

Scratch Sheet

The Pet Food Recall Tragedy

More than 100 name brands were sold at major retailers



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On March 15, the FDA (US Food & Drug Administration) learned that certain pet foods were sickening and killing cats and dogs. FDA found contaminants in vegetable proteins imported into the United States from China and used as ingredients in pet food. All tainted pet food, animal and fish feed, and vegetable proteins continue to be recalled and destroyed.



The list of recalled foods seems to grow by the day and includes products sold by, but not limited to, popular brands such as IAMS, Eukanuba, Nutro, Authority, Doctors Foster & Smith, Evolve, Hill's Prescription Diet, Natural Balance, Royal Canin, and Science Diet. The current list (print date May 23, 2007) includes HUNDREDS of cat foods alone.



The list can be accessed at:
www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/petfoodrecall/



It includes articles on all of the various pet foods recalled, links to the recalled foods with information as to the product description, type of packaging/container, Best Before Dates, size, and product codes. Also available is a search feature which allows searching by brand name, UPC Code, product description, and container type.



Pet Owners also have the option to subscribe to "Recalls Email List", read FAQs, report a pet food complaint and updates by the FDA at:
www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html



Pets affected have developed kidney failure. Pets that are in kidney failure can exhibit the following symptoms: increase water intake, increase urination, decreased appetite, vomiting, and lethargy. If your pet is showing any or all of these signs, you should seek veterinarian assistance.



To learn more about an alternative food, read the story on page 12.

WINNERS' GALLERY



Grand Champion (CFA)
Highlander Hey Jude of TabbeyRd
 Red Classic Tabby & White Male
 Breeders: T Signore & E Sweeney,
 P/R Shuba & S/B Storten
 Owners: J/C Kominos & L/T Llewellyn
 Photo (above) by Tetsu

A 4 ring, 1 Show Grand
Grand Champion (CFA)
Highlander Penny Lane of Shubacoons
 Brown Classic Tabby & White Female
 Breeders: T Signore & E Sweeney,
 P/R Shuba & S/B Storten
 Owners: J/C Kominos & P/R Shuba
 Photo (below) by Larry Johnson



Grand Premier (CFA)
Dukehaven Gandalf
 Brown Classic Tabby Neuter
 Breeder: Susan Duke
 Owners: Katherine Duke
 Photo (above) by Helmi



Grand Champion (CFA)
Purrtigers Miranda of Miaw
 Silver Classic Tabby & White Female
 Breeder: Becky Carazzone
 Owners: Andrew & Lisa Fuller
 Photo (above) by Helmi

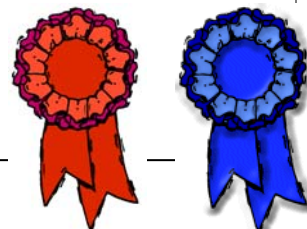
Grand Champion Alter
Castle Rock Bad Seed
 Silver Classic Tabby Neuter
 Breeder: P Refstrup & T Schlichting
 Owners: Mette Bechmann
 Photo (right)



Grand Champion (TICA)
Juniatas Kopernikus of GebuhrCoons
 Brown Mackerel Tabby Male
 Breeder: Kathrin Schier Owner: Sandra Gebuhr
 Photo (above)



Tripe Grand Champion (TICA)
CascadeMtn Indianapolis 500
 Brown Classic Tabby & White Male
 Breeder/Owner: Blair & Susan Milburn
 Photo (left) by Helmi



HCM From a Pet Owner's Perspective

Fancier Members Karen & Randy Buchanan, Washington

I have thought about writing this article for a couple of months now....wasn't sure it would be something I could do...did I want to share such personal feelings with so many people that might read and judge it? My decision to go ahead and write this happened while looking down at our newest Maine Coon cat lying on my chest with his arms around my neck and his face nuzzling under my ear. My husband saw him and laughed....said "that cat acts just like a baby."

Looking down at the pile of warm fur, feeling his breath and paws making biscuits against my neck brought tears to my eyes as I thought of the sweet gentle giant we lost 9 months previous.

And I wondered how many other people have experienced the lost of a loving pet. Did others feel the lost of the pet as strongly as losing a human family member like we did?

The words "Sorry, we won't be able to work on Murphy's teeth today. The Doctor heard a heart murmur. Please come and pick him up. " that I heard will never be forgotten. I had just gotten to my office after dropping our 4 1/2 year old Brown Classic with White Male Maine Coon named Murphy off at the veterinary office to have his teeth worked on. I hadn't even had time to open up my computer and start work. I couldn't believe Murphy could have such a problem that he couldn't have his teeth worked on. Other than his gingivitis, Murphy was a picture of health and robust. To treat his gingivitis, he had cleanings, dietary changes, laser treatments, and acupuncture. Nothing had worked so far except to remove his teeth. He weighed 18 pounds and was long and lean. He was beautiful with a loving and outgoing personality....everybody who saw Murphy loved Murphy (even those so-called dog-lovers that would never want a cat type people).

Upon picking Murphy up, his doctor explained to me she thought Murphy had a heart murmur and didn't want to "put him under" to work on his teeth. She highly suggested that we let her make arrangement with the Washington State University (WSU) to have him examined with the latest equipment.

As soon as WSU was able to see us, we packed Murphy up in his traveling crate. He had never traveled so far. Upon arriving at WSU, the technicians provided him a very small cardboard disposable litter tray to use. Being the gentleman that Murphy was, he used the little litter tray with great dignity and such precision as if he had always used one that small. Such a small thing, but caused so much pride in us. He was so good about being manhandled during the exams. Everybody kept coming in to see the beautiful Maine Coon boy. After the heart echo and examination was complete, the Doctor came in to tell us that Murphy had been diagnosed with HCM. That HCM was a genetic heart problem, only the symptoms could be treated, and that it was not curable. The Medical Staff sent us home with hugs and condolences telling us that they couldn't tell us how long Murphy had....could be months or years. They recommended bringing Murphy back to WSU once a year to see how the HCM was progressing and sent him home with us with a prescription of heart pills. I paid the veterinary bill for services rendered with tears running down my cheeks while I watched my husband across the room talking to Murphy in his traveling cage. Would he be here next year at this time to bring him back up to WSU? If the HCM was progressing and there was no cure to help Murphy, did we want to make him go through the traveling and the testing again? We didn't have the answers. We just knew that we didn't want to lose Murphy.

Murphy was a replacement of an old (18 years old) farm cat we had prior to Murphy. We also had one other Maine Coon female cat, Alley Kat that was older than Murphy. Our cats are our kids. This was the second marriage for both my husband and me. Although my husband had three grown children, he and I together did not have any children. We had Murphy and Alley. Our friends would tell us that when they died they wanted to come back as our cats. Our lives were formed around the cats. If we traveled for more than overnight, we hired a "live-in" to take care of "the kids." And, then when we traveled we always seemed to hurry back home because we were homesick to see "the kids." A lot of people like to boat, travel, shop, or whatever, but we just wanted to have our animals. No matter where you go, you always have to come back home. So we wanted a home with our animals. Animals that waited at the door when you came home to greet you to let you know that somebody was waiting for you.

After getting Murphy back home, we settled back down to ordinary life except every morning his Papa, my husband, would give Murphy his heart pill without fail.

Everyday life continued as before....Murphy would go out into our "secure" back yard with my husband and work/play with him in the yard. He would love to run across the yard at us. My husband taught Murphy at an early age to "ride piggyback" on his back. Visitors just loved watching Murphy ride piggyback through the house.

Every morning upon waking, I would yell out to my boy "Murphy, here Murphy" and no matter where he might be in the house or what he was



Baby Murphy



doing, he would come running as fast as he could down the halls and jump up on my bed to say good morning and get his first loving of the day. Oh how I loved to hear his thundering paws come running at me knowing the kisses I was going to get.

During the day, if Murphy caught me sitting down, he would jump up higher than my head and bend down to grab and shake my head by my hair. He would have me laughing so hard I thought he would scramble both our brains the way he shook our heads so hard. Murphy loved to play fetch with his Papa with paper balls. The paper balls could be found every where...in our shoes, under furniture, in water bowls, in our bed. At night, he would jump on our bed and lay down on our headboard laying his head on my pillow. I would say goodnight to him holding his paw.

We kept track of Murphy's breathing and panting, regularly checking the color of his soft paw leather (thank goodness he had pink leather so we could tell if he had an oxygen problem) to make sure he was getting enough oxygen through his system.

As time went on, we each would separately watch Murphy for any indication he might be getting worse. I was afraid to run our spa tub as it would blow air afterwards and scare Murphy...I thought it might be bad for his heart to get so startled. We didn't want to take him in the car or do things with him that we thought would upset him or cause his heart to work harder.

Over months, it appeared that Murphy started to do things a little slower than he used to...those early morning runs down the hall to the bed to say good morning started to take a little longer, pretty soon it was more of a walk down the hall than a run. Murphy no longer initiated piggyback rides. He appeared to be growing older while we watched.

Neither his Papa nor I wanted to admit to the other...we were slowly losing our wonderful gentle giant. I didn't want to discuss his health...it broke my heart and always left me in tears. Time was passing too quickly and there was nothing we could do about it.

In July 2006, we decided to go out of town for our anniversary...just a couple of nights. We had our friend, Marilyn, come baby-sit "the kids." She understood how important "the kids" were to us and always promised to take good care of them while we were away. She knew how to give Murphy his heart medicine.

