

## Welcome!



Thank you for taking the time to visit a TICA show in your search for the perfect feline companion. Today, you will see some excellent representations of some of the more than 40 breeds of cats recognized by TICA.

Bringing a new pet into your family involves a long term commitment of time, energy, and money. Buying your kitten from a responsible breeder is one step in getting off to the best possible start with your new family member.

### What can I expect from a responsible breeder?

*When you buy a kitten from a responsible breeder, you can expect the breeder to:*

- Guarantee that your kitten is in good health and free from Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV).
- Strongly urge you to have your own veterinarian examine your kitten within a few days of purchase to confirm its good health.
- Require that you have your kitten neutered or spayed at the appropriate age.
- Provide a written sales agreement that describes all terms of the sale, including the breeder's health guarantee and the neuter/spay agreement.
- Be intensely interested in the welfare of every kitten they produce, and encourage you to call whenever you have questions or concerns about your kitten.

### How can I tell if my kitten is healthy?

*Handle the kitten. It should have good muscle tone, a clean coat, and bright, clear eyes. The kitten should not be sneezing or sniffing. Its eyes should be free from discharge and its ears should be clean and pink inside. There should be no bald patches or signs of dry, flaky skin. Check behind its ears, low on its back and at the base of the tail for flea dirt (which looks like black sand).*

### How can I tell if a kitten is well socialized?

*Play with the kitten using a non-threatening toy, such as a feather or ribbon. After a period of normal caution toward strangers, the kitten should relax into a friendly, active and playful attitude. Many perfectly friendly kittens would rather play than be held; however, after becoming acquainted with you, the kitten should let you hold it for a short time.*

### When can I take my kitten home?

*Most responsible breeders allow their kittens to go to new homes at 12 weeks of age or older. If you're used to seeing barely-weaned kittens in pet stores, this might seem odd; but it's actually a good age to make the transition to a new home. At 12 weeks, a kitten is weaned, litter box trained, and has been vaccinated at least twice. And, it still has plenty of comical, lovable kitten-hood to go.*

### Will I receive my kitten's papers?

*When you get your kitten, you'll receive its health/vaccination record and a written sales agreement. After you have the kitten altered and send the breeder a veterinarian's certificate of neutering or spaying, the breeder will send you the kitten's TICA registration form. To register the kitten, you must fill out the registration form and send it, with the proper fee, to TICA.*

### What should I do after I bring my kitten home?

*When you bring your kitten home, make sure you follow the breeder's instructions carefully. Making the transition to a new home can be very stressful for any cat. Changes in food, water, litter, and overall environment can cause minor ailments, even in healthy cats. (For example, dairy products usually cause diarrhea, so don't give your kitten milk unless instructed to do so by the breeder.)*



# THE INTERNATIONAL CAT ASSOCIATION, INC.

## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A KITTEN?



### Why is the breeder asking me questions?

*Don't be offended if the breeder asks you questions (for example, whether you have other cats, whether your current cat has been tested for Feline Leukemia, etc.) The breeder is not trying to embarrass or intimidate you; they are simply trying to determine whether their kitten will have the home they want for that kitten. (Remember, to a responsible breeder, a kitten is not a commodity; it is an individual to be loved.) A responsible breeder strives to find the best possible home for each kitten.*

### Why buy from a responsible breeder?

*While no one can guarantee that your kitten will never have a medical problem, a responsible breeder's commitment to ethical, responsible breeding increases your chances of getting a healthy, well adjusted kitten.*

### What about the pet overpopulation problem?

*A responsible breeder is acutely aware of the vast numbers of unwanted cats and kittens, and breeds for quality rather than quantity. Breeding a cat with less than ideal "show conformation" adds to the pet overpopulation problem and degrades the overall quality of the breed. Don't think you can "offset the cost of the kitten by having just one litter" - have all your pets altered!*

### How do I decide on a breed?

*While you're visiting the show, take the opportunity to talk to breeders of various breeds. Be sure to find out how much grooming each breed requires, and whether the breed has any special needs or characteristics. Cat books, cat magazines and the internet are other good sources of information. If you haven't decided on a breed, or if the expense of a purebred kitten is beyond your current budget, please consider adopting a cat or kitten from a local shelter. There are many lovely and loving cats in need of good homes.*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

### What are the characteristics of this breed?

*A responsible breeder will be happy to discuss a breed's characteristics and special requirements with you. For example, some breeds require a lot of grooming, others typically have loud voices; and still others are relatively aloof. Be sure you discuss the breed's characteristics with the breeder and decide whether they are right for your lifestyle and personal preferences.*

### Do you provide a written sale agreement that includes a health guarantee?

*A responsible breeder sells a kitten only with a written contract that includes a health guarantee.*

### What diseases and conditions does your health guarantee cover?

*A responsible breeder will vaccinate the kitten at least twice against Panleukopenia (Feline Distemper), Calicivirus, and Rhinotracheitis.*

### How are the kittens raised?

*A responsible breeder puts careful thought and much care into raising healthy, outgoing kittens, and will be happy to discuss their methods with you.*

### Can you provide references from people who have purchased kittens from you?

*A responsible breeder will be able to provide references upon request.*