

The Cattery Visit: What to look for when you visit a cattery

Think of yourself as an objective cattery inspector*. Prepare and prioritize your thoughts ... adorable kittens will distract and capture you.

Take along.

Bring a friend for another set of eyes and a camera to use with permission. Wear comfortable clothing. Listen, ask questions and write down answers.

Is this a place you could live?

Most catteries are home based. Guest speaker and author, Susan Little, DVM recommends you consider, "if you'd be happy to live and eat in the cattery yourself, it is probably clean enough. If it repels you, that's not a good thing."

"The number of cats depends not only on available space, but also time (and money) to care for them." says Anne McCulloch of Catiators Cattery,

Are you welcome to see all the cats?

"Ask to see adults in the cattery and be sure they look healthy and happy. Watch for cats with shy or anti-social behavior." Dr. Little advises. Most breeders see your visit as "good for socializing of cats and kittens." says Liz Hanson of Chemicoons Cattery.

Organized cats prevent stress

McCulloch feels the "greatest challenge in raising cats is managing the impact of keeping cats together." Small, stable groups minimize stress and disease and prevent unplanned litters. Dr. Little adds, "Cats should be matched by age and young kittens should not be mixed with older kittens or adults, at least until they've had their vaccinations." Don't be surprised if asked to wash your hands before handling kittens.

Checklist

Housing

- Plenty of space for exercise, climbing, clawing
- Clean and stimulating toys
- Fresh and clean bedding
- Proper ventilation and temperature control
- Bowls are clean, water fresh, and food properly stored
- Litter boxes, clean and scooped (within reason)
- Odor control tolerable
- Isolation area for cats that are ill

Cats

- Bright, clear alert eyes
- Clean noses, no sneezing or coughing
- Ears clean and no scratching
- Coats clean and unmatted
- Hind quarters clean of feces

Interaction

- Owner and cats interact
- Animals are attentive not hiding and fleeing
- Kittens of 8 weeks and more approach you

Consider your feelings upon leaving.

You feel comfortable; if you have lingering questions or feel at all like rescuing... find another breeder. Remember the kitten you bring into your home is your responsibility for life.

*Cattery inspection forms can be found on the Internet at:

http://www.acfacat.com/forms/c_of_d.html

<http://www.cfa.org/articles/cattery-standard.html>

<http://www.cfainc.org/articles/cattery-inspection.html>

<http://www.tica.org/vrbpprg1.pdf>

Sources:

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