



ADVICE FOR BREEDERS

Over the years, a number of breeders have broken GCCF Rules regarding the registration and selling of kittens, often innocently, because they are not aware of the rules or the implications of those rules. I am attempting here to explain some of the complicated procedures involved and give reasons why breeders are not allowed, by law, to act in certain ways. Of course we all know there are disreputable breeders who obey no rules, register no kittens and sell them without vaccinations at an early age; this article is not for them, I am writing for those who love their cats, are proud of their kittens and want to do the “right thing”.

THE GCCF SUSPENSION LIST

When someone breaks a rule in GCCF they can be taken to Disciplinary and, if the offence is serious, they may be “suspended” for a period of time from showing and breeding. Sometimes offenders are fined but do not pay, so they are suspended “sine die”, that is until such time as the fine is paid. Before you consider taking one of your females to a stud, it is very important to check the name of the stud’s owner is not to be found on GCCF Suspension List which is on the website at www.gccfcats.org/suspend.html

Check carefully that the owner of the stud you are taking your female to is not on the list of people suspended for whatever reason. Suspension means just that! They should not be allowing people in to stud as they are no longer a part of the GCCF and the owner of any queen mated by their will not be able to register the kittens. Sadly not all stud owners are truthful and still accept queens for mating, still charge stud fees and still give the impression there is not a problem and that is why it is so important to check first.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REGISTER ALL OF MY KITTENS?

The “Sale of Goods Act” and the “Trade Descriptions Act” bind anyone selling a pedigree kitten. The GCCF has to ensure its own registration rules comply with these acts of parliament. Therefore, if a breeder describes a kitten they are selling as “pedigree”, they must provide the proof of this to the purchaser at the point of sale, by handing over all the necessary paperwork. It is, obviously, very important for breeders to protect their kittens and the integrity of their prefix by taking great care when registering a litter.

When you take your queen to stud in the first place, you must give the stud owner a copy of the registered name, breed name/breed description and registration number of your queen and let him/her see the registration documents that prove she is registered on the GCCF Active Register and can be bred from. You must also make sure you have seen the stud’s Certificate of Entirety, together with his registration and vaccination documents etc before you leave your queen with the stud owner.

Section 1 Rule 1a of the GCCF Rules states:

.....All male cats used at stud must have a Certificate of Entirety deposited with the GCCF prior to the registration of their first litter of kittens.

Then, when you return after the mating has taken place, *the owner of the stud cat must provide a Certificate of Mating to the owner of the queen upon collection of the queen.* (Section 1 Rule 3d.)

A certificate of mating must state the registered name, breed name/breed description and registration number of the sire, together with the registered name, breed name/breed description and registration number of the dam and the dates of mating, and must be signed by the registered owner(s) or specified keeper of the sire. (Section 1 Rule 3e)

It is important to remember that you, as the queen’s registered owner, must be given the mating certificate, it cannot be withheld. Make absolutely sure you have agreed about this, the price of the stud fee and any special conditions and/or requirements **BEFORE** you leave your queen with the stud owner in the first place. The best option is to visit the stud owner, see that the circumstances and facilities are acceptable and agree on all terms before your queen calls and you take her to stud. If there is any aspect you are not happy with, then do not take or leave your queen for mating, it is not worth it, believe me!

When the kittens are born and reach about four to six weeks of age, you need to think about their registration. The GCCF helps breeders make a clear distinction between cats that are for breeding purposes and those that are not by having the ACTIVE and the NON-ACTIVE Registers. Here are the GCCF Rules that apply:

Section 1 Rule 1a. *Only cats/kittens required for breeding purposes should be registered on the Active Register.*

Section 1 Rule 1c. *Cats/kittens which are not required for breeding should be registered on the Non-Active Register. Progeny of cats on the Non-Active Register will not be registered.*

Reputable breeders must make it absolutely clear from the outset whether a pedigree kitten is intended to be used for breeding or is being sold as a pet, by using the relevant register.

Often prospective buyers beg for their kitten to be allowed “just one litter”. If you agree to this request, you and the purchaser need to realise that kitten must be suitable for breeding and has to be registered on the “Active” Register. The breeder must, of course, also realise they cannot actually stipulate she only has one litter. If the prospective queen is on the Active Register, the breeder is agreeing with the new owner and the GCCF that she is suitable for breeding purposes. However, if the breeder has decided the kitten is not to be bred from, then, if it has been registered on the Non-Active Register it is protected. A stud owner would be severely disciplined by the GCCF if they allowed a female on the Non-Active Register to visit their stud. They must check each queen’s paperwork before accepting her.

Some breeders simply do not register kittens that are sold as pets; they feel it is an unnecessary expense. That is a dangerous route to take! If some, but not all, of the kittens in the litter are registered by the breeder, the GCCF requires *a declaration to be completed giving the following information: The number of kittens in the litter: The breed and apparent colour/pattern of each kitten: The sex of each kitten. This information must be provided for each kitten alive when the first kitten is registered.* (Section 1 Rule 3a).

