



## FACA Policy Statement

### Community Cats

FACA supports humane, effective, and proactive strategies for humanely managing community cat populations; these programs can include, but are not limited to, Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR), Shelter-Neuter-Return (SNR), Return-to-Field (RTF), Return-to-Home (RTH), and as a last resort Community Cat Relocation (CCR) and Working Cat programs. These programs not only provide life-saving options for cats that may otherwise be at risk of euthanasia but can also stabilize and eventually reduce the population of community cats.

Community Cat Programs have been successfully implemented, and maintained, for many years across the country, and throughout the state of Florida, supporting its efficacy. These programs do not add to or introduce new cats into the community, instead, they promote health and population stabilization, resulting in eventual reduction over time. FACA recognizes that alternative programs used to control outdoor cat populations, including trap and euthanize practices have been shown to be impractical, costly, and ineffective at best, and at worst, frequently inhumane.

FACA recognizes the need to be practical regarding the location of cat colonies and emphasizes the need for them to be a reasonable distance from any playground or school yard. A practical distance from wildlife protection areas should also be provided.

Further, as ear tipped cats may be re-trapped in ongoing efforts to stabilize or reduce cat populations, those animals should be appropriately revaccinated against rabies. FACA supports a prohibition on nighttime feeding of cat colonies except as necessary to trap, neuter, vaccinate, and return those animals.

FACA recommends each community assess their unique challenges and resources, specific to their location; individualized practices and policies should be developed to provide the most appropriate management programs for their area. FACA encourages establishing mutually beneficial working partnerships between animal welfare groups, veterinary professionals, and local leaders to best serve the needs of the local community.

Often times, problems caused by unsterilized outdoor free-roaming cats can be multi-faceted, and as such, FACA recommends an equally complex approach to managing the program. A combination of TNVR, SNR, targeted trapping for sterilization, low- or no-cost spay/neuter options, caretaker support, proper use of humane deterrents, and community education should be utilized to ensure the most effective implementation of a community cat program.



# Florida Animal Control Association

FACA encourages local agencies pass and enforce leash and license laws for owned cats, to encourage responsible pet ownership while not penalizing caregivers or Good Samaritans that provide basic care to community cats.

Should local agencies implement, or maintain, a community cat program, the following minimum standards should apply:

- All community and/or colony cats **MUST** be sterilized, vaccinated against the Rabies Virus, and ear-tipped. If resources allow, FACA recommends also administering a Feline Combination Core Vaccination (such as FVRCP), basic de-wormer, and a flea preventative.
- Only healthy cats should be returned to the location they came from and not relocated; relocation should only occur when the cat cannot safely return to its original location, or when the original location is unknown, and under the supervision of a caretaker, to ensure proper introduction to a new, acceptable, location. The relocation process can take up to three weeks of confined care for a cat to acclimate to a new environment. Care should be taken to ensure provisions for proper introduction can be made.
- Guidelines should be established to address excessive feedings that are causing a nuisance (i.e. attracting wildlife or creating and leaving trash litter), which can result in a violation of local ordinance.
- Cats that appear sick or injured should be trapped and removed for treatment or humanely euthanized.
- Ongoing or severe nuisances should be addressed in the plan, but caretaker penalties and trapping or removing cat should be considered a last resort.

FACA strongly recommends the ongoing training and education of agency staff to ensure current knowledge of best practices, effective conflict resolution of nuisance cat complaints, proactive education to assist with proper management, and full community support for both caretakers (i.e. reasonable vet care and euthanasia options) and residents (i.e. humane deterrents).

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