

## To breed or not to breed?

Written by Melanie - Last Updated Sunday, 26 July 2020 11:55

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If you are toying with producing just one litter or if you don't think you can't afford to desex your cat please read the following.....

Firstly any breeder can tell you that the first litter is more often than not a disaster... The new mother can often become confused and is unsure of what to do. The kittens can be born and she won't release them from their sacks resulting in their death. Her underdeveloped eggs can also result in complications.

Secondly, unless someone can be home with the heavily pregnant cat **CONSTANTLY** around her due date don't even think about breeding!!! What is going to happen to her if there are complications and you are not home? If she goes into labour in the middle of the night are you going to be happy to sit up with her to ensure that all goes smoothly?

Thirdly, The more cats you own the more likely you will have problems with cat spraying and marking (both with males and females) and cats that don't get on. Do you have the patience and facilities to be able to keep cats that don't get on apart?

Some other things to think about:

1. Have you been upfront and honest with the breeder you have purchased the kitten from and are they happy with you breeding with a cat they have sold you?

2. Do you have access to a stud cat to mate your cat too in the first place. A mating is likely to cost you somewhere in the vicinity of \$1200- \$2000. You may also have to have tests done to prove to the owner of the stud cat that your cat is disease free. Most responsible breeders have closed studs meaning you won't be able to use them anyway and most breeders will also only allow **REGISTERED** breeders to use their studs. If your cat is not registered and you are not a registered breeder you will not be able to register the kittens.

3. If the breeder you purchased your female cat from is happy with you to breed from the cat

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sold to you and you have found an UNRELATED stud cat that the owner will let you use it is your responsibility to take your cat to the stud and leave her in the care of the owner of the stud for aprox 5 days. You will then have to travel back and pick her up.

4. Are you prepared to put up with a female cat on heat for up to 6 months before she reaches an age where she is mature enough to be mated. I can guarantee you sleepless nights and you will have trouble keeping a girl on heat inside as she will be desperate to get out. She will call for HOURS on end and it ISN'T quiet... Trust me!

5. Are you happy to have your hands in her birthing fluid? Don't think you won't have to.... the chances are pretty good you will. Especially with a young, small breed of cat having her first litter.

6. Are you able to revive a kitten that won't breath? Are you comfortable with the fact that you will possibly have still born kittens or kittens born with deformities?

7. Do you have a kitten pen or suitable area for her to give birth. You will most likely need to confine her for a week or so prior to her due date to ensure the kittens are not born in your linen closet or on top of your shoe collection which is probably the spot your cat would choose.

8. In the event your cat needs an emergency C-section in the middle of the night you will be looking at HUNDREDS of dollars and most likely over a Thousand. Just to walk through the door of a 24 hour vet will cost you a \$200+ consultation fee. On top of that you will have the anesthetic and the surgery fees etc etc.

9. If you intend to keep your own stud where are you going to keep him? Studs realistically can't remain house pets as they will spray your furniture and walls with strong smelling urine to mark their territory.

10. Some entire females spray and mark their territory.. especially when they are on heat. Are you able to deal with this and are you prepared to have items in your house urinated on? It is reasonably common and locking your cat in a small cage for days on end is NOT a solution!

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11. Do you have the required heat mats and baby kitten food to raise the kitten with? If the queens milk dries up are you prepared to get up every few hours during the night to hand feed each surviving kitten. Are you able to worm the kittens every 2 weeks till 12 weeks of age and do flea treatments as required? The costs involved in these treatments will add to your costs considerably.

12. Are you prepared to potentially loose your beloved cat because of complications or have her put at risk of disease/infection because of the Stud cat you used?

12. If you work most days of the week how are you going to have the time to raise the kitten and put the hours of attention into them.

13. Where do you intend to house the kittens? Kittens aren't born litter trained and unless you have a suitable area you will end up with lovely deposits all over your house.

14. How do you intend to find suitable homes for the surviving kittens?

16. Are you prepared to pay the vet to microchip and vaccinate and desex) all the kittens. The kittens will likely require 2 vet checks resulting in 2 x consultation fees + the fees for the other services.

17. If the kittens become sick are you going to be prepared to deal with vomit, Diarrhoea etc. If the become dehydrated they will probably require a drip and constant 24 hour care at a vet.

