

When you want to breed kittens.....

So, you have just bought yourself a beautiful little kitten girl – congratulations! And now you have started to think about how nice it would be to let her have kittens...

Yes – kittens are adorable, but before you go further with your thoughts – please read this leaflet carefully.

Becoming a serious breeder – or just have a litter for fun?

Please, do not fall into the temptation of just having kittens. You do not just decide to breed your pet cat and sell the kittens for profit. The decision to become a cat breeder is not a simple one to make. Reputable, registered breeders choose to enter this field because of their love for animals in general and cats in particular. So should you. Having a litter just for fun will not gain the breed, nor the serious breeders. So again – please do not fall into the temptation of just having a litter for fun!

Examine why you are considering becoming a cat breeder or want to have a litter. Are you doing it for the money or for the cat(s) and the good of their breed? This is not something that makes (easy) money – mostly breeding is a special hobby, and a very expensive one. Be open minded about showing an altered cat before starting to breed, this way you can learn about your breed. If you are still motivated after a year or so with showing, and your motives are right, and you have the time and means to carry it through – you are into lot of joy and happiness as a breeder!



Photo by (N)Fodnaheia's

Responsibility to the breed

It is important that you learn as much as you possibly can about your chosen breed before you think about opening a cattery. You need to be able to know about how to select great cats for your breed, its genetic history and genetic health.

You need to have a very real desire to improve or preserve your chosen breed of cat through safe, healthy breeding practices. In order to better the breed you need to have a complete understanding of what makes a great example of your chosen breed.

Knowing the traits, potential health issues and temperament of your breed as a whole, is very important toward becoming a reputable breeder with lots of knowledge.



Photo by NO*Havstrilens

Do you have the time?

To be a reputable, first class cat breeder, you need to devote yourself. Daily tasks such as cleaning, grooming and feeding will be mandatory to maintain healthy cats and environment. Having kittens require that are at home a lot. You must also know that you can get off from work in the event of complications, you must be able to get to vet, etc.



Furthermore, the kittens must stay with you for at least 12 weeks, and during these weeks you must have the time to socialize them, finding new homes, meeting with the possible new owners, transport to the veterinarian for vaccinations and health checks etc.

Setting up a cattery

To become a breeder in Norway – you will have to be registered in an association, e.g. Norske Rasekattklubbers Riksforbund, NRR, which is part of the Fédération Internationale Féline d'Europe (FIFE) that is a federation of national members. A cattery name is the private and personal property of a breeder and can normally not be change.

Per today, there are none particularly skills needed to be a registered breeder/get your cattery name. But, as a registered breeder, you are obligated to follow the rules for breeding in your association, which is why you should learn them.



Photo by NO*Havstrilens

Selection of breeding queen

It is normal to be anxious to jump right in and start putting two cats together and make kittens. But if you do as proposed, take a year showing a neutered cat, you will have so much more knowledge and understanding of your breed.

You will also have developed an important network of breeder friends, who have gotten to know you, and who are willing to sell you a good breeding cat. Because – it's seldom the best cats that are sold as pets.

Be also aware that some cats are sold with restrictions – you may not be allowed to breed on your queen.

Be sure to perform tests that are mandatory for your breed before mating.



Breeding male at NO*Havstrilens – photo by Tessa

Choosing the male

When you have chosen your queen to breed on - you need to find the right male. Finding the right male is essential in all breeding, and you should consider a lot of things, like do this male add/contribute the right things for your queen? How can you improve the breed by mating these two? Have you checked the pedigree, to see that they are not closely related*?

Be sure that the male has done the mandatory tests for you breed before mating!

And talk to the breeder of your new female – listen to his/her advice!

(* Pawpeds.com has a huge database of all breeds – and the possibility to testmating).

Costs

Having a litter is not only income – it is also a lot of costs beside the food and the cat litter. It is also veterinarian costs (examinations, vaccinations, ID-marking) deworming and registration fee. These are the mandatory costs.

In addition, you must calculate cost of borrowing the male – the mating fee, extra food for your queen (before and after she has given birth).

You should also consider insurance the kittens.

Some breeds demand that you perform tests before you are allowed to breed on your female.

This is done by laboratories, and Sometimes it is a veterinarian that must do the tests. This also

bring extra costs for you. And you should always have in mind that sometimes things go wrong, so you need a caesarean section, or the kittens get ill while growing up. It is highly recommended that you format a thorough budget before starting your breeding.

And remember to calculate extra costs for marketing, showing etc.

In the end – breeders seldom make money on breeding!



What to Expect When Your Cat is Pregnant

Remember that your cat is not a wild cat. Even though your cat may still have some of the same survival instincts as a wild cat, she is no longer physically a wild cat. Firstly, she may not be in that peak physical condition that would allow her to successfully chase down a racing impala to procure a meal. Secondly, if she is a pure-bred cat, she may be more prone to dystocia (or difficult birth*). This means that you have to be there for your cat all the way!