We returned home late in the afternoon and were so glad to see our Maine Coon kids. Murphy jumped onto the kitchen island for a treat from his Papa and then ran out to his outside playground. Shortly after, he came inside to where his Papa was. His Papa called out that there was something wrong with Murphy, he had just plopped down and was crying out as if something was wrong with him. After checking Murphy to see what my husband meant, I ran to the telephone and called the Veterinarian. Of course, it was after hours and only the emergency clinic



Grown-up Murphy

would answer. I explained to them that we had a 6 year old male Maine Coon Cat diagnosed with HCM who just went down and couldn't get back up. And, that Murphy appeared to be in a lot of pain. The Clinic Personnel told us to rush Murphy in immediately, we had no time to spare.

Upon hanging up the phone, we realized that Murphy had pulled himself by his front legs and had gotten under our king size bed headboard. My husband and I lifted and removed the bed in order to reach Murphy. Murphy had no movement in his hind quarters. He was dead weight in my arms and crying and howling out in pain as we were trying to put him in his travel cage. Tears were streaming down my face as I sobbed to

my husband to hurry as he was locating the car keys. The Emergency Clinic had made it very clear we only had minutes to get him to the Clinic. The freeway was clear and we made in to the Clinic in about 5 minutes. We were directed to put Murphy's cage on the exam table and we all worked on getting him out of his cage onto the exam table.

After a short exam by the Emergency Vet, we were told that Murphy was suffering from severe Saddle Thrombosis. He had thrown a blood clot from his heart and it had apparently lodged in the aorta going to his hind quarters. It was causing him great pain and paralyzing his hind legs. His eyes were turning glassy and he was frothing at the mouth. We were losing him quickly. And he was hurting so much. It seemed like forever for the shot to be prepared. I held Murphy as the Vet administered the shot to take Murphy from us forever. Hey, wait a minute...this wasn't our Vet. How do we know this Vet knew what she was doing? Maybe there was something to help him through this and we were rushing things? No we were told, nothing could be done, it was too late and he was in too much pain. I held Murphy's long, lean, beautiful body and told him what a great boy he was, how happy he had made his Papa and me, how we would never forget the love he had given us as the Vet slid the needle into his forearm. In no time at all, I could feel what life that was left in Murphy leave his body. There was no turning back now; our big wonderful Murphy was gone. I picked Murphy up and paced the floor with his lifeless limp body in my arms knowing that once I handed him over to the Vet, he would be gone from us forever. No more morning runs to say good morning

to me, no more piggyback rides, no more love and kisses. Between my sobs, I could hear my husband crying and telling me it was time to give Murphy to the Vet. It was over.

But it wasn't over. Now we were being asked what we wanted done with Murphy's body. How was he to be disposed of? This was our "baby" and we were being asked how we wanted him to be disposed. We chose individual cremation in order that we could have him returned to us in an urn. Murphy would join our previous pets in the secured backyard he had loved so much.





We went home with an empty travel cage. Nothing seemed real. Holding hands, we both sobbed in the car going home. At home, we sent emails to family and close friends explaining that Murphy had gone to Heaven. He was loved by many. He was no more.

Early the next morning the phone started to ring to ask if we were alright. We hurt too much to answer the phone and talk to people. For a few days, we shut our phone off and shut our drapes. We didn't want to talk or see people. We were grieving. We had lost "our child".

During the following weeks, we did the only thing that seemed right for us. Together my husband and I got on the computer to search for another Maine Coon. Hours at a time we would spend....Canada, United States, and Europe...Emails were written, phone calls were made and we couldn't find a male Maine Coon kitten for us. When we were able to locate kittens, we would ask if the breeder's cats were tested for the gene that caused HCM. So many told us no, they didn't believe in it. The testing they felt was too expensive. Some Breeders just never answered the question. Our disappointment continued in trying to find a Maine Coon that we felt was as healthy as we could

reasonably expect. We knew that we were too heart broken to accept just any kitten without knowing if that kitten might be a repeat of what we went through with Murphy.

We made contact with two Breeders we found on the internet that said that they would be attending the local TICA show in a couple of weeks. They invited us to travel and attend the show, meet them, and talk about what we needed in a kitten. Maybe there would be kittens at the show ready for adoption. When they were told how we lost Murphy, they wanted us to be sure that we got our new kittens from reputable Breeders that medically tested their breeding lines.

We went to the Cat Show and spent hours walking the aisles to hand out our "adoption resume" to the Breeders at the show. I had never before seen my husband beg for anything. That day at the show, he came as close to it as I think he ever will. He went up and down the cage aisles, introduced himself to the different Breeders, handed out our "Adoption Resume", and pleaded for a male kitten that was from a breeding line free from HCM! I was so proud of him and thank goodness he had the gall to plead...I didn't. It was all I could do to refrain from crying and sobbing out loud. All those beautiful cats and kittens but disappointment was our destiny...no kittens for us were to be had. We had to travel home empty handed.

The two Breeders that had invited us to the Cat Show were from different states, met us and told us to keep in contact with them....they might have litters coming up that would meet our needs. They promised us if we were patient and waited till the time was right, they would work together and get us the two little male kittens we were wanting. And, they promised that the kittens would be from breeding lines that were free from the DNA gene that caused HCM and ALL parents (some grandparents even) have been echocardiogrammed by a board-certified cardiologist and found free of HCM.

From July until January (such very long months) we kept in weekly contact with both. They gladly shared their medical records with us. Although they could not guarantee we would not get another cat with heart issues, they assured us that we would not get one with that particular mutant gene. They explained in detail their breeding programs, how their breeding cats were tested and for what medical conditions. We felt comfortable and trusted these two ladies.

In January, we were blessed in bringing Fletcher Fitzgerald, a brown classic Maine Coon, home. Almost a month later, we flew and picked up a brother for Fletcher. Virgil Von Vegas joined us. What joy and happiness these two sweet boys have brought us. We realize they can never replace Murphy. They are not Murphy. They are mischievous little guys all of their own....their own personalities, tricks, kisses, and idiosyncrasies. They are Love. But Murphy will never leave our hearts.

If the Breeder where we obtained Murphy had medically tested his/her animals, we may not have had to go through what we did with our beloved Murphy. Upon finding out about Murphy's medical problems, we were told that he/she didn't believe in the testing as it was too expensive and not worth it. He/she continued to breed animals that she knew was prone to have heart issues. If more Breeders were aware and saw the hurt and pain that HCM causes to the pet and pet owner, maybe more Breeders would be in favor of testing their breeding lines. If their animals are found to be positive, they need to be altered and removed from their breeding programs. Breeders, please listen to my plea...test your breeding line and do what you can to prevent the hurt and pain that the unlucky ones go through if you don't.

I know I don't want to have to look into another Maine Coon's eyes as their life is slipping away because of poor, selfish breeding practices. No pet owner should ever have to experience that pain.

If my writing this article has touched just one Breeder's heart, then I know writing this was worth writing.

Now if you will excuse me, I need to pick up Fletcher and Virgil, one on each shoulder, nuzzle and let them know how thankful I am that they had such wonderful Breeders that care for the love and devotion of the Maine Coon Breed. As my boys lick the tears on my face, it is as if they too are so thankful that they had such Breeders in order that they can have healthy and happy lives.



Virgil visits Murphy in the (cat safe) Garden

Tuesday Morning

Mommy rudely awoken at 4:30am by lots of chirping, trilling, meowing and banging on the bedroom door. Mommy said, 'GO AWAY!' More banging, chirping, trilling and meowing come from the other side of the door. Mommy was not a very happy Mommy!

Mommy gets up and gets dressed. Even then still not fully awake, she slowly opened the bedroom door and found three big furry Maine Coons wanting her awake.

They seemed to be acting a little bit strange that morning, stranger than normal, as if they were guilty of something. Once they were sure Mommy was up to stay, they raced down the hall and into their room. They just stood there and waited for Mommy to follow.

Mommy sleepily followed and when she turned on the light, couldn't believe what lay on the floor at her feet. She stood there with her mouth wide open just staring at the floor. There was one of their litter boxes knocked over with a huge mountain of litter on the carpet!

Remember, Maine Coons are very large kitties and therefore they need to have a larger than average-sized litter box. So this was an even larger than average-sized mess! Well, the furry kids just stood there looking at the floor then up at her. She asked, "WHO DID THIS?"

Well, Kasey ran up to the top of the six foot tall climbing pole and flopped over onto her side and looked down at Mommy—with the very cute and innocent expression upon her face. Murphy headed straight for one of the food bowls and started to eat as if nothing had happened. Carbie, her sweet furry Casanova just flopped over onto his side and also had the innocent look on his face. How can you be upset with THAT face?

As Mommy stared at the mountain of litter on the carpet, she knew that there was NO WAY that she wanted to use her powerful Wind Tunnel vacuum cleaner on that mess, so she decided to use her old and not-so-powerful Dirt Devil hand held vacuum cleaner. Still she didn't want to have to vacuum up all that litter.

She then remembered her small hand held garden shovel in the garage that she thought she could use to scoop up as much of the litter prior to vacuuming. When she returned to the kitty room with shovel in hand, she began the daunting task of scooping up as much litter as possible. It took almost an hour to get that HUGE MESS cleaned up!

Much later, she was finally able to get washed up, but all the while she could hear the kitties playing in their room and racing up and down the hall. A Maine Coon stampede was now racing through the house at a blinding speed.

She heard the stampede enter the kitty room and went to see what in the world they were getting into. But did she really want to know? Not really!

As she entered their room, she was nearly trampled by a Maine Coon stampede. She immediately noticed that they had knocked over their toy basket and there were toys laying everywhere on the floor. Cleaned that up and then made the mistake of looking towards their food and water bowls.

