

ANIMAL WELFARE CODE OF PRACTISE – BREEDING CATS AND DOGS ("The Code")

A thirty (30) page document affecting **EVERYONE** involved in the **BREEDING** of cats.

This article is not an exhaustive review of the Code or even a Summary. The purpose of this article is simply:

1. to alert members to the existence of the Code and provide information on where to find it;
2. to highlight **some** of the features of the Code and the potential consequences of non compliance with the Code;
3. to **urge** members to read the Code for themselves and in particular the "Standards" in the Code; and
4. to **encourage** members to provide feedback to NSW CFA, or, through other channels, to hopefully enable changes to be made to some parts of the Code.

Some of the important aspects of the Code:

- The Code is **now** – ie it commenced operation on 25th September 2009;
- The Code is **additional** to existing legislation that you must comply with regarding animal welfare, such as the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and the *Local Government Act 1993*;
- The Code sets out two types of protocols:
 1. Standards – which are **minimum mandatory** requirements for breeders covering a wide range of animal husbandry subjects; and
 2. Guidelines – which are **optional** guidelines - described as "best practice" methods;
- Failure to meet **any** of the **Standards** set out in the Code may result in:
 1. the issue of a Penalty Infringement Notice or prosecution under clause 20 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (General) Regulation 2006*; or

2. in more serious cases, prosecution under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*;
- There are ***in excess of 100 individual Standards*** listed in the Code – many with sub-paragraphs;
 - While many of the matters dealt with in the Code are common sense, the Code in its totality prescribes a very (at times arguably pointlessly) onerous regime that *must* be followed by all breeders.

Areas covered by the Code (in relation to Cats only)

The major subject areas covered in the Code (with a **few** examples of the many **Standards** prescribed **within** each of these subject areas) are:

1. Responsibilities and competency of staff in a breeding facility:

Staff – includes employees/volunteers. A breeding **facility** – includes any place, premises or thing used for the accommodation/shelter of animals for the purpose of breeding;

2. Quality Management Systems:

Example: *detailed documentary records must be kept (for a minimum of 3 years) in relation to each animal housed at a facility;*

Example: *each facility must have a documented program for pest control and for swift removal of animals in case of emergency;*

3. Animal Housing:

Example: *each cat must have a litter tray at least 1.2 times the length of the cat;*

Example: *each facility must have an isolation area (there or at the vet) with “documented and demonstrable biosecurity measures in place”;*

Example: *functioning fire fighting equipment must be readily available and staff trained and practiced in its use;*

4. Animal Management:

Example: *lists animals that must be housed singly – eg animals with dependent young and animals in season (if not being mated);*

Example: kittens must be offered... (Food) at least 3 times daily from 3 weeks of age;

Example: areas housing animals must be cleaned at least once daily; bedding must be changed at least daily and disinfected at least weekly; litter trays must be changed, washed and disinfected at least every 3 days;

5. Animal Health:

Example: where there is evidence that kitting has commenced and no progress is made within 2 hours the queen must be examined by a vet;

Example: veterinary advice must be obtained in the event of unexplained illness or death;

Example: cats must be vaccinated against feline infectious enteritis and feline respiratory disease in accordance with manufacturers recommendations unless with the written approval of the vet;

6. Transfer of Ownership:

Example: at the point of purchase, clients must be offered accurate written information which concerns the care of the animal purchased;

Example: if within 3 days of purchase a cat is not acceptable to the purchaser for any reason, the breeder is required to take the cat back and refund 50% of the purchase price...this guarantee must be provided in writing at the point of sale;

7. Breeding and Rearing:

Example: queens must not have more than 3 litters in any 2 year period unless with the written approval of a vet;

Example: queens must not be intentionally mated during their first oestrous cycle.

Note: the above paragraph numbers are not the same as those that are used in the Code.

Where to Find the Code:

The link to the Code is:<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/codes/general/breeding-dogs-and-cats>

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