Simply “declaring” your kittens, offers them no protection at all, they are, in reality, unregistered and as a breeder you are, to all intents and purposes, abandoning them.

Section 1 Rule 3b states: *Kittens which have been declared may be registered at a later date, either by the breeder or by the new owner.* Similarly, a breeder may decide if there are no kittens of show quality in a litter, not to declare or register any of them. Once again, those kittens are sold without protection, *“If NO kittens from a litter have been registered by the breeder, any kitten from that litter may be registered at a later date, either by the breeder or the new owner.* (Section 1 Rule 3c).

Furthermore, to protect the rights of someone purchasing an unregistered kitten, the GCCF Rules Section 1 Rule 3f states: *“If a kitten is sold unregistered, in addition to the pedigree, the seller shall supply a copy of the certificate of mating whether or not the seller is the registered owner of the sire. Any application to register the kitten at a later date must be accompanied by this certificate.*

The laws of the land protect the purchaser and they make it quite clear that after buying a pedigree kitten that was simply “declared” or unregistered, the new owner can go ahead, register it on the Active Register and breed from it. However, the unregistered or declared kitten will have the GCCF prefix rather than the breeder’s.

I hope I have made it clear to everyone, after reading the above, that a pedigree kitten of pet quality, or one with perhaps a defect that should not be passed on to future generations, could be bred from, quite legally, UNLESS ITS BREEDER TAKES THE RESPONSIBLE STEPS TO PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING by registering all kittens not suitable for breeding on the Non-Active Register.

WHY IS THE PAPERWORK SO IMPORTANT?

According to the Sale of Goods and the Trades Description Acts, someone selling a kitten as “pedigree” must provide proof of that at the point of sale; the seller HAS to provide the pedigree and if the kitten is just declared or unregistered, HAS to provide the certificate of mating.

Some breeders think they can get round all of this hassle by withholding paperwork until the new owner provides proof the cat has been neutered. It must be realised though that this is against the law and the new owner could take the breeder to court and WIN. Breeders HAVE to provide the necessary paperwork, the Sale of Goods Act is adamant about this and the GCCF has to comply with the requirements. It is for this reason we have Section 1 Rule 10a:

“When a cat or kitten is advertised or sold as a pedigree cat or kitten the vendor shall, at the time of sale, provide the purchaser with a properly completed pedigree signed by the breeder, carrying 3 generations at least, showing all the breed numbers and registration numbers, also the breeders name and address. If the vendor is not the breeder, the pedigree must, additionally, be signed by the vendor. If the cat/kitten is not registered, a copy of the mating certificate shall be supplied by the vendor to the new owner.”

That is the GCCF rule and all breeders with a GCCF prefix must adhere to it. There is, however, one way in which you could insist the new owner provides you with proof of neutering for kittens on the non-active register and that is found in Section 1 Rule 10b:

“If at the time of sale, the cat or kitten is registered, the seller shall provide the purchaser with a transfer form, duly completed and signed by the seller, unless it is jointly agreed in writing by both parties at the time of sale not to do so.

So the only form that can be withheld until the owners provide proof the kitten has been neutered is the Transfer Form but only if both parties have both agreed, in writing, as described above. However it does mean the new owner cannot show the kitten until after neutering as it would still be, officially, in the breeder’s name.

WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE MY PET KITTENS ARE NOT BRED FROM?

By far the best way of protecting those kittens that are not to be used for breeding and to ensure no purchaser deceives you when buying a “pet” is by having them neutered before they are sold. This is called “Early Neutering”. There is a great deal of information about this on the GCCF website at www.gccfcats.org. From the home page go to “Breeding” and then scroll down to “Early Neutering”. You can also search The Cat Group’s website on www.thecatgroup.org.uk, which has a Policy Paper on neutering. If you log onto “Timing of Neutering”, this gives further information. The page also has a paper you can refer to your Vet. It details the risks involved in anaesthetising young kittens and gives informed advice on suitable methods of procedure etc. My own vets were very interested in the information contained on this website and also the specialist advice to be found on the Feline Advisory Bureau’s website, www.fabcats.org. Their practice is now, officially, “FAB Cat Friendly”!

Early neutering has been undertaken in many countries for more than twenty years, with no adverse effects reported. The cost can be included in the price of the kitten and you can be confident that genuine pet buyers will be delighted the neutering has been done. The younger kittens make a rapid recovery and can still be shown in the same Open Classes as entires. I have had a female kitten spayed at 14 weeks and my greatest problem was stopping her from leaping around the room in a “wall of death” within an hour of coming home! Reports from animal welfare groups confirm feral kittens are being spayed as early as eight weeks, they are easier to catch and tame at that age, but usually pedigree kittens are neutered at around fourteen weeks or two weeks after the completion of their vaccinations.

Anne Gregory

The quotations in italics are copied directly from the relevant GCCF Rule. Copies of the GCCF Rules can be obtained from the GCCF Office, 5 King’s Castle Business Park, The Drove, Bridgwater, TA6 4AG price £2.50, or from GCCF stalls at various shows around the country.