The bowls were knocked over and food was lying all over the carpet. She got THAT cleaned up and saw the water bowl was full of food. She knew that Murphy was the culprit of that deed because he loves to put food and toys in the water bowls. Cleaned up yet another mess and put fresh water in the water bowl!

Just walked out to the living room, turned on the light and just about got run down by yet another Maine Coon stampede AGAIN! And again, I noticed that the living room toy basket was knocked upside down and toys everywhere. She cleaned THAT up. Then she heard noises coming from the kitty room so she went to see what her furry 'angels' had done this time! Toy basket upside down AGAIN and toys everywhere! Got THAT cleaned up AGAIN!

MOMMY NEEDS COFFEE BADLY at this point! So she sat down to have coffee and read the morning papers. Suddenly another Maine Coon stampede is heading her way!

She grabbed the coffee cup and watched the papers go flying! The stampede started to dive bomb the poor, helpless newspapers. So now the floor was covered in papers! Finished the coffee and cleaned up the papers.

Now it was time to vacuum the house. On the way to get vacuum cleaner out of the hall closet, she walked past the kitty room and saw the toy basket UPSIDE DOWN AGAIN! Yes, toys EVERYWHERE! So she cleaned THAT UP AGAIN!

By now Mommy felt like crying!

She started to vacuum and when she got to the kitty room to vacuum, she found water bowl FULL OF TOYS!! "MURPHY!" she exclaimed. Yet another round of cleaning THAT up AGAIN! And she put fresh water in the bowl and set the toys to dry on the kitchen counter top.

FINALLY she walked into the living room. Turned off vacuum cleaner. Picked up the toy basket and noticed the kitty tunnel standing on its end. She put the tunnel and toy basket on the sofa (to get them off the floor) so she could vacuum. She finished vacuuming in the living room and headed back to the kitchen/dining room.

She took the vacuum cleaner back to the hall closet and put it away. She notice a too quiet house and went to the bedroom. There on the bed were her three sleeping 'angels'. Time: 9:30am. Time for a much needed break.

Thinking back about the morning, she hoped they NEVER do this again!

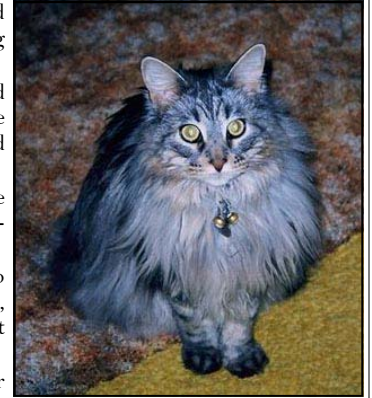
She never could figure out how they knocked over that litter box. They usually aren't like that so she decided it was either, "BE MEAN TO MOMMY DAY" or the FULL MOON!" That's it, the FULL MOON!

She heard chirping heading her way, as she looked up, saw them coming in 'follow the leader style' with Kasey leading the way. She jumped up on her lap and started to purr. Carbie lies on her chest and gives her lots of kitty kisses. Murphy lies next to her and is also purring loudly.

They look so cute and innocent! How could she ever be upset with them? They certainly do have her well trained. She loves them so much—even though they can be such monsters at times. That's them, the three precious angels!

The End.

Carbie



Corky & Murphy

Tuesday Morning Written by Lynne Glaser, Fancier Member

Lynne has submitted numerous mischievous cat stories of her four Maine Coons. These will be featured over the next few issues of the Scratch Sheet. Kasey [Bigfoot Kasey Kitty Kat] is her only female and she is nine years old. Carbie [Bigfoot Wolfram Carbide kat] is eight years old. Murphy [Bigfoot Murphy Bear da kat] is six years old, and Corky [Bigfoot Corky Nemo Kat] is three years old and he is the biggest one at 25 1/2 lbs.



Purrumao Maine Coons

Jose Luis Grasset, Madrid, Spain
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Provisional Breeder Member
www.purrumao.es

Purrumao Cattery was funded in Madrid, Spain, in January 2004. We were very excited when we acquired our first breeding cats, and unfortunately, equally inexperienced.

A few months later we had to face the shocking truth. Selling Maine Coon kittens in Spain was a tough job, since Spaniards are not acquainted with the wonders of purebred cats. And keeping a whole male inside the house is quite a risky adventure !

In Summer 2005 the Scratch Sheet had an article about us and we were still quite optimistic about the future of Purrumao. But during autumn of that same year I was forced to neuter our stud and spay the two females after facing a rough, family crisis due mostly to our stud's spraying. We had recently had our one and only litter back then and I was able to keep two female kittens in case breeding was possible in the near future.

And so there was a family truce, time passed, and on november 2006 we had our second ever litter. It was Purruma Arjuna's, one of the female kittens we had kept. This time we chose more wisely the time when the kittens would arrive, and finding new homes for them was much easier. Since we have no stud, it was a bit tricky to get both females pregnant, and in fact we only managed to do so with Arjuna. But at this stage, breeding is a continuous learning process for us and we slowly get better at it.

For the near future, we will stay just with our two breeding females. In time, we'll see if we are ready for more females and even our own stud.

Our philosophy is to keep our cats in an environment as close to their natural one as possible. We spent much time and money fencing our 6.000 square feet



Purrumao Anada



yard so the cats cannot get out. This allows us to let them out regularly, and even though they are not allowed out alone -we go out with them and keep an eye on them while we do some gardening- we are pretty confident there is no way they can get out. It's quite impressive to see a medium-sized coonie -our cats are not huge- climbing down one of the big trees in the yard !

For those times when we cannot go out with them, we fenced a 18 x 18 feet area adjacent to the house our cats can access at ease through a door on the window. This way we ensure the cats get plenty sun and fresh air, and a large area to run, climb, and play when we are not paying close attention.

Our cats have show pedigrees, but we intend to use some outcrosses if we do get more cats. This is so because we think it's good for the future health of the breed, since it will strengthen the gene pool. Until the outcrosses come to Purrumao, all our kittens will be sold as pets only.

We put a strong emphasis on testing our breeding cats for genetic diseases. The economic cost is ridiculous compared to the advantages of knowing our cats are as healthy as it's possible to find out. We know there is no cat 100% healthy, but we feel it's our responsibility to check in every possible way the health of our breeding stock. Our plan is to continue testing our cats for HCM every other year approximately, since X-ray, ultrasound and SMA tests at one year of age guarantee they are HD and PKD free for life.

If things go well, Purrumao will expand sometime in the future and start producing cats that meet our own requirements to become breeders. Time will tell.



What Do the HCM DNA Results Mean? Help Find Out!

Allison M. Heaney, DVM, Diplomate ACVIM (Cardiology) and Assistant Professor at Washington State University, is beginning a study in conjunction with Dr. Kate Meurs. This important study will correlate the genetic and phenotypic results of the cats of Dr. Meurs' testing so that they are better able to give breeding and prognostic ideas to the owners/breeders. This project's goal is to ascertain how many genetically normal cats still develop the disease, and how many heterozygotes and homozygotes do and do not develop the disease. This research is simply one of the next steps needed to better understand HCM development in the Maine Coon. Although Dr Heaney's research is being done independently of Dr Meurs, it has Dr Meurs' approval and Dr Meurs has given Dr Heaney full access to whatever information they have on tested cats. All of the data and information that Dr Heaney receives will be kept totally separate from all of the lab data to avoid the lab technicians knowing the echo results. At present, Dr Heaney is only collecting information on the 3000+ cats that have been tested by Dr Meurs' lab. It is important that each cat's accurate and complete information, along with the scan record, be sent to Dr Heaney. If only partial information on any given cat is received, it would make the data incomplete. Please be assured that none of this specific information will be made public and none will be identified with any specific cat or breeder/owner. The information is only used for data tracking purposes. One problem has been that most people have not submitted sufficient information when sending in their cat's DNA to be tested. This is very unfortunate and it is hoped that people who submit their cat's DNA will, in future, try to provide more information about important items like their cat's heart health, date of birth and relationships to other cats that have been tested. This data is vitally important in moving forward the HCM research, both for Dr Meurs' data and for Dr Heaney's data. Without each cat's accompanying identifying information, the scientific tracking and study of that cat is incomplete.

***IMPORTANT:** For her research, Dr Heaney needs a copy of the most recent echo done on any cat tested for the mutation. The date of the echo doesn't matter, so long as it's the most recent echo results. This research covers every cat tested by Dr Meurs. *Even if you have no echocardiogram record, please fill out the form & send that for each cat that has been tested by Dr Meurs so that those cats can be included in Dr. Heaney's study.

If you have any questions, contact Dr Heaney or assistant Ryan Fries. The more people that can provide copies of a scan with the completed form for each tested cat, the better the project results will be, affording everyone greater HCM scientific information & an increased understanding of HCM.

Return a copy for each cat tested by Dr Meurs, along with a copy of each cat's scan record by a boarded cardiologist. You can email the complete information to aheaney@vetmed.wsu.edu or FAX it to: 509-335-0880 or snail the completed information to: Allison M. Heaney, DVM Diplomate ACVIM , Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Pullman, WA 99164

Cat Name

Gender

Birthdate

Owner's Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

Date (if ever) of last echo & results If possible could you please include a Xerox copy of any echocardiogram information? (If no echocardiogram is available, please send the completed form. This information alone will be extremely helpful.)

Has your veterinarian ever detected an auscultation abnormality in your cat (murmur, gallop, arrhythmia)? Yes No

Has your cat had any symptoms that could be associated with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (heart failure, fainting episodes, a clot in the aorta or elsewhere)? Yes No



Cat~Minster

Starring Fancier Member
Michele Mislant &
GP SmokeyCoons Mario Puzo



Cat-Minster Premiered on the Game Show Network this past Spring in the US and featured CFA's International Cat Championship. The following is member Michele Mislant's account of the exciting events.

