

SAVE A KITTY FERAL CAT PROGRAM, INC.

Policy/Procedure (2)

11/10/04

Revision (2-9-06) *

Testing/Vaccination for FeLV/FIV/FIP

Currently Save a Kitty Feral Cat Program, Inc. does not routinely test or vaccinate for FeLV, FIP or FIV. There are several reasons why this is not done. At the request of a potential adopter, the group will require a specific test but the fee for this service/services will be **paid by the adopter**. The program, at times requires testing of feral/homeless cats in order to determine if the animal is ill and suffering. Also, at times, in order to place an animal in a permanent home, we will consider testing. The final decision will be made by the President of the organization.

THE SHEER NUMBER OF CATS, COST AND TIME DELAY. Our program is trying to address a situation that is completely out of control at this point. There are hundreds of cats/kittens that need surgically altered in order to prevent hundreds of additional litters. Working through the local vet hospital or an established low-cost clinic, the time constraints involved to test each animal would slow our accomplishments. If you add the time to draw blood and run test kits for FeLV/FIV on each cat, this would incur additional cost and would certainly reduce the number of cats that we could sterilize. *Kitten testing is not accurate and therefore; not performed unless the animal is symptomatic.

RELIABILITY OF TESTING. Salivary screening for FeLV is not as accurate as a blood test. If an otherwise healthy, asymptomatic cat turns up positive, then there is the dilemma of euthanizing an animal that might have zero-converted to negative. It is nearly impossible to trap these cats again and retest in 2 to 4 months to see if they remain positive carriers or convert to negative. (This is very likely for kittens.) There is no quick “in-house” test kit for FIP at all. It is doubtful that any trap/spay/neuter/release group is eliminating this potentially deadly virus from it’s colonies. On the other hand, any veterinarian has discretion to request testing and then euthanize any **symptomatic** animal. **The group advocates for the release of any asymptomatic animal.**

SUCCESS OF OUR CURRENT PROGRAM. Since the start of our program in July, 2004 we have actively spayed/neutered over 500+ cats and placed 150+ cats and kittens in permanent, loving homes. Contracts are in place to sterilize these kittens at the appropriate age or they can **and will** be recovered from the adopter. We have prevented these animals from ending up at the local humane society, which most likely, they would have been euthanized. Since these viruses are most often transmitted through fighting amongst intact tomcats and breeding queens, just spaying and neutering cats in these colonies decreases their risk.

In conclusion, we feel that our primary objective has always been to sterilize the incredible surplus of unwanted cats and kittens through humane measures. The numbers indicate that this program is working, however, we certainly are not opposed to testing, vaccinating and (when medically necessary) euthanizing feral cats to eliminate their suffering. In a perfect world with unlimited resources and volunteers, testing and vaccinating for these viral diseases would certainly be a plus. For now, decreasing the population and therefore the suffering of these cats will remain our primary goal.

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Save a Kitty Feral Cat Program, Inc.

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