

Personalities of Working Cats

The personalities of working cats vary from cat to cat. Some cats will warm up over time and eventually may even let you pet them. On the other hand, some working cats are rarely seen, making themselves scarce in the day when people are around. Some of them will befriend other animals, such as horses. We have had cats sit on horses and sleep with ducks. **Please tell FCAS if your working cat becomes friendly and wants to live in the house and you are unable to let them in. We will help you find them a home as a housecat.**

Feral cats are not aggressive unless cornered and threatened. Trying to grab and pet them, for example, may lead to someone being scratched or bitten. In general, feral cats should be left alone unless they start coming up and indicating they want to be petted. Take their lead! The best way to form a bond is to regularly talk to the cat and have a regular feeding routine. Canned food is useful for getting the cats to feel a bond with their feeder.

In general, working cats learn to ignore dogs, however free roaming dogs should be discouraged from chasing the cats. Children should be shown how to leave them alone and watch them from a distance.

Veterinary Care

The rabies vaccine given here at FCAS is good for one year, and subsequent shots are good for three years. Feral cats should be brought to your veterinarian in a live trap and only if the cat has open wounds, broken bones or other serious health concerns. Most feral cats are very hardy and can work through most colds and limps, and will gradually improve on their own.

If You Move...

Please contact FCAS if you make plans to move and need help with your working cats. It is easier on the cat if the new homeowners can continue to feed your working cats, but FCAS can help you rehome them if that is needed.



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The Ultimate Guide to Acclimating Your New Working Cat

Congratulations on adopting a working cat! You have helped a feral cat who might otherwise be homeless or euthanized gain a new lease on life.

Here are some guidelines on how to help your cat acclimate and what you can expect afterwards.

Acclimation Period

To allow the cat to acclimate to their new surroundings, they need to be contained in either a secure area like a tack room, or in a large kennel. FCAS has kennels available to you for loan. The kennels are large enough to hold a bed, a litter box, and dishes for food and water.

The purpose of the holding period is to allow the cat to get used to the physical environment, the sound of your voice, other animals and people, and the feeding routine.

Number of Days: The recommended number of days in the kennel is 5-7. The length will depend on how the cat adapts to the kennel. Some cats can get overly stressed and many may not eat or may frantically scratch to get out. In those cases, 4-5 days in the kennel would be more humane. During winter in a relatively cold barn, about 4 days will suffice. Consult with FCAS if you have any questions.

If the cat can be let loose in a secured room or a shed where it has more room to move around, the holding period should be extended to several weeks.

Placement of Kennel: If possible, the kennel should be placed in an area where the cats can feel secure while also observing some of the activity of the barn. For example, along a side of the barn where they can watch horses going by but have some privacy. A blanket or sheet should be draped around part of the kennel so they do not feel overexposed. In warmer months, the kennel should not be placed in direct sun or a place that quickly heats up. At all times, the kennel should be in a well-ventilated area with no exposure to noxious fumes.

Cleaning the Kennel: The litter box should be scooped daily. It is usually easy to work around the cats because once someone comes up to the door, they run and hide and will generally stay there until you leave.

Releasing the Cats

The kennel door should be opened during the evening or whenever it is relatively quiet, so the cats will feel free to come out and explore. Their food and water should be placed relatively close to where the kennel was. If the food needs to be moved to a different location, it should be done so gradually so the cats will be aware of where it is.

Upon release, some cats hide for days or longer. You can determine if they are there by the amount of food eaten. Some cats will leave temporarily, exploring the surrounding areas. **Because of this, you should always continue to feed at first, even if the food is not being eaten.** We have had instances of cats disappearing for months and then showing up again. It is recommended to continue feeding for at least a month. Stop if there is no sign of the cat, but remain alert if the cat shows up in the future. In the end, a certain percentage of rehomed cats will disappear after release, despite all efforts.

Feeding the Cats

The cats need fresh food and water daily. If possible, the food should be placed off of the ground to deter other critters from getting at it. Feeding in the morning also helps with this.

Type of Food: Dry food should be non-generic and with as little dye as possible (since dyes cause problems for some cats). Purina Cat Chow is one good choice. Canned food is recommended while they are in the kennel and for the first few weeks after release so the cats think your property is a really good place to live. It can then be gradually weaned off. If served as a treat every few days, it definitely helps entice the cats to stay.

A feeding routine is an important way to establish trust with the cat. Cats fed canned food in particular learn the routine and are often waiting at feeding time.