We walked into the San Mateo Event Center on November 17, 2006, full of excitement, not knowing what to expect. I have been showing Maine Coons for two years and my second Maine Coon, SmokeyCoons Mario Puzo (Mario) had come to live with me and Nate in June and so far his show career was going better than I could have imagined. But this was the CFA International Show and we were going to be faced with a larger Maine Coon class than we usually see in Region 2. Mario's breeder, Elaine Hawksworth-Weitz, had said to me "you should take Mario down to the CFA International Show, it is quite an experience." Boy, was she right!

The size of the show was unbelievable. I had never seen such a large show hall full of cats! Overhead were signs indicating where breeds were located, so I headed to the Maine Coon section. Once I got everything set up, I looked at the show catalog. 721 cats entered for competition! The show had 12 Specialty rings, 6 judging Kittens and 6 judging Championship & Premiership. Judges received their assignments just before the start of the show. Premiership rings had been broken up evenly, we had 2 rings each day. Walking around the show hall, I could see there was an area that had been sectioned off, I was told it was the stage for the TV show, which had been dubbed "Cat-Minster" that was being filmed. I didn't realize there were going to be film crews at this show, but I didn't think much of it since they didn't have anything to do with me.

First up was Wain Harding. I groomed Mario, took a deep breath and carried him up to the ring. This was my first chance to see the seven other Maine Coons competing in the Premiership class. I was right, the class was larger than we were used to encountering in Region 2 and the quality was certainly there. I didn't know what would happen! After judging had completed, Wain awarded Mario Best of Breed! I was ecstatic but even more so when we were called back up to his final! I was surrounded by the friends I had traveled with and we all cheered when Mario was awarded 6th Best Cat in LH Premiership. One more ring to go Friday and it was Larry Adkinson. Another Best of Breed ribbon later and we were called up to Larry's final. Mario was awarded 2nd Best Cat in LH Premiership! When we left the show Friday night I was on Cloud 9! I couldn't wait to see how the weekend was going to play out!

Saturday started with a Best of Breed award and 3rd Best Cat in LH Premiership from Kitty Angell. I was starting to think that perhaps Mario could be Best Maine Coon in Premiership if this kept up. Then we went to Walter Hutzler's ring where he was awarded a Second Best of Breed. Best of Breed went to a beautiful older spay, Nascat Waving the Checkers. I wasn't surprised, she was a beautiful and mature girl (almost 9 years old) and besides I had been "counting my chickens" a bit too early! Mario still made Walter's final and was awarded 7th Best Cat in LH Premiership. I went home Saturday just as excited as I was Friday night. Looking over the finals, I found that there were only a few cats that had made all four finals, and Mario was one of them. Sunday was going to be fun!

Our first ring on Sunday was Barbara Sumner where Mario was awarded Best of Breed and 2nd Best Cat in LH Premiership. One more ring to go and I had done the math to determine that if he received a final he would be a strong contender for one of the top 5 cats in LH Premiership. This last ring was Wayne Trevathan, where Mario was given Best of Breed. I breathed a sigh of relief and anxiously awaited the numbers for the final. The final numbers were called and Mario had made it! Wayne awarded him 7th Best Cat in LH Premier-



Wain Harding with Mario

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

ship! This definitely put him in the running for one of the Top 5 awards.

Throughout the weekend, I had seen the film crews following around exhibitors but hadn't had any encounters with them myself. After we completed our last final, the Best of Breed in each of the classes advanced to a progression ring. It was explained to me that one judge had been chosen to decide which of the three Best of Breed should continue on to the Breed Showcase that was being filmed on the stage. Each breed would have one representative presented to the crowd and television cameras for a total of 60 cats. A beautiful Gold-eyed white Maine Coon kitten (Himedaruma Simba of Jazz Dream) was chosen to represent our breed in the progression ring. I went back to our benching area and waited to hear if Mario had made one of the Top 5 cats in LH Premiership. A short time later, the results were posted and Mario was 3rd Best LH Cat in Premiership overall! The highest scoring "non-Persian" in LH Premiership! I was so excited! I had been told that there was a presentation at the end of the International show that included a presentation of the Top 5 cats in each class. I asked around and found that the filming of Cat-Minster was replacing the presentation of the top cats. This was disappointing, but my disappointment didn't last long when I heard Mario's number being called to come to the holding area where cats were waiting to be presented for the Breed Showcase. Apparently they needed more cats to present and Mario was chosen to be one of those cats, presumably because he was one of the top cats in his class. There had been cats waiting for more than an hour to go onstage to be presented. Mario and I waited for our turn. I was approached by a member of the film crew who asked me if I would be interested in having an interview with them. I figured "what the heck, I'm here to get the whole experience!" and agreed. They asked questions about preparing for the show and how I was enjoying the experience. One of the questions the questions asked led me to say, "Now I sound like a 'crazy cat lady'!" The producer jumped on this comment and said, "What do you say to people when they say you're a 'crazy cat lady'?" And I responded, "I tell them about the breed I show, and about how I show a Real Cat...I mean they are ALL real cats!" The damage had already been done! I knew as soon as that comment came out of my mouth that if it was to make the show, I would be burned at the stake by the breeders of all those FAKE cats. Oops.



Mario was in the last group of cats presented in the Breed Showcase. Walter Hutzler was the judge presenting him and did a wonderful job. At the conclusion of the presentation, Walter hoisted Mario up over his head and said "The Best Maine Coon Cat". There was a bit of discussion as Walter was advised that Mario was NOT the "BEST" Maine Coon, since he didn't win the progressive ring. So, he tried again and got it wrong again. The third time was a charm! I went and collected Mario from the ring and was interviewed yet again and then ushered to a photographer waiting to take pictures of the two of us. I got him back to his benching area and was being called back to the staging area. Once there, I was asked if I would mind wearing a microphone and said "sure". Once they got the microphone on me I was placed in the crowd with the owners of the other cats that had been presented. Next came the announcement of the Top 10 Cats in show. I was SHOCKED to hear Mario's number among that 10! Unsure of how he made it into the Top 10, having not won the progressive ring, I went and got him and placed him in the ring for the final judging. Had I been to a CFA International show in the past, I would have known that a Best in Show is chosen from the top cat in each class, but I hadn't so I wasn't aware that Mario was being presented for the sake of TV. Turns out the TV crew chose four cats to "round out" the pool of cats competing for Best in Show. I found that out when I returned home. Nevertheless, it was an amazing experience and Mario and I were given quite a bit of "air time" on the Cat-Minster show that was aired on April 1, 2007. Thank goodness the piece of my interview that included "I show a Real Cat..." ended up on the editing room floor and I was relieved to see the production crew did a wonderful job of making Mario and me look like this kind of thing happened to us all the time!



Chronicle / Brant Ward

From the San Francisco Chronicle

President's Corner

In April, Beth (Hicks) and I had the opportunity to judge a show in Tokyo. It is always a pleasure to visit other countries, meet new people, and see new cats. The largest breed groups represented were Maine Coons, Norwegian Forest Cats, and Ragdolls. On Monday after the show, we presented the Maine Coon seminar to a group of almost 30 people consisting of MC breeders, judges, and judge trainees. We used the seminar Beth developed in 2004 which contains pictures that show both good and bad examples of various features of the Maine Coon. Following the seminar, we adjourned to a banquet room for dinner and continued discussion. We talked for hours about breeding, grooming, health issues and shared funny stories of what mischief our cats had gotten into! What was amazing was to realize that we were half a world away from home meeting and talking to so many people who also love the Maine Coon Cat. It reminded us of just how special these cats really are. In spite of the language barrier, we were able to understand each other through some words, some gestures, and some pictures.

Many thanks to show manager Ryoko Doi who also arranged the seminar and dinner. Many thanks also go to Michi Hagan who was our interpreter during the show and at the seminar.

Here are some pictures of the Maine Coon lovers in Japan.

Lynne Sherer



From Left to Right: Kiyotaka Ono, Lynne Sherer, Beth Hicks, Shizuko Ono. Front (sitting) Michi Hagan



Pictured Top (left to right) with cattery name in parentheses: Yukie Seino (Canon), Mamiko Iwata (Herbykatz), Sachie Yumoto (Chatile), Beth Hicks, Masae Shiino (Bellsinphony), Tomomi Hidaka (Mainlyhill), Akie Horikoshi, Ryoko Doi (Shonancats), Yayoi Nishioka, Mimi Tsuruoka, Tsutomu Doi
Front (left to right): Shizuko Ono (Onocoon), Ikuko Kamoi (Kirdcoon), Lynne Sherer, Michiko Hagan (Williamina), Hitomi Oyama (Furaido), Hisae Tasaki (SP judge), Jyunko Tsuda (Cavallino), Kiyotaka Ono (Onocoon).



Michi Hagan introducing Beth Hicks

Seminar Classroom



THE RAW FOOD DIET

With the Recent Food Recall, More & More Pet Owners are Looking for an Alternative Feeding Regime. Breeder Member, Janice Schafer of Poseycoon Cattery, presents her story of changing her cats to a raw meat diet.

