



The Time is Meow

Regulation of cat breeding and extreme cat breeds

Why it matters

Cat breeding is currently unregulated, with no adequate safeguards to protect cats and their kittens. Female cats in ill health may be overbred, giving birth to repeated litters in poor conditions and producing kittens that are sick and diseased.

Worryingly, there is a market in the breeding of cats with extreme characteristics, such as ultra-flat-faced Persians who may suffer from breathing difficulties or Scottish Fold cats with floppy, bent-over ears arising due to a genetic disorder affecting cartilage development in the whole body. Such breeds look cute and can generate a large profit for breeders, but the cats themselves are left facing a lifetime of suffering and possibly a shortened life. Health conditions including kidney disease and breathing difficulties are common in extreme breeds leaving owners with expensive veterinary bills and pets with complex needs.

Most companion animal vets (86%) have treated conformation-related health problems in brachycephalic, flat-faced breeds of cat, such as Persians and exotic shorthairs¹.



Lily was gravely ill when she came into Cats Protection's National Cat Adoption Centre. A vet confirmed she had suffered years of neglect and had given birth to repeated litters for all of her 10 years of life.

Having never had the chance to fully recover, Lily's kidneys were failing. Despite her ill health Lily was still an attentive mum, desperately trying to feed her kittens even when she was too sick and weak to eat herself. Sadly, despite Lily's best efforts, she died, leaving four kittens behind.

Turn over to read about the Scottish Fold breed

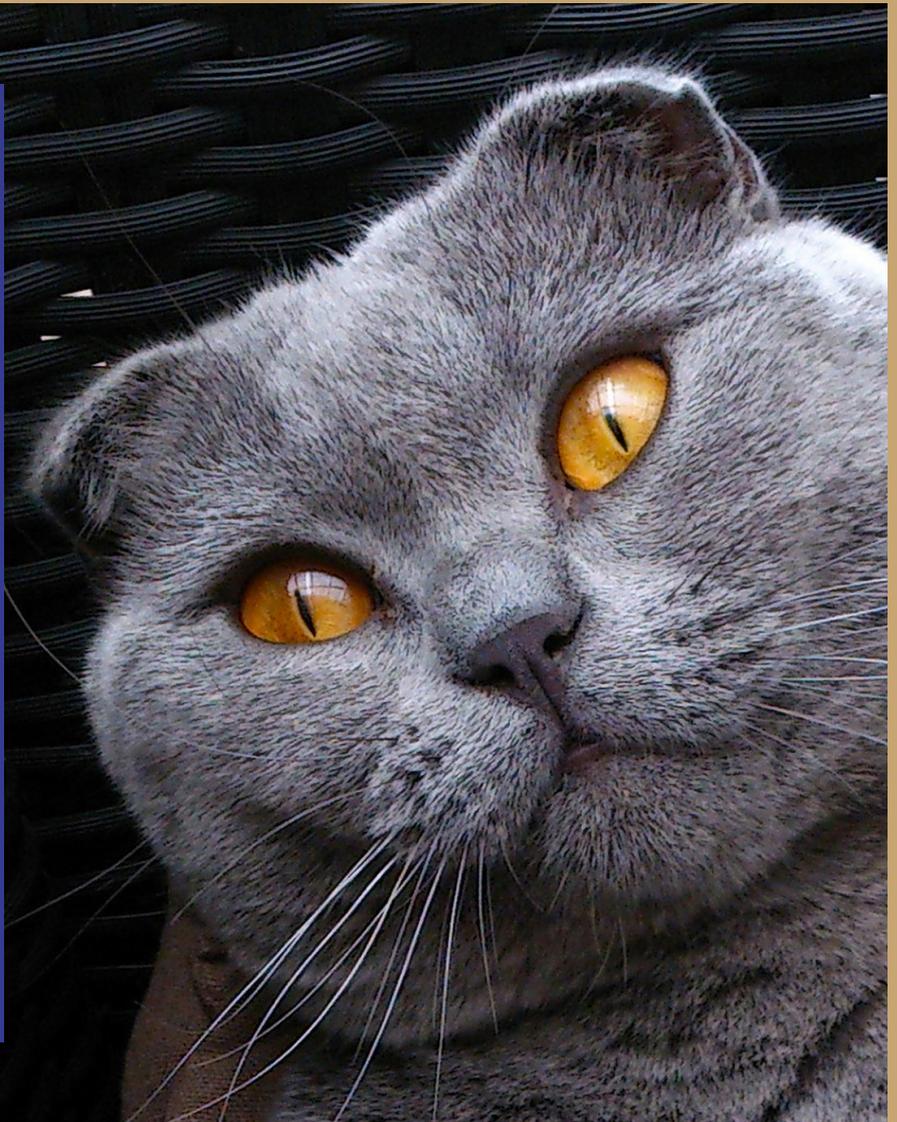


What the government can do

1. Regulate cat breeding, as is already the case for dog breeding. Regulations should require regular inspections of licensed breeders. Regulations should also set limits such as the number of litters a female cat can have and a maximum age after which breeding should cease.
2. Ban the commercial breeding of certain extreme breeds such as the Scottish Fold, Munchkin and ultra-flat-faced Persians, and introduce compulsory testing for known inherited diseases.
3. Work with animal welfare organisations to raise public awareness of the welfare and behavioural issues of certain extreme breeds and wildcat hybrids.

A crippling defect: the painful life of a Scottish Fold

Ruthlessly bred for their misshapen and deformed ears, Scottish Fold cats are virtually guaranteed to lead a life of suffering and pain. The intentional inbreeding of these cats has resulted in an inherited defect that causes abnormalities with joints and bone growth, an inflexible tail and short, stiff legs. Arthritis is rife among the breed and many Scottish Folds will be unable to perform normal cat behaviours like pouncing and jumping due to painful early-onset arthritis. Long-term pain relief is frequently required to cope. Quality of life can become so poor that euthanasia of young Scottish Fold cats is not uncommon².



For further information about our advocacy work visit www.cats.org.uk/timeismeow or email advocacy@cats.org.uk

¹ British Veterinary Association's Voice of the Veterinary Profession survey polled 671 veterinary surgeons across the UK in May/June 2017

² www.ufaw.org.uk/cats/scottish-fold-osteocondrodysplasia