

To Judy Sugden, TIBCS Editor,
APRIL 18, 1998

I have heard through our trusty grapevine (It was printed first in the March Bulletin—Editor's Corner—*Editor*), that the upcoming September TIBCS Bulletin will be featuring Leopard Cats and Foundation generations. I must admit, I do not feel that this action would be in the best interest of our Bengal breed, and am therefore writing to voice my objection. I am forwarding this to the rest of the TIBCS board, as well as other members, in hopes that this issue will be reconsidered.

People like Von Pilcher have fought long and hard to separate the Bengals from the foundation generations, to avoid legislative action that would affect our breed. Even TICA, has designed a system to distinguish the foundation cats from our SBT's. We have protested to national magazines about the use of leopard cats and foundations cats in breeders' ads. But now, in direct contradiction, the TIBCS bulletin will be featuring them in our own publication.

There are International organizations that are currently considering the acceptance of Bengals into their registries. For them, a key issue is the domesticity of the Bengal. I feel that it is counterproductive for our members to promote so heavily the wild heritage of our cats. These organizations are wanting to hear that our cats are totally domestic, and local breeders are struggling to convince them of that.

I fully realize the role the Leopard Cat and Foundation generations have played in the history of our breed. I also appreciate the work and dedication involved in raising these cats and getting them to reproduce. These cats are very special, and I appreciate their beauty and uniqueness as much as anyone. Their owners are rightfully proud of possessing such awesome animals. This is not a new scenario, the owners of foundations cats wanting to show off their beautiful cats.

Mainly, I question whether an issue of the Bulletin should be dedicated to these cats. I feel that if they want to promote (market) their special line, they should put together their own publication, separate from the TIBCS bulletin, at their own expense. It would be nice to see what the different Leopard Cats look like, and to be able to relate to them in our future pedigrees. But this should be something the individual ALC owners should provide, not TIBCS.

Let us realize that the bulletin is seen by many of our judges. By featuring the foundation cats in our bulletin, it may be construed that our goal is to have SBT Bengals that look like Leopard Cats. Jean Mill has explained, many times, why this is not a wise course of action. There are breeders out there that need to be reminded of this. They are misleading the public and other breeders by promoting foundation cats so heavily, giving the impression that is what Bengals look like. That is not being realistic, or honest.

I have read the letter that Hugh Price sent to the TIBCS board, and I agree with him completely.

I am requesting that the TIBCS board discuss and vote on whether or not the foundation cats and Leopard Cats should be featured so prominently in our Bulletin. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Gene Ducote
Gogees Bengals

FOUNDATION ISSUE DEBATE

Judy Sugden Responds---

Thank you very much, Gene.

The board most definitely shares your concerns, as do I. I am convinced that it needs to be done now and by TIBCS for the reasons below. But at the same time we do definitely need to reiterate and emphasize the delicacies and problems involved in such an undertaking, and couch it safely.

Whatever the Board decides, I will definitely print your carefully thought out and well written letter in this issue of the Bulletin as a reminder to us all as to where we are going and what we are doing.... or better yet ...and maybe also...(and why this Foundation Lookbook is proposed to be in an issue featuring articles). Will you expand this into an article to run in the September issue that will caution and address again our domestic stance (so it is not misconstrued as a promotion of ALCs or their copies? Maybe emphasize the domestic Bengal features that improve upon the ALC genes. (purr, glitter, clear coat, pelt <basically all those things that breeders currently advertize as Bengals (and which YOU, Gene, first got together in a convincing bundle))... while still working TO ADD to our already stunningly beautiful bengals a few more ALC derived traits like whited tummies, etc.>). Should be able to find/get others to help all the angles.

Certainly all your points are true and well taken. My stance is all of yours. But TIBCS has many responsibilities and purposes under education and the betterment and promotion of the breed.

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Anthony Hutcherson Responds to the Bengals-L email list-

To all,

An important "issue" is before us. It was my idea to do such an issue a few years ago. It seemed shameful to me that we were not keeping a close record of our foundation cats, the cats that hand deliver those precious ALC genes down to the SBT domestic Bengal, literally and figuratively. As a breed theory and history buff I recognized how valuable the beginning animals are to any breed. Though in most cases these animals are not perfect examples even just one picture can help current breeders in determining success or failure in retaining, losing or adding various traits.

The stud book issue allows for some measure of gauging progress but as it has traditionally become a showcase for SBT Bengals it is not complete. There is no better example of what is phenotypically retained, lost or added as the Bengal moves from ALC bred to domestic to SBT Bengal.

Further the stud book allows a tiny window in determining the vigor of our breed. By doing an issue to feature foundation cats the window is enlarged for a more complete picture of our breed. By featuring ALC lines either by including the ALC or its offspring we can inform and educate as to the number of ALC whose bloodlines exist in the Bengal further helping us to gauge vigor. If there is to come a time when outcrossing to ALCs is no longer allowed at least there would be one place where there was a record

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