and large round eyes.
- Quiet voice with a very gentle personality.
- Number one registered cat in the United

States.

- Originated in Persia and Iran; breed has been maintained for more than 3,500 years.

Russian Blue

- Short plush coat.
- Medium size.
- Moderately active.
- Available in blue, silver-tipped colors with bright green eyes.
- Affectionate and quiet nature makes an excellent house pet.
- Believed to have originated in Russia or Northern Europe around 1800; rare breed in the United States until the 1960s.

Siamese

- Short hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Has pointed colors with blue eyes.
- Once considered a pet of royalty in Thailand.
- Originally, breed had kinked tails and crossed eyes. Today these traits are uncommon and considered faulty characteristics.
- Very affectionate and vocal.
- Originated in Siam (Thailand); introduced to the United States in late 1870s.

Singapura

- Ticked, short coat of hair that resembles miniature cougar.
- Small to medium size.

- Color is sepia agouti (darker brown and ticked) with lighter color underneath; eyes of hazel, green or yellow.

- Intelligent, affectionate and playful with a quiet voice.

- The name is the Malaysian word for Singapore, where it originated.

Turkish Angora

- Long silky coat of hair.
- Medium in size.
- Primary color is pure white but various colors available.
- Very outgoing, friendly to everyone.
- Thought to have originated in the mountain areas of Turkey; only Angoras that can trace lineage back to the breeding program at the Ankara Zoo in Turkey are considered pedigreed.

Turkish Van

- Semi-long coat of hair.
- Large in size. Medium long torso, massive shoulders and broad hips.
- White bodied cat with color on head and bushy tail.
- One of a few breeds that enjoy water and are curious and intelligent.
- Originated in the Lake Van region of Eastern Turkey and South west Asia.

Established Breeds

British Shorthair

- Short, dense coat.
- Medium to large in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Relatively quiet natured, doesn't demand attention.
- Excellent companion.
- Called European Shorthair in other European countries.
- Considered the oldest natural English breed.

Birman

- Long, silky hair coat not prone to matting.
- Medium to large in size, with stocky body.
- Available in various colors points with white feet and blue eyes.
- Intelligent, affectionate cat that loves to be around people.
- Believed to originate in Burma, where it was considered sacred; imported into France in 1919.

Burmese

- Short, glossy coat.
- Medium in size.
- Available in sable, champagne, blue and platinum hair colors, with yellow to gold eyes.

- Very playful; enjoys lots of attention.
- Prefers to be near owners; a true lap cat.
- Very agile with extraordinary leaping ability.
- Originated in Southeast Asia.

Havana Brown

- Short to medium hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- A dark warm brown hair color with green eyes.
- Affectionate and inquisitive in nature.
- Makes excellent pet.
- Resulted from mating domestic black cat and Siamese.
- Originated in England, where it was first registered in 1954.

Ragdoll

- Long coat of hair.
- Large in size; perhaps the largest of all domestic cats, with males weighing up to 20 lbs.
- Available in color points, including blue, chocolate, lilac, red, cream and seal; and in four patterns, including solid, white paws (mitts), white body (bicolor), and color on head, tail and/or legs (van).
- Very affectionate and gentle; loves to be around people.
- Originated in California in the 1960s.

Tonkinese

- Soft, medium-short coat of hair.

- Medium in size.
- Mink hair color with aqua eyes. Body color much lighter shade than point or mask colors. Also available in solid colors with green eyes and pointed patterns with blue eyes.
- Resulted from cross breeding Burmese to Siamese.
- Very alert, inquisitive and playful; makes an excellent pet.
- Imported to the United States in 1930.

Mutations

American Bobtail

- Semi-long haired coat.
- Medium to large in size with a stocky, muscular build.
- Name of breed derived from its short tail.
- Available in various colors.
- Good temperament.
- Originated in the United States from random breed cats in the late 1950s.

American Curl

- Has long and short hair.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Name of breed derived from ears, which curl to back of head. Curled ears breed true in 75 percent of kittens when both parents have curled ears.
- Originated in the United States in 1981 when female stray cat discovered with

curled ears.

American Wirehair

- Wiry medium hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Hair is dense, crimped and coarse and whiskers are curly.
- Originated in the United States; first appeared in 1966 in New York.

Balinese

- Long, silky hair coat.
- Medium, slim, long body.
- Blue, chocolate, lilac or seal point color with deep blue eyes.
- Considered a Siamese cat with long hair.
- Affectionate, curious and lean muscled.
- Loves to play.
- Mutation may have appeared in different Siamese cat litters in many countries.

Cornish Rex

- Has a wavy, silky, short hair coat and lacks all guard hairs; very soft to the touch.
- Small to medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Has very large ears high on head and slender body with long legs.
- Prefers warmer surroundings as breed lacks outer coat.
- Enjoys being held.
- Originated in England in 1950.

Devon Rex

- Has an unstructured wavy coat (different than that of the Cornish Rex).
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Extremely devoted pet.
- Distinguished with elfin appearance, including high cheekbones and large, striking ears low on head.
- Prefers warmer surroundings.
- Originated in England in 1959.

