

Ten Lives Cat Rescue - Barn Cat Homing Policy

Effective Date: 1st October 2024

Approved By: Ten Lives Cat Rescue Board of Directors

Reviewed By: Meg Murphy

Next Review Date: October 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures and guidelines for homing barn cats through Ten Lives Cat Rescue. This programme provides a humane solution for cats that are not suitable for traditional indoor pet homes due to their feral or semi-feral behaviour, but still deserve a safe and caring environment. Barn cats are typically placed in barns, stables, warehouses, or similar outdoor environments where they can thrive while providing natural pest control.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers, and potential barn cat adopters involved in the barn cat homing process. It governs the placement of all cats identified as suitable for barn or outdoor living under the care of Ten Lives Cat Rescue.

3. Eligibility Criteria for Barn Cat Placement

Potential barn cat adopters must meet the following criteria to ensure a safe and appropriate environment for the cats:

1. Property Requirements:

- The property must include a safe and secure shelter for the barn cats, such as a barn, stable, outbuilding, or similar structure that provides protection from weather and predators.

2. Environment:

- Barn cats must have access to a suitable area where they are safe from traffic, aggressive animals, and other potential dangers. Rural, farm, or semi-rural locations are preferred.

3. Care and Feeding Commitment:

- Even though barn cats are more independent, they still require daily care. Adopters must commit to providing fresh food, water, and ongoing veterinary care as needed.

4. Barn Cat Relocation Protocol:

- The adopter must be willing to follow the recommended relocation process to help the cats acclimate to their new environment. This typically involves keeping the cats in an enclosed space for a period of 2-4 weeks before they are allowed to roam freely.

4. Types of Cats Suitable for Barn Placement

Barn cats generally fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Feral or Semi-Feral Cats:**
 - Cats that are not socialized to humans and prefer minimal human interaction. These cats are often happiest living in a more natural, outdoor environment.
2. **Under-Socialized Cats:**
 - Cats that are not comfortable living indoors as pets but can thrive in a barn or outdoor setting where they can hunt, explore, and have limited contact with humans.
3. **Former Stray Cats:**
 - Cats that may have lived outdoors for most of their lives and are not adjusting well to indoor environments, but still need a safe place to live.
4. **Cats with Behavioural Issues:**
 - Cats with behavioural problems (e.g., aggression or extreme fearfulness) that prevent them from being suitable as indoor pets may thrive in an outdoor environment.

5. Adoption Process for Barn Cats

The process for adopting a barn cat through Ten Lives Cat Rescue includes the following steps:

1. **Application Submission:**
 - Potential adopters are required to submit an online application, outlining the details of the property, the available shelter, and their experience with animals.
2. **Application Review:**
 - The application will be reviewed by the barn cat programme coordinator to ensure the adopter meets the criteria for a safe and secure barn cat environment.
3. **Property Assessment:**
 - A home visit or virtual property assessment will be conducted to ensure that the location is suitable for barn cats.
4. **Adoption Fee:**
 - A nominal adoption fee may be charged to cover the cost of the cats' spaying/neutering, worming and vet health check. This fee helps ensure the adopter is committed to the long-term care of the cats.
 - Standard Fee: €50 per cat. In usual circumstances, a minimum of two bonded cats from the same colony/place of origin will be rehomed together.

- Fee Waiver: In some cases, fees may be waived for adopters providing homes for multiple barn cats or for cats with special needs.

5. Barn Cat Relocation Period:

- Adopters must agree to confine the barn cats in an enclosed area for a minimum of 2-4 weeks to help them acclimate to their new environment. Ten Lives Cat Rescue will provide detailed instructions and support for this process.

6. Post-Adoption Support:

- Ten Lives Cat Rescue will offer ongoing support for adopters, including guidance on how to properly care for barn cats and advice on any challenges that arise during the acclimation period.
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6. Responsibilities of the Adopter

Adopters of barn cats agree to the following responsibilities:

1. Food and Water:

- Adopters must provide daily fresh food and water. While barn cats may hunt, they cannot rely solely on hunting for their nutritional needs.

2. Shelter:

- The barn or other outbuilding must offer safe, weatherproof shelter that protects the cats from extreme temperatures, rain, and snow. This shelter should be free from any hazards such as dangerous chemicals, sharp objects, or machinery.

3. Veterinary Care:

- Adopters must ensure the barn cats receive routine and emergency veterinary care as needed, including regular worming, flea and tick prevention, and any other medical attention.

4. Acclimation Process:

- Adopters must confine the barn cats in an enclosed area for a minimum of 2-4 weeks to allow them to adapt to their new surroundings. This helps prevent them from wandering off and ensures they recognize their new home.

5. Safety Measures:

- The adopter should make efforts to minimize risks such as exposure to dangerous predators, road traffic, or other animals that might pose a threat to the cats.
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7. Return Policy

In the event that the adopter is unable to continue caring for the barn cats, they are required to return the cats to Ten Lives Cat Rescue. The following guidelines apply:

- 1. Return Timeframe:**
 - Cats may be returned at any time, but the adopter must notify Ten Lives Cat Rescue and arrange a mutually agreeable return process.
 - 2. Notification:**
 - The adopter must provide advance notice to Ten Lives Cat Rescue of the need to return the cats, allowing time for arrangements to be made for their safe transfer.
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8. Special Considerations

- 1. Multiple Barn Cats:**
 - Barn cats often thrive in pairs or small groups. Adopters are encouraged to adopt two or more cats together to provide companionship and mutual support.
 - 2. Health Status of Cats:**
 - All barn cats will be spayed or neutered and vet checked prior to adoption.
 - 3. Ongoing Monitoring:**
 - Adopters are encouraged to stay in touch with Ten Lives Cat Rescue for updates on the barn cats' well-being and can reach out if any issues arise.
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9. Confidentiality

All information provided by adopters during the barn cat adoption process is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of processing the application and ensuring the well-being of the cats.

10. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as needed, by the Board of Directors. Any amendments must be approved by the board and will take effect immediately.