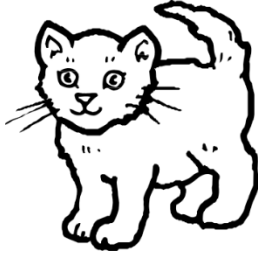


# *Jefferson County*



## **4-H Cat Project Handbook**

# ALL CATS NEED SOCIALIZATION!



Bringing cats to local or county meetings helps them socialized with other cats, people and different situations.

Each meeting should include time for each attendee to present their cat to the other members. This helps the member and the cat with speaking in front of others.

Cats are very social creatures and need socialization. It is an “old wives tale” that cats are solitary creatures.

## CONTACTS

### **Fair Superintendent:**

**Project Leader:** Emilie Shoop, 309-473-3083, [eshoop@gmail.com](mailto:eshoop@gmail.com)

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION



**Vaccinations and Immunizations:** All cats must be immunized for Panleukopenia—Respiratory Complex and vaccinated for rabies by **June 15** prior to fair and within the past one year to be shown at fair. Proof of vaccination and immunizations are to be presented at fair.

**County Meetings:** See County newsletters for information on County meetings.

**County Fair Show:** See Jefferson County Fair book for requirements for showing.

## EQUIPMENT



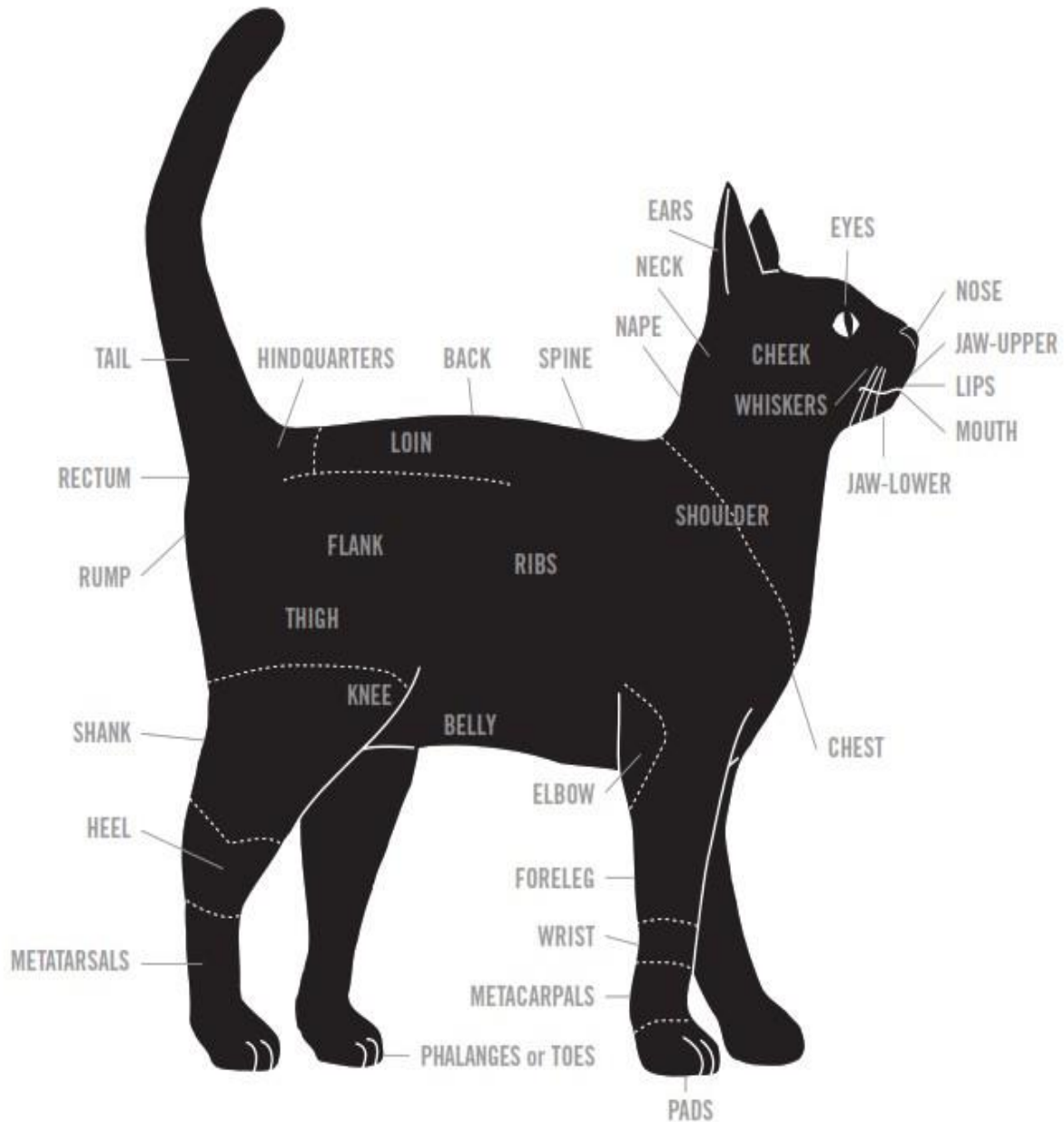
These are some basic equipment to care for your cat at fair or daily basis:

- A carrier is very helpful in transporting your cat to the vet or anywhere you travel with your cat. Keeps them safe in the car as well as when leaving the car so they do not escape and get lost.
- Scratching post for cats with claws is a must have item. You can use catnip to help encourage your cat to use the scratching post and not the furniture.
- A collar, harness, and leash for your cat if you plan to either show your cat or take them outside for other reasons. This helps to prevent them from running off. Also, if the cat is not used to leaving the house or being somewhere else gives more control of the cat if it escapes your arms.

# PARTS OF A CAT



It is important to know the names of a cat's body parts. This is good guidance to tell your parents or veterinarian how your cat is feeling or behaving.



# CAT GLOSSARY



- **Bench:** an area at a cat show where cages are put for the cats to be kept during the show
- **Breed:** group of cats with similar characteristics and related ancestry
- **Bunting:** rubbing or pushing with the head; cats bunt against other animals or objects to scent mark them
- **Canine teeth:** the long sharp teeth near the front of the mouth used for catching and killing prey
- **Carnivore:** flesh eating animals
- **Carpal Pad:** extra fleshy pad above others on front paws, thought to help stop skidding when a cat lands after jumping
- **Cattery:** place where cats are bred and / or boarded
- **Castration:** removal of the testes
- **Catnip:** the herb *Nepeta Cataria*, which gives off a scent that most cats like; normally used in cat toys
- **Colostrum:** high-protein milk with a high content of antibodies that is produced during the first few days after a dam gives birth
- **Condition:** a cat's well-being; includes weight, muscle tone, cleanliness, radiant good health and grooming
- **Dam:** the mother of a litter
- **De-clawing:** surgically removing claws
- **Dew Claw:** extra toe on hind leg above paw; function is unknown
- **Domesticate:** to shape a species of animal over time to live with and assist humans
- **Elbow:** first joint below the body on the front leg
- **Estrus:** a recurrent state during which most female mammals are fertile; heat
- **Euthanize:** inducing the painless death of an animal for reasons of preventing future suffering
- **Feline:** belonging to the Felidae, which includes the lions, tigers, jaguars and wild & domestic cats
- **Feral:** domestic or tame animals that have gone back to a wild state
- **Gestation:** the period between conception and birth; pregnancy normally last from sixty-three to sixty-nine days
- **Groom:** to brush or comb a cat's coat
- **Hairballs:** tangled mass of swallowed hair, resulting from cats washing themselves with their tongues
- **Haw:** eyelid that is sometimes seen at corners of a cat's eye
- **Hock:** a cat's ankle
- **Intact:** not spayed or neutered; can still breed
- **Juvenile phase:** phase of a kitten's development, from fourteen weeks to the onset of sexual maturity, when established behaviors and skills
- **Litter:** kittens born at the same time from the same mother
- **Loin:** the top line of the back between the rib cage and the hip
- **Long Haired:** cat whose coat has long top hairs, with a thick, woolly undercoat
- **Metacarpal pads:** thick pads of tissue on paws to keep a cat from slipping
- **Metacarpals:** bones between the wrist and the paws; includes the dew claw, the cat equivalent of a thumb
- **Metatarsals:** Hind paw bones, foot bones