Before delivery day, you have to decide on a room. It should hold normal room temperature (around 20°C/60°F) and not be too draughty, and you should have planned the kittening box/nest. At delivery day – your cat most likely will have you to be next to her all the time. You must therefore prepare to stay home for some days. Some cats also need help during the birth, at least you must be able to call the veterinarian.

After the kittens are born – they need to be socialized and secure. Starting from they are newborn – but mostly from they are 3-4 weeks old. You must ensure that you have the time, space and knowledge to raise the kittens into becoming lovable, adorable and secure cats. This job is so much more than you would expect – and only experience it will make you understand it

Selling the kittens

Kittens are seldom "sold by themselves" – and you have to do some effort in order to find new, good homes. You need to have either an updated website, or use social network, as for example Facebook, to inform about your cattery, the cats, kittens, show-results, test- results etc. You can also



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advertise in different type of media.

You will also need to learn how to photograph kittens. This will help the new buyers to see how the kitten is, before asking for it.

Be ready to welcome new owners into your home! As a reputable breeder, you will have nothing to hide from new owners. You should be curious about the new owner – who, where, why. A kitten should be like family for the new owner – and they should manage to make you understand this. Remember, you are not selling a thing – it's one of your "children".

When the kittens are old enough, you need to decide which kitten should be sold to breeding. It is through selection that we can improve our breeding.

Never let a kitten leave your home before:

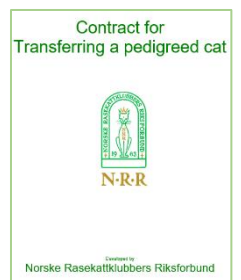
- They are at least 12 weeks of age
- They are fully vaccinated
- You have registered them and got a pedigree and other registrations papers
- If the kitten shows any symptoms of illness.
- You have made a contract



Photo by NO*Havstrilens

Contracts and other transfer documents

As a reputable breeder and member of a cat association, you must always use contracts when both borrowing a stud, and when selling kittens. When selling a kitten, the buyer should always have a contract that state the kitten's name, pedigree number, chip number, and information about the kitten's parents. Further on it need to have information regarding the seller and the buyer, the price, payment, and of course – any restrictions you as a seller set for the kitten, e.g. not for breeding, only indoor, etc. And of course – you need to provide the new owner with a certificated pedigree and vaccination papers. You should also provide health certificate for the kitten's health at the time of transfer.



What could possibly go wrong....

Most of the times, nothing goes wrong. But sometimes things happen. As a breeder you need to be prepared for everything. This is a short list over the most common things, but there will always be other that can occur. So please make sure you have some knowledge, the time and the money to act when some things happen.

- Something goes wrong during the birth, and a caesarean section is necessary. Hopefully both your cat and the kittens will survive.
- The kittens get infections, like eye infections or intestinal infections.
- You can't find buyers for your kittens.
- Sold kittens get ill and/or die. You have a certain responsibility towards the new owner.

Education and learning

Becoming a good breeder is more than just learning by doing. You should really take some efforts in educating yourself. Do your research on how to become a cat breeder in an ethical way, and you will produce wonderful pedigreed cats, and be recognized as a reputable breeder. There are several different types of courses online, and there are activities to attend through your cat club. And of course – listen to your mentor!

Some online courses that are recommended:

- Pawpeds G1, G2 and G3
- NRR – Oppdretterdiplomering

Some books that are recommended:

- "Katten" by prof. Bjarne Braastad

Other learning activities:

- Find a good mentor
- Attending your club's member-activities
- Attending cat shows

Be a member of a cat club

As a registered breeder – you must be a member of a cat club or another association. This in order to have certified pedigrees for your kittens.

But, even if you now – after having read this leaflet – have decided to keep your girl only as a beloved pet – being a member of a cat club can be very useful and good. We all sometimes need to belong somewhere – and to have some others to discuss with, and to relay on. A cat club is full of people with love and knowledge of cats.



Photo by NO*Havstrilens

Mentorship

You should as the breeder who sold you your cat if he/she is willing to be your mentor. It is important that you have a mentor with the same breed as you, that you can talk to and learn from. Of course – this requires that your breeder is an



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experienced breeder. If not – try to find someone else. Ask your club if any of its members will undertake such a role for you. Be aware that it can be quite difficult to find a breeder, not having sold you a cat, to take on such a responsibility.

Sources used in this leaflet

<https://www.catownerclub.com>

www.pawpeds.com

<https://www.catbuyerguide.com>

www.fifeweb.org - Breeding Regulations rules

www.NRR.no