**editor's note: the photos within this article are the beautiful cats Janice lost, with her home, in a tragic fire in December. This article is dedicated to all of Janice's pets lost that night.*

It was a vet, Dr. Elise Thomas Holt, then owner of Cascade Pet Hospital in Seattle, who introduced me to the raw food diet in 2003. My first litter had been born in January and the two girls that I'd kept to show had developed chronic diarrhea at the age of 5 months. For some reason, I decided to take them to a new vet—one who combined so-called "alternative medicine" with traditional allopathic treatment. She examined the kittens and then informed me that she could diagnose the reason for the diarrhea by looking at their ears! She pointed out some grey-black almost grain-like oily smudges inside their ears and removed a sample to show me. She ruled out ear mites or a yeast infection. The problem, she said, was a protein deficiency. That surprised me as I had been feeding a dry food with the highest protein content that I could find at the time (Felidae) and premium canned food—about half dry food and half canned. Dr. Holt told me that she frequently observed this inside cats' ears, and invariably, those cats were fed a diet consisting in part or entirely of dry food. Although some cats managed to do alright on a commercial dry food diet, at least in the short term, many others displayed this symptom of protein insufficiency. She advised that it should never be necessary to clean the inside of a healthy cat's ears. They should always be perfectly clean.

To remedy the protein deficiency, she recommended immediately switching the cats to a 100% canned food diet, explaining that canned food contains far more meat protein than dry food. Cats, being obligate carnivores, are designed to digest meat. The protein content listed on bags of dry food is deceiving because much of the protein is derived from grains, and grain-based protein is not *bioavailable* to a cat. Canned food usually contains little or no grains. Being a wet product, it is a valuable source of the fluids necessary to ensure proper kidney function. Dr. Holt also suggested that I consider switching my cats to a raw diet at some point.

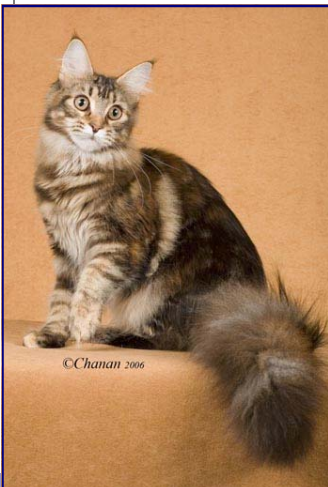
Just a few days after switching them to canned food, the diarrhea disappeared, and I decided to move ahead with the raw diet. I was frankly skeptical of the notion that a cat could obtain balanced nutrition without being fed a "scientifically formulated" commercial diet, but I decided to experiment for one month. If the cats seemed to be doing worse on a raw diet, I could always abort the experiment and go back to feeding canned food.

I didn't have a recipe, but I started by offering ½" pieces of raw chicken on a plate. The kittens took to it readily. The adult cats refused to touch it. So I decided to try a more gradual approach. I started by making homemade "Spot's Stew" (recipe available online). It's basically a whole chicken cooked in a pot with some celery, carrots, zucchini, parsley, and oatmeal. After deboning the chicken, I threw the cooked mixture into the blender and pureed it, then threw in several generous handfuls of the cats' dry food. All of the cats accepted this new food. With the next batch, I pureed the dry food, taking the "crunch" out of the mix, and used less dry cat food. Using less and less dry cat food in subsequent batches, I started stirring in ½" chunks of raw chicken, and then increased the proportion of raw chicken chunks mixed into the pureed chicken-in-a-pot. By the end of week three, all eight cats were eating raw chicken exclusively, three meals a day. I didn't have a grinder and I didn't realize the importance of including raw bone in their diet, but I had successfully converted every one of my cats to a 100% raw diet. And I felt good knowing that I had taken an important step to improving their long-term health.

What I hadn't expected was the amazing short-term benefits of feeding a raw diet. The amount of stool deposited in the litter boxes declined drastically and the litter box odor disappeared almost entirely. I later learned that the reason for the classic litterbox odor is the fermenting grain filler from dry food that has passed through the cat's digestive system largely undigested. My cats seemed to have more energy and to sleep much less. Their eyes were brighter and their bodies became more muscular. And as for their water intake; they almost stopped drinking at all from their water bowls. Instead, they were getting their fluid intake from their food, just as cats in the wild do. The transformation of their coats was dramatic. Within three weeks after being converted to raw food, their coats had become incredibly soft and noticeably thicker. They seemed to have stopped shedding almost overnight. At the end of a show bath, I found almost no hair in the sink drain. And the clumps of hair on the carpets and furniture was greatly

Fancier Member Ruth Sogz, PurRydeRoc Cattery, suggests readers consult Debra Zoran's article, published in JAVMA, Vol 221, No 11, Dec 1, 2002, entitled *Timely Topics in Nutrition—The Carnivore Connection to Nutrition in Cats*. It is neither pro raw or pro commercial food but presents a balanced, scientific view point.

CH Tabbypatch Autumn
Skye of Poseycoon





CH Tabbypatch Typhoon of Poseycoon

reduced. Best of all, the cats stopped coughing up hairballs, and the one cat who'd had a sensitive stomach stopped vomiting. After six weeks on the raw food experiment, every cat looked better and seemed healthier than on the previous diet of half canned and half dry. And this had been accomplished without any digestive upsets or illness as a result of salmonella or e. coli. I was impressed.

I read everything I could find on the internet about feeding a raw diet. I discovered the catnutrition.org website, which I highly recommend. It provides a recipe to follow and helpful background information. I bought Michelle Bernard's book, *Raising Cats Naturally*, available through her website (www.blakkatz.com). I joined a Yahoo groups! called rawpaws with useful files in the archives and knowledgeable people who patiently responded to my many questions and shared practical advice, such as which grinder to buy. I read every article I could find about feeding a raw diet, included an often-quoted article by Dr. Lisa Pierson (available on the [catnutrition](http://catnutrition.org) website). I discovered that the great controversy among raw feeders is whether to include vegetables in a raw diet for cats and dogs. Most everyone agreed that grains had no place in a feline diet, but some argued that a raw diet should include

10-20% steamed vegetables on the theory that cats in the wild consume small rodents with partially digested vegetables in their stomachs. After experimenting both ways, I was unable to observe any apparent benefit from including vegetables, although in theory, I think that steamed vegetables might be a useful natural source of vitamins and minerals. If one does decide to include vegetables in a feline diet, they need to be steamed or juiced since cats lack the enzymes necessary to break down cellulose walls.

My second litter was born at the end of 2002—a litter of 7 and all good-sized (4.1 oz. or more). For the first time, I got to observe how kittens would do on a raw food diet. Sometime between 5 weeks and 6 weeks of age, each of them wandered over to the mother's plate and sampled it. Soon they were gobbling it up. I put a ring of raw food around the edge of two paper plates, and they all crowded around, along with mom. They continued nursing until they were 12-13 weeks old, as had my first litter, but most of their nutrition came from the raw food. What I found remarkable was the total absence of intestinal upset as they converted to solid food. No gas, no diarrhea, no upset tummies. And their muscle tone was phenomenal. Each of them had that solid, heavy lean-machine feel.

By the time the 7 kittens were ready to leave for their permanent homes at 16 weeks, they and our 8 adult Maine Coons (mostly spayed/neutered pets) were consuming about 6 pounds of raw food every day! On average, each ate 6 or 7 oz. per day. We were making food in 80 lb. batches and freezing it in 1 and 2-lb plastic containers. When the kittens were little, we put out food four times a day, then went to three times a day as they got older.

We primarily fed chicken, occasionally some pork, and stocked up on turkeys around the holidays. Beef and lamb were beyond our means. We used a \$99 grinder from Northern Tool (online) that could handle chicken drumsticks and thighs, bones and all. After a couple years of hard use, my grinder finally died as I was starting to grind 80 lbs of chicken hindquarters. In desperation, I tried to find someone who would grind the chicken for me. None of the local butchers or sausage makers would grind chicken with the bones in, but I found a custom butcher used by local farmers and hunters. He had a huge commercial grinder that could handle the bones and a mixer that could blend 100 lbs. at a time. We eventually worked out a deal where I provide him with the proper amount of dry supplements for a batch, packaged in a Ziploc bag. He grinds the chicken hindquarters, chicken livers, and beef heart on his coarsest plate, then mixes the ground meat/bone with the dry supplements, adds the oils (wild salmon oil and vitamin E) and some raw eggs, and then packages it in 1 or 2-lb chubs. He has saved me countless hours in the kitchen.

I feed raw meat, usually chicken (bone included). I follow the recipe in a book by Michelle Bernard (*Raising Cats Naturally*). I use a grinder to coarse grind the meat and bone. I add chicken heart, liver and also supplements; kelp, dulse, psyllium husk, taurine, Vitamin B complex, a glandular supplement and Vitamin E, along with Salmon oil. The weight on my cats is amazing and their coat quality is excellent. I have had very little illness (such as upper respiratory infection) in my cats and kittens since starting the raw diet 3 years ago. The kittens wean to raw very quickly often by 3-4 weeks of age. The proof that feeding raw is truly wonderful came when I had to stop for a time due to time constraints. The cats really suffered, their coats weren't as full and luxurious and I could just tell they weren't as healthy as they could be! When I started again, the difference in a week's time was amazing!
Dawn Hunt, Provisional Breeder Member, Koontyme Cattery

*Why add bones to the recipe?

First, feeding cooked bones is NEVER a good idea. They can easily splinter and cause serious damage. Raw bones are much softer. Try chopping a cooked bone in half with a cleaver and then a raw one. You'll see a HUGE difference.

However, if you are making a batch of raw food, I suggest using a meat grinder to prepare a diet with bones in it. Chopping by hand will prove exhausting and getting the bones the same size as those of a cat's prey (such as mice or birds) can be nearly impossible to do by hand.