Scottish Fold

- May have either long or short hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Named for folded ears, although not all kittens possess this trait. Kittens are born with straight ears; folding occurs at three to four weeks of age, if at all.
- Very quiet and calm with sweet disposition.
- Originated in Scotland in 1961, where mutation occurred among farm cats.

Somali

- Semi-long, ticked (hair shafts banded) hair coat.
- Medium to large in size.
- Available in blue, ruddy, red or fawn colors with gold or green eyes.
- Noted for bushy tail.
- Active and social.
- Very affectionate and adapts well to families.

- Breed originated from longhaired Abyssinian.

Sphynx

- Almost totally hairless or with very fine down on the body; some hair on nose, toes and tail tip.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors that appear on skin.
- Needs to be bathed or wiped often to keep clean, since there is no hair to keep skin from becoming oily.
- Very curious and loves to be around people, especially to stay warm.
- Originated in Canada in 1966.

Hybrids

Bengal

- Short hair coat.
- Medium to large in size.
- Available in brown, sepia and seal variations.
- Resulted from cross breeding of the domestic cat and the Asian Leopard Cat, a different species.
- Through selective breeding, spots have been retained and temperament of domestic cat is usually established but some still act wild.
- A very active cat and not the best choice for everyone.
- Originated in the United States.

Bombay

- Short, satin-like hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Black in color, with eyes ranging from copper to gold.
- Intelligent and easy to train.
- Great house pet.
- Originally a cross between a Burmese and a black American Shorthair that originated in the United States in 1953.

Exotic

- Dense short to medium hair coat.
- Medium to large stocky body.
- Resembles a Persian cat but with shorter hair. Name of breed chosen to reflect Persian-American Shorthair mix.
- Very sweet and quiet breed.
- Originated in the United States in 1966.

Javanese

- Long hair coat.
- Medium to small in size.
- Available in various color points with vivid blue eyes.
- Same body type as Siamese and Balinese.
- Tail is long and heavy furred.
- Very affectionate and vocal breed.
- Considered a mutation from a natural breed that originated in Thailand.

Ocicat

- Short, spotted hair coat.

- Large in size.
- Available in various colors with all eye colors (except blue).
- Most athletic and muscular of short haired cats.
- Active, playful and social pet.
- Originated from mating Abyssinian to Siamese in the United States in 1964.

Oriental Longhair

- Long hair coat.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Has a long body with long legs and slender tail that is covered with plume-like fur and large ears.
- A very athletic, affectionate and vocal cat.
- Originated in England and the United States in 1988.

Oriental Shorthair

- Short, glossy coat of hair.
- Medium in size.
- Available in various colors, many have green eyes.
- Very limber and muscular with large ears.
- Originated in England and the United States. Developed in 1950.

Random or Mixed**Domestic American Longhair**

- Medium to long coat of hair.
- Medium to large in size.

- Available in various colors.
- Name given to non-purebred cats with long hair in the United States.
- Very popular due to availability and long hair.
- Makes good pet.
- Originated in the United States.

Domestic American Shorthair

- Short coat of hair.
- Medium to large in size.
- Available in various colors.
- Name given to non-purebred cats with short hair in the United States.
- The most popular pet cat.
- Originated in the United States.

X. GLOSSARY

Anemia: Reduction of red blood cells that carry oxygen.

Bicolor: Solid hair coat of one color with patches of white.

Breeding True: Offspring of pedigreed cats that match size, color, hair coat and body style of parents.

Calico: Tri-color cat, usually with black, white and orange patches of color.

CFA: The Cat Fanciers' Association (www.cfa.org) is the largest cat registry

organization in the world.

Chinchilla: Contrasting color tips of hair coat. Lightly tipped hair coats are termed "chinchillas."

Classic Tabby: "M" on forehead with body markings in shape of a bull's eye that is darker than rest of hair coat. Visible rings on tail and bars on legs.

Ectoparasite: Parasite that lives on or within the skin surface.

Endoparasite: Parasite that lives within the internal organs or parts of the body.

Feral: Unsocial and intolerant of handling or petting.

Hairballs: Hair that is swallowed during self grooming that mats together in the stomach or intestines and may be vomited up.

Mackerel Tabby: Thin vertical stripes within hair coat on body. Mackerel tabby cats all have stripes resembling an "M" on their foreheads.

Mange: Parasitic infestation of mites that burrow under and into hair follicles (note there are two types, Demodectic and Sarcoptic).

Parasite: An organism that lives in or on another organism.

Parti-Color ed: Hair coat pattern with two separate colors.

Patched: Tabby with red patches of hair.

Point ed: Coloration where the “points” (face, legs and tail) are darker than the body as in Siamese and Persian cats.

Prolapse: Falling down or slipping of a body part from its usual position.

Pustule: Eruption containing pus, such as boils or pimples.

Quarantine: Placing animals with contagious diseases in isolation from other animals to prevent spreading of the disease.

Queen: Female cat.

Rex: Wavy or curly coat.

Shaded: Contrasting color at tips of hair coat.

Smoke: Solid color with white undercoat next to skin.

Ticked: Bands of color on hair coat shaft.

Tom: Male cats.

Tortoise shell: Black and orange mixed hair coat.

Van: Cream to white hair coat with color patches on head, tail and/or legs.

Wirehair: Bent, wavy hair coat, springy to the touch, resembling short wire.