



Showing Your Household Pet Kitten or Cat

Does your family's pet cat have an easy, outgoing, friendly personality? If so, he or she could be an excellent candidate for showing as a Household Pet (HHP)! Household Pets are non-pedigreed cats, or in some instances, pedigreed cats with disqualifying traits. Most cats that can't be shown in one of the pedigreed cat classes are eligible to be shown in HHP class! Because the Nashville Cat Club believes that ALL cats are beautiful, we encourage you to consider showing your special pet in HHP class. This is a class about fun, beauty and personality, not perfection in meeting any standard. Some exhibitors choose to only exhibit at local shows; others will travel to many shows throughout the show season. Although no National scoring is in place at this time, Household Pets are scored for Regional awards. In addition, we like to support a competitive, fun, and educational place for owners to show their cats, meet other fanciers, and maybe even discover that special breed that's perfect for them to show in pedigree classes.

General Eligibility

Almost any cat will be eligible as a HHP. There are some restrictions:

1. The cat cannot be descended from wild blood. CFA has a general policy that seeks to protect cats in the wild, and does not believe it is appropriate to encourage them to be removed from the wild for breeding to domestics.
2. The cat cannot be declawed.
3. The cat must be at least 4 months old to participate.
4. Any cat over 8 months of age must be spayed or neutered. CFA supports the welfare of all cats, including those in shelters and awaiting homes. We see the value in supporting the careful and considered breeding of pedigreed cats; but under no circumstances do we want to encourage the breeding of Household Pets.
5. Pedigreed and/or registered cats with disqualifying or other unshowable traits are welcome in HHP classes. Although some HHP's are pedigreed cats that can't be shown for various reasons (straight-eared Scottish Folds is a good example or a Manx with a full length tail), the vast majority are cats of mixed heritage, resulting in a lovely display of coat textures, color patterns and eye color for judges and spectators to admire.

Entering the Show

Check the Exhibitor section of the CFA website (www.cfa.org) for shows in your area. You can also check out the Cat Shows US!! website at www.catshows.us. There you will find a flyer for the show of your choice. It will contain the information you need to enter your cat. You can download a PDF entry form to print out and mail to the entry clerk, or you can choose to enter online if you prefer. If you mail a printed entry form, be sure to enclose your payment. Online entries require you to mail payment within ten (10) days, however, if the show is less than ten days away, you can pay at the door when you arrive for the show.

If this is your first show, you might have questions about how to complete the entry form. If so, contact the Household Pet coordinator listed on the show flyer, who will be happy to assist you.

Preparing for the Show

Your HHP must be bathed and presented in good condition, with clean eyes, ears and coat. Your HHP must also be free of fleas, ear mites or any infectious or contagious illness. You should have your cat inoculated by a licensed veterinarian against feline enteritis, feline rhinotracheitis, calici virus and rabies and tested for feline leukemia virus before entry. Front and rear claws must be clipped. No declawed cats may be entered. These are the same requirements of pedigreed competition, and are an owner's duty to a beloved pet.

When preparing to show your HHP, it's a good idea to get him/her used to bathing and grooming, traveling in the car, noisy places, and being petted/handled by other people. An excellent way to help train your kitty is to take him to the pet store with you. A harness and leash will allow you to let him out of the carrier while in the store so he can interact with other customers and learn to expand his comfort zone.

Show Day

The day of the show has finally arrived! Your kitty has been bathed, groomed, and is in top condition for the show. Plan to arrive early enough to set up your benching area and get your kitty settled in before judging starts.

When you check in, you will receive your catalog, pay any fees that are due and locate your benching area. Each cage is 21"x42"x21" and is divided into two "half cages." Your entry assigns you a half cage. You can, at your option, purchase the other half of the cage when you enter your cat so he can have more space. This is what most people do if they only have one cat entered. Your cage and benching table must be covered, so bring something along for that purpose. Sheets, towels, or anything that can be draped work well as cage covers. If you plan to continue showing your cat, you might want to make a set of pretty cage curtains to fit the cage. Cage curtains can be as simple or

elaborate as you want. An internet search will locate numerous websites with instructions on how to make curtains, as well how to set up your benching area.

Grooming items you may want to bring to the show hall:

1. Grooming tools like combs and brushes. Chamois cloths can be used to slick up a short haired cat.
2. Wet wipes to clean up any unexpected accidents that might happen.
3. Paper towels.
4. Facial tissues (very helpful to pick up unwanted moisture from your cats coat!)
5. Cotton squares or rounds and a bottle of saline or multipurpose solution (for contact lenses) for cleaning eyes before you go to the ring.
6. Litter box and scoop. Litter is supplied by the Club for use in the show hall.
7. Food and water from home. Sometimes water from other places can upset your cat's stomach.
8. Any items that kitty may need in the hotel if you are staying overnight.
9. An enthusiastic spirit and readiness to learn and have a lot of fun.

Your cat will be listed in the catalog with a number assigned to it, called the exhibit number. When your number is called, simply do your last minute grooming, then bring your cat to the ring and place it in the cage that has your number on top. Some clerks will give you a "grooming call" – that is your notice to start getting your cat ready for the ring.

Household Pets are primarily judged on cleanliness, ability to be handled, health, condition, and personality. There is no written standard for HHP – it is the judge's preference as to how they are ranked in finals. In this class, judges are free to evaluate cats subjectively and often encourage exhibitor participation. Some of the cats have very interesting histories which owners are sometimes invited to share with the judge and audience. So don't be shy! Each HHP exhibit is evaluated by the judge, using criteria of condition and beauty. Personality and temperament are also extremely important factors in a successful HHP. After being judged, each cat receives a red and white Merit ribbon. These cloth ribbons can be taken with you. When the clerk turns your exhibit number down after the judge hangs the Merit ribbon, take your cat back to the benching area. Of course you hope your cat will be brought back to the ring when the judge presents rosettes to his or her Top Ten picks in the HHP class. The excitement of your cat winning its first rosette is hard to beat, and is often the catalyst for further interest in pedigreed cats!

CFA has a New Bee website at <http://www.cfanewbee.org/> for new exhibitors. While some of the information is geared to exhibitors of pedigreed cats, most will also apply to Household Pets. It contains everything you need to know about showing your cat at a CFA cat show.