Using raw bones in the diet provides an excellent source of calcium (versus bone meal or some other isolated source of calcium) because you're guaranteed to get the all-important calcium-to-phosphorus ratio right.

Also remember, raw bones are more than just a calcium source. Fresh, raw bone also contains many important trace minerals that are difficult to duplicate using synthetic supplements.

Continued p. 14



(Above)
CH Chattacoon Poetic
Justice of Poseycoon



(Below)
CH Coonopry's
Reba Mac
of Poseycoon

Buying Ready-Made Raw Food

Nowadays, many more pet groceries are carrying ready-made raw food, but making your own or having it made to your specifications gives you control over the recipe and the quality of the ingredients. If you live reasonably close to a rural area, it's worth looking for a custom butcher, particularly one who handles game. A lot of hunters apparently choose to have their wild game ground or transformed into sausages, so a butcher who works with hunters will have a robust meat grinder and large mixer.

Probably the two best-known commercial raw foods, at least in the Seattle area, are Raw Advantage and Steve's Real Food. I don't recommend either of them. Most self-respecting rawfed cats won't touch Steve's, which looks like meat puree frozen into little cubes. Raw Advantage contains grains and costs a fortune. Although I haven't tried them, I believe Prairie, Columbia River, Oma's Pride, and Darwin's are reasonably good raw food options, based on their list of ingredients. One or more of those brands are generally offered in the frozen food section of pet groceries (not to be confused with the large pet supply chains like Petco or PetSmart) and grocers such as Whole Foods Markets. But the most economical approach is to make your own.

*Note: I recommended to a friend who decided to try the raw food experiment that she purchase some ready-made to try out with her cats before going to the expense of purchasing the supplies necessary to prepare her own. It proved useful; she transitioned her cats via the ready-made, and two months later purchased her own grinder & supplements and began to prepare the food herself.

Poseycoon Recipe

I started with the recipe from the catnutrition.org website. I understand that it was originally published in a booklet called *The Backyard Predator* put out by an organization called Feline Futures. After about 2 years of tweaking the recipe, I finally settled on the following:

Meat Ingredients

75 lbs. chicken hindquarters. Remove the thick skin and fat pads from the thighs but leave it on the drumsticks.
13 lbs. beef heart (yields 10 lbs. after fat chunks are removed) **OR** 10 lbs chicken hearts
5 lbs. chicken livers

Grind the meat and organs very coarsely (we use $\frac{1}{2}$ " or $\frac{3}{4}$ " plate) and set aside in the fridge. Time permitting, cut the beef heart into $\frac{3}{4}$ " – 1" chunks rather than grinding. Chewing on chunks of meat serves to clean the cats' teeth. The livers grind better if they are partly frozen.

Dry Supplements: In a separate bowl, stir together the following:

- 3 TBSP Prozyme or other probiotics
- 1 TBSP powdered dulse (a purple seaweed) – a source of trace minerals
- 1 TBSP powdered kelp – a source of trace minerals
- 4 TBSP acidophilus (a digestive enzyme)
- 4 TBSP calcium ascorbate (a buffered, non-acidic form of Vitamin C)
- 1 TBSP B-complex powder
- 2 TBSP Montmorillonite clay (Nutramin brand)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup L-Lysine
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup gland & organ concentrate (we use G.O. Powder from www.petsbestfriend.com)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup beef gelatin powder



CH Chattacoon Sophie
of Poseycoon

Eggs: Then add 8 free-range raw eggs to the dry supplements, and beat together until smooth.

Optional: Stir in 2 cups pureed, steamed vegetables.

Oil Supplements: Stir into the egg & supplement mixture the following:

- 4 TBSP wild salmon oil (keep in fridge or freezer)
- 4 droppersful of Vitamin E liquid (mixed tocopherals or d-alpha, not the synthetic dl-alpha)
- 40 capsules of CoQ10 dissolved in 1 cup very hot water (the soft gel-caps will dissolve and sink to the bottom, and the oily contents will rise to the surface)
- 6-8 cups water

Mix the egg-supplement mixture into the meat. Spoon out, in appropriate portions, see page 15 for more details on storage.

Yields approx. 85 lbs. You may cut this recipe down to an appropriate size for your cats if necessary. One Maine Coon will eat 5 – 8 oz. per day, depending on the cat's size, age, and activity level and whether the cat is pregnant or lactating. Freeze immediately. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator or by placing the container in cold water. Do not thaw in the microwave.

Why All the Supplements?

You will notice that different raw food recipes contain different quantities and types of supplements. If I could afford to feed organic poultry and meat from animals raised exclusively on organic, non-genetically-modified feed that had been grown on fields enriched with compost and natural fertilizers, and could obtain whole animals, including all organs, I wouldn't bother with most of the supplements in my recipe. I do not add taurine. The beef or chicken hearts contain ample taurine. I use dark meat rather than white meat because dark meat contains more taurine. None of my adults or the 45 kittens I have raised have ever shown any symptoms of taurine deficiency. I like to use chicken hindquarters because the kidneys are attached. I include vitamin C, although cats in the wild consume very little of it, because I believe it enhances my cats' immune systems and increases their resistance to infections. The recipe is calculated to provide each cat with 500-1000 mg of L-Lysine, an amino acid which inhibits the replication of the herpes virus, per day, depending on their food consumption. None of my cats were ever diagnosed as carriers of the herpes virus, but they frequently had black "sleepy seeds" in the corners of their eyes. Once I started adding L-Lysine to their food, this discharge disappeared almost entirely. The beef gelatin powder is a good source of chondroitin, helpful for healthy joints, and seems to help the mixture hold together better. The Montmorillonite clay contains 70 or so trace minerals and has the ability to absorb toxins out of the digestive system. CoQ10 is primarily known for its cardiac benefits, but I started using it to prevent or alleviate gingivitis. It seems to reduce inflammation of the mucous membranes in the mouth. The wild salmon oil, vitamin E oil and raw eggs are great sources of omega fatty acids and contribute to lovely coats. Some people advise against feeding egg whites to cats, but I use whole eggs and have not observed any ill effects. I use fewer eggs than called for in the catnutrition.org recipe.

Storage

If a person is feeding only a few cats, it can be useful to package the raw food in ½ cup frozen balls. To do this, use an ice cream scoop to portion balls onto a cookie sheet lined with waxed paper or plastic wrap. After freezing, the balls can be stored in a Ziploc bag.

Another breeder scoops out 1 c. portions into freezer storage bags & flattens the food down so they will stack in the freezer. This also helps expedite the thawing process.

Adding Chicken Necks

Different types of meat can be substituted for the chicken, although electric meat grinders can only handle soft bones (poultry and rabbit). In addition to feeding ground raw food, I recommend offering cats skinned chicken necks daily. If they turn up their noses at the whole necks, they can be snipped into 1" pieces with kitchen shears and mixed into the ground food. Chewing on chunks of meat and raw bone is the best way to keep a cat's gums healthy and free of plaque. Kittens need little encouragement to chew on chicken necks. Adults often seem uninterested unless the necks are chunked and disguised in their ground food. I found that if I cut the necks into ½" – ¾" chunks and put them into the ground mix, all of my cats would chew them up.

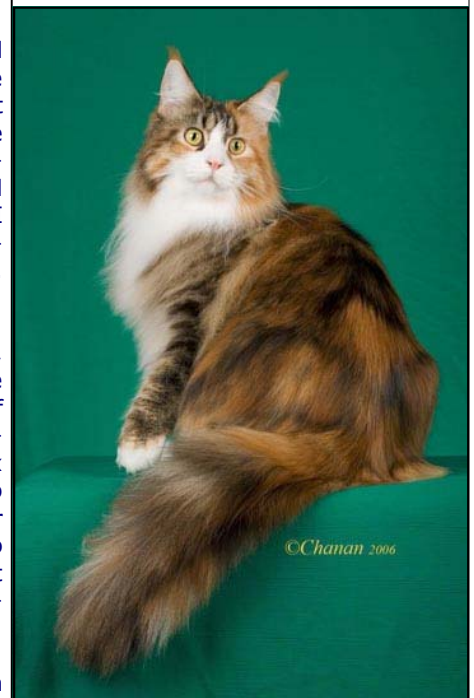
Supplies

To make your own raw food, you'll need some kind of meat grinder. Even a manual grinder—the cast iron kind that clamps onto a counter—will work, but for large quantities, an electric grinder is essential. I've had good luck with the 1000 watt grinder available from northerntool.com for about \$100. However, they have changed the grinder they offer for that price (although not the photo on their website) and rumor has it that the new model may not stand up to heavy use. I would advise purchasing the extended warranty if buying the Northern Tool grinder. I would also consider the Deni Professional Electric Meat Grinder, available on Amazon for \$130, based on its specs, but I haven't tried it or talked to anyone who has. The catnutrition.org website has a more extensive list of grinders & ratings.

I buy my supplements from iherb.com (NOW brand L-Lysine in 1-lb containers, NOW brand B-complex powder, vitamin E oil, kelp, dulse, and calcium ascorbate powder, and NOW brand beef gelatin) and from kvvet.com (Thomas Labs brand of probiotics, comparable to Prozyme but cheaper). I buy Nutramin brand of Montmorillonite clay, available from several sources online. The multiglandular complex that I use is the G.O. Powder available from petsbestfriend.com. I'm fortunate to be able to purchase wild Alaskan salmon oil by the gallon through a local raw feeder buying group. Stored in the freezer, it can last for 6 months or longer. Costco seems to be the cheapest source of CoQ10. This is the most expensive supplement in my recipe, but I think the benefits in terms of healthy gums and cardiac protection are worth the cost.