- **Miacis:** earliest ancestor of the cat
- **Musculature:** the system of muscles of the body
- **Nape:** loose skin just forward of the shoulder at the base of the neck
- **Neonatal phase:** first phase of a kitten's life that lasts for about ten days. It is marked by helplessness, dependence, and the need for nourishment and a mother's care
- **Neuter:** to castrate or alter a male cat through surgery
- **Nictitating membrane:** a thin protective membrane beneath the lower eyelid that can cover the eyeball
- **Odd-eyed:** cat with two different colored eyes
- **Pad:** fleshy tissue on the sole of the paw
- **Pedigree:** an ancestral line of descent especially as diagrammed on a chart to show ancestral history, including parents' names, colors, and registration numbers
- **Phalanges:** toe bones
- **Purebred:** a cat bred from members of a recognized strain, without admixture of other blood, over many generations
- **Queen:** a mature female cat kept for breeding
- **Queening:** giving birth
- **Quick:** the pink part of a claw containing nerves and blood vessels, which you want to avoid while clipping a cat's claws
- **Scent Marking:** a cat marks its territory with urine, or with scent from glands on the head, or paw pads, sending a message to other cats
- **Sire:** the father of a litter
- **Socialization phase:** phase of a kitten's life, from two to fourteen weeks of age, during which social play and interaction begin and behavior patterns are established; imprint phase
- **Solid:** all of one color
- **Spay:** to surgically remove the ovaries of a female
- **Shedding:** the casting off of hair to be replaced by new hair
- **Stud:** un-castrated tomcat used specifically for breeding purposes.
- **Tabby:** markings, either striped, spotted or blotched
- **Tarsal:** ankle bones or hock bones, located at the hock which is the joint below the knee on the hind leg
- **Taming:** getting an individual animal accustomed to the presence of humans
- **Third eyelid:** eyelid that is sometimes seen at the corners of a cat's eyes.
- **Tipped:** coat whose top hairs are tipped with a different color than the undercoat
- **Toes:** there are usually five toes on the front paws and four on the back
- **Tom:** an un-neutered male domestic cat transition phase
- **Tortoiseshell:** coat resulting from linkage of dominant and recessive orange genes, both carried by female chromosome
- **Weaning:** gradual change in a kitten's diet from mother's milk to solid food
- **Vaccination:** giving a substance (usually a shot) to stimulate immunity from a disease
- **Veterinarian:** a professional qualified to treat diseases and injured animals
- **Wrist:** the joint below the elbow on the front leg
- **Zoonotic:** a type of disease that can be passed on from animals to humans



# REQUIRED VACCINATIONS & IMMUNIZATIONS

## FVRCP or FVRCP-C (3 in1 or 4 in 1) (Need every year)

### **Includes:**

- 1. Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR):** an upper respiratory virus that causes fever, discharge from eyes and nose, and other nasty symptoms.
- 2. Panleukopenia:** also known as distemper, a highly contagious viral disease that causes fever, appetite loss, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, and other complications that frequently result in death
- 3. Feline Calici Virus (FCV):** an upper respiratory virus that causes fever, discharge from eyes and nose, and other nasty symptoms
- 4. Chlamydia Psittaci:** extremely contagious, especially in kittens. Causes severe distress in the form of swelling and redness of the tissues around the eyes, and excessive tearing, sneezing, salivation, and coughing.

### Vaccinations

**Rabies: (Vaccination is usually good for 3 years)** a serious virus disease affecting nervous system; transmission is by bite from an infected animal; always results in death



# BREEDS & CHARACTERISTICS



There are about 40 recognized breeds of cats. They are divided into two categories.

## **Short Hair Breeds:**

- There are three divisions of short haired cats: British Short Hair, American Short Hair, and Oriental Short Hair.
- Short Hair cats are generally active and playful and easier to care for than long-haired ones. They usually have loud, raucous calls.
- Coat Characteristics: Single coat of fine or silky fur or Double coat of thick, downy undercoat, most of which grows on the underside of the torso.
- Favorite Breeds include: Cornish Rex, Exotic Short Hair, Russian Blue, Snow Shoe, Sphinx, Abyssinian, Siamese, Devon Rex, Bengal, Ocicat, British Shorthair, Oriental Shorthair.