18. Are you prepared to have the buyers of your kittens contacting you should anything go wrong and do you have the experience to give them the right advice?

19. Do you have the knowledge and information to be able to put together a care information pack to supply each new owner with. This should take you hours to put together and should include information on the kittens diet and required meals, A "what to do if" section including

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information on a variety of common things that can go wrong. Info on what medications, treatments and vaccinations etc are due and when. What foods are suitable at what age. Information on desexing and ongoing care of the cat.

20. Are you going to be able to supply the new owners with some basics to get them started and to prevent the kittens becoming sickly because of a dramatic change in diet.

21. Have you researched the lines of both the female cat you are breeding with and the potential stud to be able to inform the buyers of the kittens as to the history and the blood lines of any kittens you produce. You will need to be well informed so that you can keep your eye out for any genetic issues that may arise.

22. Are you going to be able to GUARANTEE the health of each and every kitten you sell? Are you happy to put it in writing and have a purchase contract? If not you will leave yourself open to legal battles and demands for refunds and reimbursements for vet fees and the cost of the kitten should a kitten you sell have complications. You will likely have to consult with a solicitor to ensure your documentation is appropriate.

23. Are you prepared to spend hours with each customer going through all the paperwork, answering all their questions, transferring microchip ownership information etc?

24. Are you aware that from the time of mating to the time the kittens are ready to go to their new homes will be 20+ weeks/5 months? This will mean no romantic weekends away or holidays during this time unless you have a responsible breeder with experience that is prepared to take on the responsibility for you.

25. What do you intend to do with the cats once they retire from breeding? Most cats will need to retire at about 6 or 7 years of age and rehoming older cats is not always easy.

26. Any cat you intend to breed with will need to be genetically and physically tested to ensure they are HIV/Felv free. Testing for HK and regular testing for HCM would also be needed. HCM tests need to be done through a specialist vet clinic such as SASH at a cost of hundreds

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of dollars per cat/per test.

I found the following article on this site (<http://www.cat-world.com.au/catworlddesexing.htm>) and thought that it was spot on so I would share it.....

### **I want my children to see the miracle of birth:**

If you want to show your kids the miracle of birth I'd suggest renting a nature video instead. You will see lots of animals giving birth. Bringing yet another litter of kittens into the world just because you want to show your children is not a valid excuse. Are you prepared for the unexpected? What if the queen gives birth to dead kittens, or deformed ones? How will your kids feel if the kittens fail to thrive after the first few days. Are you prepared to show them the miracle of death also?

### **I can't afford to desex my cat:**

Desexing is a relatively cheap operation, and if money is an issue are you prepared for the unexpected? what would happen if the cat needed expensive veterinary care after a car accident or being attacked by another cat? Pet ownership is a responsibility, and every person considering getting a pet should be fully aware of the costs, and demands before making a decision. Cats can live for up to 20 years, and can cost quite a sum of money. The cost of desexing your cat is a mere drop in the ocean compared to the potential costs if you keep the cat entire. For example:

If the queen has problems giving birth, she may need an emergency caesarean.

The queen can develop mastitis, again requiring veterinary care. If your queen develops mastitis, it may fall upon you to hand feed the kittens, every 2-4 hours (day & night). After they have been fed, you will need to stimulate them to go to the loo.

As stated above, there are several health risks associated with keeping an entire cat. All of which can be costly to have treated.

There is also the moral debate. Every year, millions of cats are euthanised because there just aren't enough homes for them. There are shelters all over the world full of cats who desperately need a good home & somebody to love them. Each pet owner should consider this before adding to the overpopulation of cats by breeding their own cat.

If you are serious about becoming a breeder, you should buy the best purebred cat money can buy, and register yourself with one of the many cat clubs. Before breeding your first litter, you should spend several months or even years researching the ins & outs of feline husbandry, genetics, disease & breeding. You will also need to know if your breed of choice is prone to any health/genetic defects. If so, can they be tested for? Arm yourself with as much knowledge as you possibly can. There is far more to breeding than putting a male & a female together & waiting 63 days.

Both male & female can be desexed from approximately 10 weeks of age. For more information on early desexing check out the following article by copying and pasting this link: <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/Health/spay-neuter.html>