If you decide to feed raw, you might need a freezer so you can stock up on chicken and other meat when it's on sale and have room to freeze your end product. If you are making raw food in large batches, it's worth locating a meat wholesaler and setting up an account. Many local grocers, or butchers will special order beef hearts, etc.

Continued p. 16



**GC, GP, RW Poseycoon
Highland Heather**

Health Benefits of Feeding Raw & Vets' Opposition

The short answer to this is ignorance. Very few vets know anything about feline nutrition beyond what they are spoon-fed in the glossy marketing materials published by the giant conglomerates that produce most commercial cat food brands. Almost none of them have ever made any attempt to research raw feeding for themselves. Fewer still have ever tried feeding a raw food diet to observe the results. Instead, they blindly repeat the scary things they hear from the pet food manufacturers.

Does this sound unfair? It's really not much different than physicians. Few medical schools require doctors to take a course on nutrition. It's generally offered as an elective, and most doctors graduate without studying nutrition.

A couple years ago, when I was at Washington State University to have echocardiograms done on my breeding cats, I asked some of the observing fourth year students about their coursework in nutrition. They said that during their four years of training, they received a total of 3 weeks of instruction on nutrition, and that covered both small and large animal nutrition. I asked which professor taught the course. It turns out that all the instructors for the nutrition classes are representatives from the pet food industry—Science Diet, Purina, etc. I suspect that most

other vet schools follow the same pattern. If it's the pet food industry that is educating our vets about "nutrition," that explains a lot of things!

Most veterinary clinics today carry a line of "prescription foods". This is a very lucrative product line. Besides being a profit center, these prescription foods have become a mainstay form of treatment of many vets. Cats with a tendency to urinary tract infections are prescribed a special food. Diabetic cats get a prescription diet. Cats with renal problems are prescribed another. Cats with gingivitis need yet another prescription food. The irony of all of this is that these prescription diets are produced by the same companies, companies such as Science Diet, that make a fortune selling the non-prescription foods that caused the problems in the first place!

The scariest objection to a raw diet raised by most vets is the danger of salmonella, e. coli or other bacteria in raw meat. Raw meat is portrayed as dangerous to both the human handler of the food and to the feline consumer. Again, I believe this objection stems from ignorance. The fact is that cats' bodies are designed to consume raw meat. They are obligate carnivores. In the wild, they hunt, kill and consume raw prey. Their stomach fluids are very acidic—more so than in hu-

mans. Their digestive tracts are relatively short. Their bodies are designed to consume almost pure protein in the form of flesh, digest it very quickly, and then eliminate the toxins generated from consumption of animal protein. Simply put, their digestive mechanism is very different from that of humans. Consumption of chicken or eggs contaminated with enough salmonella to make a human sick just does not seem to bother a cat. I have personally fed a raw diet to over 50 cats and placed all my pet kittens in homes that agreed to keep them on a raw diet. I am not aware of a single case of illness from bacterial contamination to date. In preparing raw food, I use the same safety precautions in the kitchen that I practice when handling meat intended for humans. I use plastic rather than wooden cutting boards, wash knives and utensils thoroughly, keep meat refrigerated or frozen—common sense stuff.

Provisional Breeder Member, Lisa Fuller of Miaw Cattery, adds "We have found our queens crave the raw, especially when in heat, pregnant and nursing. We feed the pre-made rabbit, venison and chicken from Nature's Variety. We have found our girls will go back to their pre-breeding weight quicker and do not lose ground while nursing when eating raw."

Tips for Converting Cats to a Raw Food Diet

Be forewarned: Most adult cats will turn up their nose when presented with some raw food. It doesn't "stink good" like their favorite dry food. It has a completely different texture. They are creatures of habit and don't like change of any kind. Don't expect them to embrace the switch to raw food without a fight. I've helped many people transition their cats to raw food, and in every case, it can be done. When I have had "guest cats" at my house (e.g., for stud service), I've generally converted them over to 100% raw within a week.

Here are my suggestions. First, stop free feeding. Get your cats used to eating at mealtimes. If you're feeding dry food, don't leave it out all the time. Put the bowl down for 30 minutes about three times a day. Let your cats experience what is probably a novel sensation: hunger. If your cats already eat some canned food, the conversion to raw is easier. Start by just adding a little water to their canned food. A day or two later, add a little raw food—maybe just 10% raw and 90% canned. Over the next week to two weeks, gradually increase the proportion of raw to canned. Within a few weeks, your cats should be eating all raw. If at any point they refuse their food, stop the transition until they accept the mix you're offering before changing the proportions again. They may need to go hungry for a day or even two to weaken their resistance. It won't hurt them. Really.

Cats that won't eat any canned food are trickier to convert. It helps if they like tuna—either canned or the dried albacore flakes marketed as "Kitty Kaviar" or available much more cheaply from Asian markets. Let the cats go without food for 12 hours or longer, then see how they feels about the tuna. If it's a hit, then feed them nothing but the tuna treats for a day or so. Let them smell it in the can or bag. They will get to the point where they get excited when they see you opening the container. Next, spread a paper thin layer of wet food on a plate. (I use wax-coated Dixie paper plates.) Sprinkle a generous amount of tuna on the top. In the process of going after the tuna, a cat will inevitably get some of the raw food into its mouth. The next day, repeat the process but use a little less tuna, and so on until within a week or so, the cat is licking up the paper-thin layer of raw food and hasn't noticed that tuna is no longer in the picture. If your cat doesn't like tuna, substitute some treat that you cat does enjoy, but cut up fine enough that the cat can't remove it from the plate without getting its tongue in the raw food.

Another suggestion for stubborn cats is to tempt them with little pieces of chicken liver. If they won't eat any raw meat, then offer them cooked chicken. Then gradually stir in tiny bits of raw liver, then some tiny bits of raw chicken meat. The initial goal is simply to get them to relinquish their craving for the crunchy kibble to which they are accustomed and broaden their notion of what they consider to be food. It may take some perseverance and experimenting to see what works with each individual cat, but I'm convinced that any cat can be converted to raw food, given a little time.

Continued p. 17

Disclaimers

From Janice Schafer: I am not a veterinarian, nutritionist, or a medical professional of any kind. This article represents my personal convictions and advice, based on four years of feeding a raw diet (exclusively) to numerous Maine Coon adults and kittens and assisting several dozen cat owners in transitioning their pets to a raw diet. What has worked for me may not work well for others. There is no one "right way" to feed a raw diet.

From MCBFA: MCBFA does not endorse one method of feeding over the others. This article represents one point of view and is felt to be important to allow this approach to be presented to the members who might be interested.



Dr. Hansen's Boxer, Abbey, and Maine Coon, Johnny

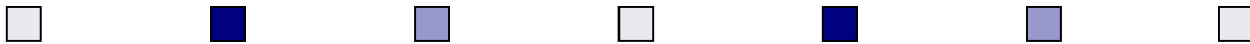
Dry vs. Wet : A Vet Chimes In

Sarah Hansen, DVM
Fancier Member & Health Editor

The 'dry food vs. wet food debate' will forever exist. I truly believe that the preference of the cat and the owner's availability (and now, the availability of wet foods) should dictate what the particular cat eats. Each type of food has pros. In general, cats fed dry food do show less plaque and dental calculus accumulation in comparison to cats fed wet food. However, the degree of improvement is unknown. Many cats eat their dry food so fast that their teeth receive no benefit from it. In addition, unlike the side-to-side movement of the jaw when humans chew, cats can only raise and lower their jaw. Thus, the teeth can only bite straight through a piece of food and cannot mash the pieces. Recently, hard foods were implicated as a potential factor in the etiology of feline odontostlastic resorptive lesions (neck lesions). Although a direct association has not yet been made, it should be noted that cats with dental disease should not be fed extremely hard foods.

The main argument to feed wet food over canned food (besides the fact that some cats like it better), is that feeding moist food over dry food with free choice water will result in an increased water intake. This is desirable to attempt to reduce the concentration of crystal and stone-forming minerals in the urine. Perhaps more important than the type of food or how it is fed, is the issue of cat water intake. Cats' ancestors stem back to a desert-dwelling feline, one who adapted well to a dry environment and required little water. Domestic cats appear to have a less sensitive stimulus for thirst and can highly concentrate their urine to accommodate for this. In housecats, this increases the risk of crystalluria and can contribute to the formation of feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD). FLUTD can be devastating for cats and their owners. Thus, increasing their water intake, be it through feeding canned food or having a running water fountain (with a filter), is an excellent way to attempt to prevent FLUTD.

Each cat should be evaluated on an individual basis to determine what type of feeding schedule is best for him/her. Many cats will do well with free-choice dry food supplemented with multiple small meals of canned food throughout the day. This may not work well for an obese cat or a cat who dislikes dry food. Your veterinarian should be able to properly evaluate your cat's body condition score and together you two will determine the best diet and feeding method to keep your cat as healthy as possible.



What's New in MCBFA?

- The Scratch Sheet (and previous issues) remains online and this issue is now accessible by using the following information upon log-in at:
www.mcbfa.org/scratchsheet.html

Username: MCBFA
Password: FoodRecall

Each upcoming issue will feature a new username & password.



- Congrats to MCBFA Breeder Member Kim Tomlin on her acceptance as a Probationary SP Judge in TICA!



In the Next Issue.....

This year's Top Show Winners will be featured. Please submit your photos, awards and stories to the editor now for inclusion!