## **Long Hair Breeds:**

- There are two divisions of long haired cats: Persian types and Other Long Haired.
- Long-haired cats tend to be quiet, stay at home pets, and their fur sometimes needs extra grooming. They generally have soft, beautiful voices.
- Coat Characteristics: Length of cat varies from two to six inches depending on the breed and part of body, tails are usually full
- Favorite Breeds include: Himalayan, Main Coon, Persian, Ragamuffin, Ragdoll, Birman, Balinese, Norwegian Forest Cat, Somali

# COLORS & MARKINGS



**Colors of Cats:** Red, Black, Blue and White. There are no “Orange” or “Grey” cats.

- **Self:** coat pattern of solid color. Each hair is consistently the same color from tip to its roots and all hairs are the same on all parts of the body.
- **Van:** is an almost white coat with patches of color on head, tail or legs. Also called Piebald.
- **Tabby:** There are four different markings among tabby.
  - **Classic:** dense, clearly defined markings on the body that are darker than the ground color. They are unbroken on top and swirled on the sides, with rings on the tail and bars on the legs. Also have “M” marking on forehead.
  - **Mackerel:** refers to dense, clearly define vertical stripes going around the body. Legs are striped with bracelets and tail is barred. Head has to “M” marking.
  - **Spotted:** refers to broken stripes appearing as spots.
  - **Ticked:** refers to darker bands of color on each hair tip.
- **Points:** Refer to darker, contrasting color on ears, legs, feet, and tail than found on the rest of the body. Four classic colors for pointed cats are: seal, chocolate, blue, and lilac, red, tortoiseshell, and lynx
- **Bi-color:** a solid color coat with patches of white.
- **Parti-color:** a coat pattern with two separate colors.
- **Tortoiseshell:** represents a black coat color with patches of red. Often referred to as a tortie.
- **Calico:** patches of red, black and white.
- **Smoke:** a silvery white undercoat with red, black or blue tip- ping to the hair.



# GROOMING & BATHING



Grooming plays an important role in feline maternal behavior. Mothers lick their kittens frequently. Grooming is also a way to give time and attention to your cat.

**Short-haired cats:** are usually only bathed for shows or when the coat gets filled with oil or grease. Brushing of the coat should be done once or twice a week.

**Long-haired cats:** require daily grooming, about 15 minutes each day and monthly bathing to maintain a good condition on the coat.

**Claws:** clip once a month

**Teeth:** clean once a week

## **Grooming Equipment:**

- Short nail or guillotine clipper for trimming claws
- Bristle brush and metal comb for removing tangles
- Rubber brush for removing dead hair for short hair
- Small soft toothbrush for cleaning teeth
- Salt
- Cotton balls for cleaning ears

## **Bathing Equipment:**

- Pet Shampoo
- Towels
- Large tub
- Diluted vinegar for removing shampoo residue

# DIET & HEALTH



**Food:** Cats should be fed good quality cat food. Check labels for proper type for individual cat. Neutered males usually need special food for urinary tract health. Fresh water is needed daily for proper health.

**Worming:** All cats should be wormed even if they are inside.

**Exercise:** Cats need plenty of exercise to maintain their weight. Provide plays or play tables. Don't use string or yarn as they may be harmful if swallowed.

**Spaying or Neutering:** All cats should be spayed or neuter to prevent unwanted kittens. Altered cats live longer and healthier lives.

**Litter:** Litter boxes should be cleaned daily. Excessive waste left in a box will have the cat looking elsewhere to leave their waste. Try different types of litter until you find the one that works best for you and your cat.

**De-clawing:** Scratching and sharpening claws is a basic instinct for a cat. There is much controversy on the whether to de-claw or not to de-claw. Talk with your vet and make an informed decision. There are caps available to put on the claws to help stop ruined furniture. It is also thought that cats scratch because they are bored. Giving a cat a scratching post and toys may help eliminate this problem. Carpet remnants and inexpensive doormats glued to the sides of cardboard boxes or wood work very well.

**Fleas:** When grooming, check for fleas. They like the warmer areas of the body. Use flea shampoo or powder.

# HAZARDS & FIRST AID



The biggest hazard to cats is the outdoors. Cars, anti-freeze and poisons are the biggest cause of injury and death to cats who live outside.

## **Indoor Hazards:**

- Electrical cords
- Indoor Plants Cleaners
- Wood Stoves or fireplaces - cats can get trapped
- Garbage cans
- Toys with removable parts
- Paint

**First Aid:** Make and keep a pet first aid kit handy. Items to include:

- Name and Phone number of vet
- Round-tipped scissors
- Tweezers
- Gauze bandages Gauze pads
- Cotton balls
- Rectal thermometer
- Antibacterial Ointment
- 3% Hydrogen Peroxide
- Milk of magnesia tablets
- Activated Charcoal tablets
- Nail clipper
- Q-tips
- Metal comb
- Brush

Post the name and phone number of your vet in several locations so it is accessible if you need it!

