

## Caring For Your New Barncat(s)

Relocating feral and outdoor cats is not as easy as physically placing them in their new outdoor home. Cats are very territorial, and if you simply place them in a new location, they will try to find their way back to where they came from, often times killing themselves in the process. Fortunately, feral and outdoor cats can be acclimated to a new territory fairly easy and in a short amount of time.

1. Place the cat in a large cage or kennel within the building they will be calling home. A room or any enclosed area will work for acclimating, just be sure the cat cannot roam freely until it establishes this space as its new territory. Give the cat a small towel lined carrier with the door held open (a small bungee cord works well for this), food and water, and a litter box. Clay litter is better than clumping in this environment, as clumping litter can get wet or in the water bowl, making a sticky mess that is more difficult to clean up. See diagram of re-homing cage on page 2.

2. Clean the litter box and give fresh food and water daily. This can easily be done by closing the cat inside the carrier (the one you have bungeed open) to keep the cat safe while you are tending to its needs.

3. After 1-2 weeks (can be up to 4 weeks), you can open the cage door. Food and water should be kept both inside and outside of the cage. Once the cats leave, they may never want to go back into the cage. **DO NOT RELEASE IF IT IS RAINING or the POTENTIAL FOR RAIN** – Cats find their home by scent and rain will wash it away. Waiting one more day will not hurt.

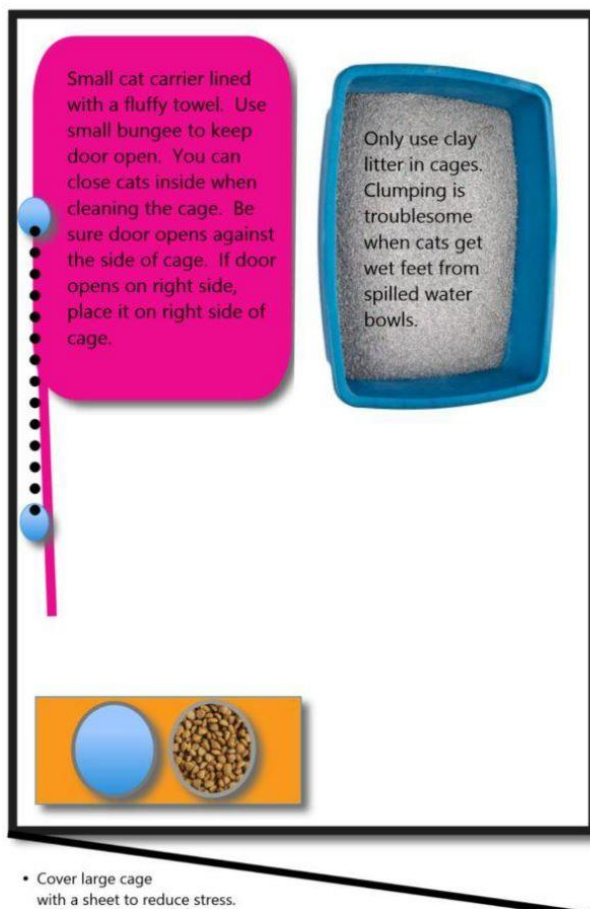
3a. If the cage is located inside of a barn or building, it's best to close all doors and windows in the barn, open the cage door in the evening, then leave. The cat will want to explore its new surroundings all night, as they are nocturnal. By morning it will have found good hiding places, although it may prefer the security of its cage. You can ease the transition by continuing to place their food and water in the cage for a few days with the door open. You will need to continue providing daily food and water after the cage is removed. Cats are territorial creatures. They will usually maintain a home base once their scent has been established, a continuous food source is provided, and they feel safe.

4. After two more weeks, the cats should be comfortable in their new home and the cage can be taken away (unless the cat enjoys sleeping in there!). The cat has now established its new territory and will likely stay.

5. Caring for your barn cat is as easy as providing fresh food and water daily. Some barn cat caregivers keep litter pans inside their barns, but often are rarely used. **Never rely on outdoor cats to sustain themselves on rodents alone, they need a nutrient rich diet to sustain a healthy life.**

## Helpful Tips

- The cats need to bond with their caretaker. Regular interactions will help create this bond.
- The cats need a regular feeding schedule; both morning and night.
- The litter box needs to be cleaned every day during acclimation.
- Water needs to be kept clean (as well as added to).
- You can feed the cat(s) wet food specifically in the evening during the acclimation process. Continue that practice after the cage door is open to help encourage them to return for the evening feeding.
- You may be able to tell how well the acclimation period is going by how the cats react when you open the door to feed them. If the cats are settling in comfortably, they will brush up against the feeder's arm. But don't worry, this may never happen with really feral cats.
- Cats like toys, especially the kind of longer rope or feather toys that allow them to interact with/play with you from a distance.
- If you have a barn/shelter that you can close up at night, please do so. It will help protect your cats from predators.
- Make sure you have an area that the cat can climb into for hiding and sleeping (upside down box can work)



### Setting up a cat for rehab or rehoming.

#### Needs:

- Cage at least 36" deep.
- Small cat carrier lined with a towel.
- Small bungee cord to hold door open.
- Litter box or shallow cardboard box.
- Clay litter, not clumping.
- Hand towel (for under food bowls)
- Food and water bowls.
- Food & Water

#### Note:

Towel under bowls will soak up spilled water.

Keep water bowl farthest from litter.

Keep the cage on a table if possible to maintain control so cats don't bolt when initially opening large cage.