CREATING A SUCCESSFUL WORKING CAT PROGRAM
OPTIONS FOR FERAL AND BEHAVIORALLY CHALLENGED FELINES

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WHY START A WORKING CAT PROGRAM?

• These cats have no other live outcome
• Socialization of adult ferals is extremely difficult and resource intensive
• Working cat programs are inexpensive and easy to start

WHICH CATS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ‘BARN’ PLACEMENT?

• Unable to be returned to their original habitat
• Uns suited for traditional adoption (feral, under-socialized, unhappy indoors)
• Capable of life in a managed colony (including considerations of physical and mental health and any special needs.)
CATS APA! DOES NOT BARN PLACE:

- Kittens under 16 weeks are sent to foster for socialization
- Declawed cats*
- Geriatric cats*
- Cats who can be returned to habitat or remain in their habitat through conflict resolution
- However, alternative, creative placement is always an option for any cat who is at risk!

SHELTERING FERAL CATS
STRESS REDUCTION IS KEY!

- A stressed cat = a sick cat.
- Dedicated quiet room
- Housing considerations (feral cat dens, cover condo up, artificial light cycles)
- Appropriate handling (or lack thereof), including medical treatments - wildlife rehab model
- Feeding considerations (types of food, timing of food)
- Quick turn around time from intake to adoption
- Outdoor habitats always better, but not necessary to begin

"FERAL CATdens"
ANIMAL-CARE.COM LIVETRAP.COM

$75
HOUSING FERALS AT THE SHELTER

Finding Homes for Working Cats

What Types of Homes Are Suitable?

- Farms / Ranches
- Stables
- Warehouses / Factories
- Greenhouses / Nurseries
- Wineries / Distilleries
- Junkyards
- Churches
- Storage facilities
- Shops: Repair shops, woodworking shops, retail stores
- Residential homes
FINDING HOMES: RURAL

- Off busy roads
- No recent predation
- Shelter provided
- Daily food and water
- Long term vet care, as needed
- Willingness to confine cats for the relocation period

FINDING HOMES: SUBURBAN

- Garage cats rock!
- Ensure neighborhood is "cat friendly", HOA rules
- Great fit for cats who are more social

FINDING HOMES: URBAN

- Retrofit space under deck or porch for shelter
- Try to place "city cats" back to city neighborhoods
- Market to urban areas struggling with rat problems
ADVERTISING TO FIND GOOD HOMES

- Your website - have an online adoption application
- Newspapers
- Flyers, post them anywhere farmers, animal lovers, or equestrians go
- Craigslist
- Equine clubs, publications, trail rides, and events
- Farmer’s markets, county fairs, horse shows
- Radio
- NextDoor
- Facebook neighborhood groups

ADOPTION APPLICATION: MUST BE ONLINE!

- Include info on your program and then the application
- Application on your website, easily findable
- Short, simple application

Turn cats looking for work! (Austin Pets Alive!)

Rats, mice & big, fat spiders wailed at the sound of my name... Haven't seen me!!

What Austin Pets Alive! rescue does is...
Non-Toxic Messaging
- farmers markets
- nurseries/
greenhouses
- keeps rodenticides
from entering
watersheds and
killing raptors
- communities that
value organic living

- hang in adoption
centers
- mailbox banks
- ask volunteers to
print, keep in car,
and hang up
- put up flyers
anywhere you
might shop if you
owned 5 acres of
land

Newspaper ads
- Still effective for rural communities
- Often free to run in unused space
YOUR FRIEND, THE HORSE.

- Every horse barn in the world needs cats.
- Riding clubs, horse shows, fairs, events are all prime marketing opportunities.
- Dressage barns, polo clubs, riding school, training barns, police stables.

HORSE PEOPLE = CRAZY CAT PEOPLE WITH MONEY

BARN CAT PROGRAMS = MEDIA DARLINGS!

BASTROP COUNTY: Barn cats keep rodents away

“STUNT PLACEMENTS”
HOW TO PLACE THE CATS: RELOCATION PROCESS
best known practices

- Crate kept inside building/barn where cats will live
- Cats confined for 2 to 4 weeks. (2 weeks is minimum, 4 weeks is optimum)
- Feed cats and clean crate daily, plan for mess!
- Feed canned food daily and make a special ‘call’ to teach the cats the sound of your voice = food
- At the end of 4 weeks, crate door left nonchalantly open for the cats to exit at their will.

THE RELOCATION CRATE
and the art of the Hidey Box

THE WHOLE PROCESS
STEP-BY-STEP, APA! STYLE
STEP 1: CHECK APPLICATION FOR SUITABILITY
STEP 2: GOOGLE MAPS IS YOUR FRIEND!

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STEP 3: DETAILED EMAIL IS SENT

Hi,

Thank you for your interest in adopting a barn cat!

The cats that we rescue are barn cats at heart and require an environment where they can be safe from predators and have access to their natural instincts. They are not always suitable for indoor homes or require significant training. They may have a long life to live with you, and we believe you will enjoy watching their natural behaviors.

They will need access to outside shelter but a barn, shed, or garage. And they will need daily feed and water put out for them. Gals, several times on hunting and feeding them will be essential for their health and well-being.

To ensure the new cats don’t immediately run away, they need to be introduced to the barn slowly. They can be introduced in an enclosed spot, such as a room or garage, or they can be kept in a large dog cage, chicken coop, etc. This is followed with food and water access, which will encourage them to come out of hiding. They will need to be introduced to the new home slowly. When they feel safe, they will begin to explore their new environment.

The cats are typically vaccinated, microchipped, dewormed, and treated for fleas and ticks. There is no cost to you for adopting these cats.

Our goal is to place them in non-profit barns or other rural areas to live with you, your family, and your pets. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us. We are happy to answer any questions you may have and assist you in finding the right cat for you.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need assistance. We are looking forward to helping you find the perfect barn cat.

Thank you for your interest.

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STEP 4: ADOPTER RESPONDS, WORK OUT THE DETAILS, SEND KITTIES HOME!
STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

APA! follows up with all barn cat adoptions at:
- 1 week
- 3 months
- 1 year

IS IT WORKING?

Data on over 3,000 barn placements:
- Long term success rate: 85+%.
- Predation accounts for less than 2% of loss.
- Most frequent cause of adopted cat missing = ran away and/or living elsewhere.

MADDIE’S FUND & APA! APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESSES

As an update, we’ve been doing this for 12 weeks, and all the end of this weekend I will have tensed 12 cats. I had two calls this past week. One was a veritable success with a new buyer, and the other was a no-show. Everything seems to be going well so far, I’ve had one more call this past week, and I’m working on getting the grades to the community.

Figure I would give you another quick update. We officially pull Kankakee’s first sets.

Thank you for all your support and for the community’s success. It’s been great to see the community’s progress, and I’m excited to see what’s next!”
Creating a Successful Working Cat Program

FAQ

- Adoption fees
- Crate deposits
- Home checks
- Excessive hoop-jumping

FAQ

- Adopt all year long
- Adopt cats in pairs (unless you have a cat-hating singleton)
- Make adoption easy
- Provide the tools for success

Um, yes... I have a question