



FACA Policy Statement

Managing Feral/Unowned/Stray Cats

FACA recognizes that free-roaming cats are an ongoing concern and that measures must be taken with the ultimate goal of having no outdoor cats in the future. However, FACA further realizes that the problem has grown over centuries and the resolution of the problem will take substantial efforts and resources.

Since the number of cats entering shelters continues to rise each year with current practices; FACA recommends each community assess its local issues, resources and practices/policies to develop appropriate management programs for their areas – with the ultimate goal of having no outdoor cats. FACA further encourages community coalitions of stakeholders to best serve the needs of the local community.

With reductions in local animal control budgets and staffing over the past few years it is imperative that the local community, animal welfare organization, and charitable foundations provide the necessary resources to fund these new programs. The core function of the animal control agency is to enforce local and state laws, investigate animal cruelty and to address the issues of homeless and unwanted pets. Those functions tax the financial ability of most, if not all, animal control agencies making it difficult or impossible to fund new programs.

FACA encourages local agencies pass and strictly enforce both leash and license laws for owned cats to limit the number of owned and new cats that might be introduced into the area.

Should the local agencies wish to implement some form of feral/free-roaming cat management plan, the following minimum standards should apply:

- All cats MUST be sterilized and ear-tipped if allowed outdoors.
- Only healthy cats that have been vaccinated should be returned to caregivers and cats should only be returned to the location they came from and not relocated.
- Friendly cats and kittens should be removed and placed for adoption.
- Specific rules should be established to limit the time food may be placed outdoors (restricting it to daylight hours only), to limit the amount of food available to a proper amount for the known cats (twice a day feeding preferred), and to limit the number of cats they assist. There should be substantial penalties for non-compliance.
- Those cats that are suffering or cannot be treated for illness should be humanely euthanized.
- Ongoing or severe nuisances should be addressed in the plan.

The goal of any community cat management program must be to assure a proper quality of life for the cats' lifetimes and the elimination of all outdoor cats over time through attrition.

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