

IMPLICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS OF DIFFERENT PROFILE PRODUCTS

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Cats reproduce with ease. However, those involved in building a pedigreed cat breeding program realize that feline reproduction is extremely complex, difficult and expensive. A female cat in estrous is a disturbing display of sight and sound. Male cats can be aggressive and they spray urine to attract females and mark territory. Breeding cats requires competitive showing to prove quality, knowledge of husbandry and assuring the health of individual cats as well as maintaining genetic diversity within a chosen breed.

A survey concerning pedigreed cat breeders' thoughts on contraception and non-surgical sterilization was developed by me to assess current practices and views. Within one week 700 responses were received. Survey highlights will be presented. Almost all respondents use a private veterinarian to spay/neuter their cats/kittens (91%) with 17% using low cost services. Breeders reported their females come in heat usually at 6 to 8 months of age and cycle constantly if not bred (every 2 to 4 weeks). Most breeders will allow only 3 or 4 heat cycles before mating once the cat is one year old. Allowing repeated heat cycles, without mating, in order to show a cat or manage litters, often results in pyometra (uterus infection) and infertility. Most breeders in the U.S. do not control heat cycles in their cats (79%); however many European breeders reported they have several methods available, including Suprelorin implants. In the survey 65% of breeders reported cases of pyometra and 49% said their cats were never fertile again. Breeders are overwhelmingly in favor of temporary contraception providing comments such as "Absolutely YES." As to permanent non-surgical sterilization 80% would favor this for female cats; 68% for female kittens; 74% for male cats and 65% for male kittens.

Research on non-surgical sterilization has been underway for many years focused on free-roaming/un-owned/feral cats. However, control of reproduction through temporary contraception would be well received as a valuable tool for planned breeding of pedigreed cats as long as safety for the cats and removal of secondary behavioral issues are primary considerations.