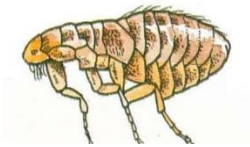
# COMMON PARASITES



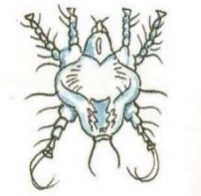
## Signs of Infestation:

Continuous or persistent scratching may be the first sign of infestation by parasites. Check the irritated area. Then take appropriate action.

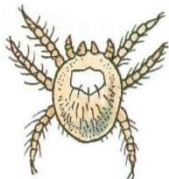
1. Fleas: Visible as pinhead size red-brown insects. Found around neck and at the base of the tail.



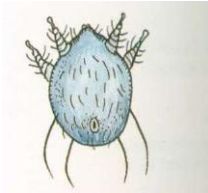
2. Fur Mites: Highly contagious. Visible as dry scales (dandruff) on the cat's back.



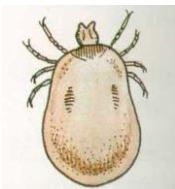
3. Harvest Mite: Visible as tiny red dots on the cat's feet in Autumn. Can be very irritating. Also known as "Chiggers".



4. Ear Mites: The most common feline health problem, producing reddish-brown wax.



5. Tick: Round blood-sucking parasite. Must be removed carefully from skin.



## TIPS FOR SHOWMANSHIP



1. Try to relax and remember everyone is here because they love their cats. No one is here to criticize if you forget or if your cat gets scared. Everyone here is because they like cats and like watching them. Also if you are relax your cat will be more relaxed.
2. Remember to handle your cat gently, but with some firmness (not too rough or too tight). When showing your cat remember to keep stroking and smooth the cat with your hand. More the practice, the more your cat will become accustomed to being shown.
3. Remember that this is a new and scary experience for your cat and if the cat scratches, growls, tries to escape, or fidgets, they are just being a cat. Smile! This is your cat so show you are proud of it.

## PRESENTING YOUR CAT



1. When your name is called go to your cage and pick up your cat. Then wait until the other person is done and the judge calls you over to show your cat.
2. Put the cat down on the table facing the judge. The judge will start looking over the cat at the ears, the teeth and the coat of the cat along with feel the cat from head to tail. Also will check the nails for trimming and will try to play with the cat with some cat toys. Making sure the cat is well groomed.
3. During this process the judge will ask questions about your cat. Be prepared to answer variety of questions about your cat.
4. When the judge is done looking and asking questions, pick up your cat and take back to the cage.

## JUDGE'S QUESTIONS



Responding to the Judge's Questions:

- Learn as much as you can about your cat. This includes color type your cat falls under for classification.
- When your cat was born in regards to the year and time of year. Also how old is your cat.
- Your cat's gender (Male or Female) and if it has been sprayed or neutered
- What your cat eats.
- Any special characteristics (examples are being good mouser, being scared of loud noises etc.)
- Who cleans the litter box and takes care of the cat. (Do not say Mom or Dad since you are supposed to be the one taking care of your cat).

# BEGINNERS SHOWMANSHIP



Some questions that might be asked by the Judge when you present your cat or your showmanship done at the cat cage:

- How old is your cat?
- **What** is the name of your Cat?
- Is your cat spayed or neutered?
- **What** vaccinations does your cat need?
- How do you know when your cat is sick?
- **Why** you chose these cage decorations?
- How active is your cat?
- Questions about your binder of pictures of your cat.
- How long have you shown in the cat project?

# JUNIORS SHOWMANSHIP



Some questions that might be asked by the Judge when you present your cat or your showmanship done at the cat cage:

- What vaccinations does your cat need?
- What's the name of your cat?
- How long will the average cat live?
- What are some characteristics of a "fixed cat"?
- What kind of toys does your cat like?
- Who takes care of the cat?
- Questions about your binder of pictures of your cat.
- How long have you shown in the cat project?

# SENIORS SHOWMANSHIP



Some questions that might be asked by the Judge when you present your cat or your showmanship done at the cat cage:

- **What** vaccinations does your cat need?
- **What** is included in the FVRCP or FVRCP-C shot?
- How long does a Rabie shot last?
- What's the name of your cat? Any meaning behind the name?
- How old is your cat?
- Questions about your binder of pictures of your cat.
- How long have you shown in the cat project?