Liz@chemicoons.com



Meet Provisional Breeder Members Lisa & Andrew Fuller

Miaw Cattery, Deer Park, Texas

www.miawmc.com

When we started showing, Andrew and I agreed that our cats' health and well-being would come before anything else. We also agreed that an important part of breeding and showing for us was educating spectators and pet buyers not only about the Maine Coon breed, but also about feline health, diet and over all well-being. Health above all else is our motto here.

Andrew and I are very lucky to have an excellent live-in cat sitter. My daughter, Samantha, has been helping us with the cats since she was 16. She has a knack for calming and soothing any cat in the house and we know when we are away the cats are getting the same care and attention they would get if we were there. Our home is most definitely a cat home.

Our home is our cattery and the cats all live underfoot. We are fortunate that Charlie, our only whole male, doesn't spray and is able to have the run the house. The kitten room and the girls' room both have floor to ceiling windows with lots of birds and lizards to watch in the garden bushes and lots of sunlight to lie in. Andrew has put a lot of thought and energy into making the house perfect for the cats.

Andrew and I credit Donna Hinton (Nascat) for introducing us to this fun and crazy world of cat shows and Maine Coons. We were the stereotypical pet buyers, looking for a brown tabby with white and totally

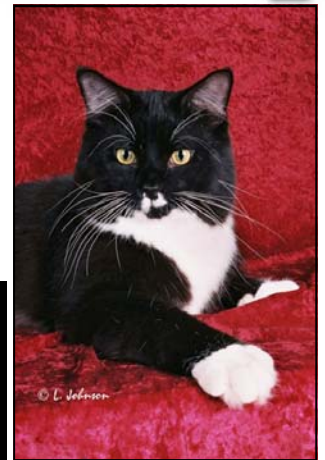
ignorant about the breed. All we knew was we had a longhair household pet which had a lot of the traits of a Maine Coon and now we wanted the real thing. Donna spent lots of time educating us about the breed, health issues, and answering any questions we had about Maine Coons. During our first visit with Donna, a silver classic tabby with white kitten, Nascat Shelby, crawled up on Andrew and went to sleep in his lap. So much for a brown tabby!

Our introduction to cat shows came about after a rather horrific bathing of our sweet little Shelby that left me with puncture wounds. Donna offered to let us bring Shelby to her and she would teach us how to give her a proper bath. Well, that was a totally different scene than we had witnessed when we bathed that kitten! What a beauty she was after a good show bath! It was after this that Donna suggested that we might want to consider showing Shelby.

Having never been to a cat show before, we attended a show first, getting our feet wet, so to speak, by carrying kittens to rings for Donna. Then in November of 2002, with Donna's help and guidance, we entered our first show. Shelby made a final in her first ring.... and off we went!

Dennis & Trudie Allen (TruTails), Karen Croke (Terrificats) & Becky Carazzone (PurrTigers) were instrumental in helping us build our breeding program.

In May of 2004, Dennis and Trudie had enough trust and faith in us to let us have Tru-tails Sinead, a beautiful brown mackerel tabby. She is the perfect mother to her kittens and has the look and temperament we like for our cats and kittens to have. Most importantly she is a healthy, well-built girl that loves people and is a joy to be around. Sinead is the standard by which we



Grand
Champion
Miaw's Sir
Charles
Chaplin

judge all the other cats in our house. To us, she is the perfect Maine Coon. Karen is our mentor in every sense of the word. She is a wealth of knowledge and experience and she shares it with us generously. Her ability to teach rather than preach, has allowed Andrew and I to learn from her and form our own ideas and ways of doing things. She is always there for us, sharing our trials and celebrating our successes. We have been extremely fortunate to have had time on a couple of long road trips with Karen for her to share stories about the history of the Maine Coon breed, CFA and TICA with us. So much of what she knows isn't written down anywhere and probably should be.

As if this wasn't enough, Karen allowed her precious boy, Terrificats Gambolero, to come visit Sinead not once but twice. Sinead likes the home field advantage. Gambolero and Sinead gave us two wonderful litters of kittens that actually loved to show. Out of their first litter came our first homegrown regional winner, GC PR RW Miaw's Benny Goodmaine and our stud, GC Miaw's Sir Charles Chaplin (aka Charlie). Benny was the first born of the first litter and Charlie was #2. What a set of firsts that was for Miaw Maine Coons!



(left) TGC Miaw's Oogie Boogie & (right) GP Miaw's Thackery Binx

Breeder Member LATE Dues

Breeder Dues for 2007 were payable **May 1**. This list is complete through printing, May 23, 2007.

ACTIVE (U.S.)

Bartha	McInchak
Berry	McKee
Bistline	Moriarty
Boulter	Multer
Bowman	Nagy
Braun	Paplanus
Carazzone	Pettison
Crooke	Pilar
Cunningham	Salan
Gaudet	Skipchak
Hall	Smith, M
Hintz	Spayde
Jones, D/G	Storten
Juul	Sullwold
Kembitzky	Sykes
Koehler/Young	Taylor
Lash	Tinney
Lidner	Tobias
Lindeman	Tomlin
Magee	Washburn
Matzkin	Williams
May, D	Winsky
Maynard	

ACTIVE (Overseas)

Berneur	Olscher
Dentico	Olsson
Katsumata	Schoneis
Kiyomiya	Seurinck
Kneifel	Shiino
Meier	Szabo
Middelman	Tracey
Motohashi	

ACTIVE (Canada)

Schulz	Shindler
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INACTIVE (U.S. & Canada)

Arterberry	English
Beggs	Fox
Behringer, W	Genovese
Blakely	Guschke
Budzinski	Jones, S
Cada	Kampo
Chappetta	Kanieski
Conley	Mann
Davis	Moody
Doran	Nicolaides
Dunford	Piper
Edwards	Tetreault

Provisional Breeder LATE Dues

Cutrupi	Martin
Enzinger	McFaddin
N/P to Bokkel Hannink	Perlmutter/Diener
Hansbeger	Petty
Harvey	Stroud
Hunt	Sullens
Hoon	Walker
Illia	Wing
M Jensen & L. Anders	Wood
Kaiser, D	Woosley
Kaiser, S	Zirkle

Fancier Members LATE Due

Ball	Northrop
Blake	O'Donnell
Charron	Ramsey
Coulson	Rivers
Crosier	Sanford
Evans	Schutz
Jernigan	Shaffer
Lockwood	Smith
Montgomery	Sterczala
	Sullivan

Fancier Members Due July 2007

Adams	Dodge	Hackman
Aldridge	Ferguson	Nelson
Bair	Fleuty	Smith
Bishop	Garra	Sogz
Connor	Glaser	Stirling
DePew	Goodwin	

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MEMBER DUES

Any and all dues may be paid to MCBFA's PayPal account using the address: roxann@velvetjewels.com. PLEASE DO NOT SEND TO THE TREASURER OR EDITOR

Fancier Memberships: Send membership fees and addresses to the Fanciers' Secretary, Joan Gaudet.

Payable in US funds only

\$20.00/one year

\$35.00/two years

\$50.00/three years

This includes first-class postage.

Canada: \$15.00 + \$6.00 postage (\$21.00 total) Postal Money Order Only

All Other Countries: \$31.00 per year; International Money Orders. No bank checks.

Provisional Breeder Memberships

Online information and application forms can be downloaded at the MCBFA website, www.mcbfa.org

If website is not available, prospective Provisional Breeders should do the following:

1. Write to the Provisional Breeder Secretary, Cain Haley, for information and application packet. Do not send money at this time.
2. Once the application packet is received, follow the instructions and send the completed application with appropriate dues (\$30.00 first year; \$25.00 subsequent years) to the Provisional Breeder Secretary, Cain Haley

Breeder Memberships: \$25.00 per year to Breeder Member Secretary, Liz Flynn. A copy of a current litter registration must be included to enable you to stay on the Active Breeder list.

Change of address should be sent to the appropriate secretary.

The MCBFA, Inc., Executive Council has directed that MCBFA services be suspended for the following individuals for the period of time indicated.

Permanent

Chris Buck (Buctales) Oct 2001

Johnnie Hardee (Guitars/Megacoon) Feb 2003

Bill/Trisha Swisher (Kanab) as of 2/27/2003

Marla Vales (Marala) April 2003

Susan Lee (CoonsCross) Feb 2004

Ginny O'Neill Follensbee (Majesticats) Aug 2004

Suspended 1 year with loss of Breeder status

Maryrose Sanchez (Codycats) Feb 2006

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Painting of Maine Coon kittens done by Veronica Blazewicz. www.cafepress.com/vernsart

GET YOUR PICTURES OR STORIES IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Anyone may submit articles, pictures or stories to the Scratch Sheet for FREE; however, only a Breeder, Provisional Breeder, or Fancier may submit Winners Gallery information. Submit to the editor, Liz Hansen, Liz@chemicoons.com or snail mail to: 2790 Alnwick Ct., Henderson, NV, 89044. Pictures will be returned.

Advertising

- Anyone may submit merchandise ads or cat show ads.
- Any member may submit listings and photos for the Winners Gallery.
- Only Full Breeder Members may advertise cats or kittens for sale, stud service, catteries, or any other service related to animals.
- Please no laser color copies; they do not reproduce well. Photos will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Cattery Ad Rates

Business card-size ads \$5 per issue
1/8 page \$10/one time or \$35/year
1/4 page \$20/one time or \$65/year
1/2 page \$40/one time limit 2 per year
Full page \$85/one time limit 1 per year

Merchandise and/or Cat Show Ad Rates

1/4 page \$25 per issue
1/2 page \$50 per issue
Full page \$100 per issue

Payment must accompany ads. Please send your ads and payments to the Editor; all checks made payable to MCBFA.