

## **FELINE HUSBANDRY: DISEASES AND MANAGEMENT IN THE MULTIPLE CAT ENVIRONMENT**

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American Veterinary Publications Inc., 5782 Thornwood Drive, Goleta, California 93117 1991 458, numerous figures and tables. Price: \$39.00 (ISBN 939674-29-7).

This book is a multi-author text on the economic and careful management of cats. It is stated in the preface to the text that the comparatively thin veneer of domestication and the distinct constitutional nature of domestic cats make them one of the most difficult animal species to keep and breed under modern conditions of confinement and intensification. The book offers 2 approaches to ensure optimum health and reproduction in domestic cats: further domestication by careful selective breeding and the optimisation of conditions in multiple-cat environments. Chapters on the history of cats and cat breeds, genetics and breeding programmes, reproduction and reproductive disorders, common infectious diseases, behaviour, nutrition, toxicology and cattery management are thus presented.

The first chapter includes information on the history and evolution of *Felis catus* as well as a description and illustration of each of the different breeds of cats. The next chapter deals with a description of the basics of genetics, colour variation in the cat, variation in coat hair, physical variation, genetic disorders, developmental anomalies and breeding programmes. This is appropriately followed by a chapter which contains information on reproductive physiology, mating behaviour, vaginal cytology, pregnancy diagnosis, parturition, manipulation of reproduction and reproductive disorders. A major part of the book (126 pages) deals with common infectious diseases of multiple-cat environments. In the introduction to this chapter, basic terminology and the factors which influence the precipitation of clinical signs of disease are very aptly discussed. In the excellent chapter on behaviour, the tremendous importance and popularity of cats as primary pets, are highlighted. The contribution on nutritional disorders could have been improved upon by the inclusion of examples of diets, commercial and home-made, for specific nutritional needs. The diagnosis, treatment and various classes of toxins (rodenticides, insecticides, herbicides, avicides, metals, plants, snake bites, household products and common drugs) are discussed in the chapter on toxicology. The book is concluded with a chapter on housing and management of cats.

The book contains numerous black and white figures, tables and sketches. Each section is concluded with a list of references and the reader is at times encouraged to consult these for more detailed information on a specific topic.

Despite the fact that the book has been orientated largely towards American readers, it is a must for anybody in South Africa with an interest in the domestic cat. It aims to promote good husbandry practices, which as stated by the authors, is a moral obligation for everyone involved in the human-animal interaction.

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