



Dear Cat-Loving Humans

Many times we find ourselves in situations and circumstances that we didn't ask for and wouldn't have chosen. Some of us are fed, trapped and sterilised at safe locations by kind people. But some people believe that we are a dangerous nuisance and don't want us in their surroundings and we are either chased away or killed in the cruellest ways.

We want to ask you very kindly, if you have a space on your small-holding or farm, to give us a place to call home. Not as your pets, but as wild feral cats.

All we ask for is a warm place to sleep, a bowl of food and fresh water. We are excellent hunters and if we are well kept and fed we will keep your barns, stables and other outside buildings free of rodents and other pests. We don't transmit any diseases to humans and before we move in, we will be inoculated and sterilised. We need to stay closed in a room for 2 weeks before we can be allowed to roam free.

*If you have space for some of us, please contact:
Engela James - 083 468 3143*



From: The Feral Cat Population



THE FERAL CATS

Feral cats are the offspring of lost or abandoned pet cats who are not spayed or neutered. Females can reproduce two to three times a year and their kittens, if they survive, will become feral without any contact with people. Cats can become pregnant as early as 4-5 months of age, and the number of cats rapidly increases without intervention by caring people. Feral cats typically live with a group of related cats as a colony and defend a specific territory where food (a restaurant dumpster) and shelter (beneath a roof or abandoned building) are available. Since feral cats typically fear strangers, it is likely that people may not realise that feral cats are living nearby, because the cats are rarely seen.

Firstly, it is absolutely essential for any institution or residential complex to maintain a colony of feral cats in order to keep the rodent population under control and to keep cats not belonging to the colony out. It serves **no** purpose to try to remove such a colony, since new cats will simply be drawn back. Studies have proven that trap-neuter and release (TNR) is the single most successful method of stabilising and maintaining healthy feral cat colonies with the least possible cost to residents, while providing the best life for the animals themselves. This allows the number of cats in the colony to diminish over time through natural attrition, as cats get old and die from natural causes.

The colony should be maintained wisely in the following ways:

Sterilisation

As many of the cats as possible should be sterilised and returned to prevent further expansion.

A colony of unneutered/unspayed feral cats can produce a number of problems including:

A growing population of cats

Frequent and loud noise from fighting and mating behavior

Strong foul odors from unneutered male cats spraying to mark their territory

Flea infestations

Visible suffering from dying kittens and injured animals

The cost of sterilising a cat is R250.00 and for more information i.e.w trapping please contact a feral trapper or your nearest vet.

Feeding

The ferals of the colony should be fed regularly in order to provide at least a percentage (ideally 70%) of their nutritional needs. This ensures that they are healthy enough to keep rodents and strange cats at bay. (If the cats are not fed, they will **not** go elsewhere, but will become a greater problem by trying to encroach closer to human habitations as they grow hungrier and more desperate. Their condition will also deteriorate, eventually resulting in their inability to keep rodents and strange cats at bay or to resist disease.

A well fed cat is the best hunter!
(volunteers can assist with the feeding)

Also note that humans cannot contract feline diseases, and that cats can not cause health problems in humans, except ringworm and respiratory allergies, both of which usually only result upon direct or very close contact with cats, which is unlikely in the case of feral cats. Also note that, although the cats may irritate some people by getting onto their cars, in our experience rats cause far greater damage to car engines.

