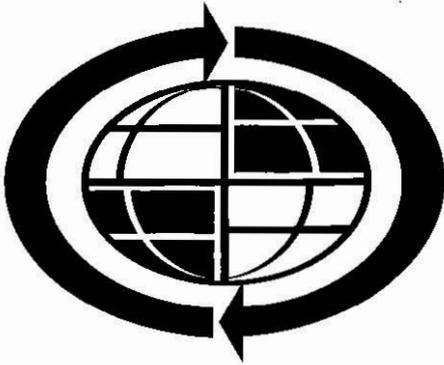


NEWS and REVIEW



COMPANION ANIMALS

Barn Cat Care

Barn cats are often thought to represent the pinnacle of domestic feline independence, but in truth, the barn cat fares no better than any other domestic cat in coping with hunger, disease and physical injury. The domestication process has created an animal which, while retaining many wild characteristics, cannot be considered truly self-sufficient. Inadequate shelter, mice in short supply, farm accidents and increased susceptibility to disease contribute to the high mortality rate among barn cats. The public may also compound the problem by foisting unwanted kittens on farmers who neither need them nor have the resources to care for them.

The Humane Society of Harford County, Maryland recently published an article which contained several suggestions to farmers and the general public for upgrading the care of barn cats (J. Townsend, *Humane News*, Fall 1979, p.4):

- (1) Supplement the cats' diet with commercial cat food. Hungry cats do not hunt any more intensively (and thus do not make better mousers) than well-fed cats.
- (2) Alter barn cats. No firm correla-

tion exists between large numbers of cats and better rodent control on a given farm.

- (3) Attempt to socialize the cats by cultivating a small colony of gentle, friendly cats that will accept handling by a veterinarian or other humans.
- (4) Vaccinate cats against distemper and rabies.
- (5) Do not leave kittens on farms as they are even less equipped to deal with the stresses of barn life.
- (6) Seek other methods of rodent control.

In essence, the care of barn cats should duplicate the care given by any responsible companion animal owner. The barn cat may be 'wild' in the sense of being less habituated to contact with people, but its basic welfare needs are no different from those of the most docile house cat.

LABORATORY ANIMALS

Alternative Carcinogen Detection

The Felix-Wankel Awards are given for research in animal welfare or in the development of alternatives to laboratory animals (See *Int J Stud Anim Prob* 1:63, 1980). Professor Hans Marquardt (University of Hamburg) and Professor Bruce Ames (University of California, Berkeley) received awards in 1977 for their research into the development of *in vitro* tests for detecting potential carcinogens. Professor Marquardt's work employs mammalian cell culture systems, while Professor Ames has concentrated on using a bacterial (*Salmonella*) test, now commonly known as the Ames test.

Much of the impetus for developing short-term *in vitro* carcinogenicity screening procedures stems from consumer and regulatory pressures to test all chemicals which are currently in widespread use or which are about to be introduced into the environ-