

ICatCare joins FECAVA, FVE and UEVP to urge advertisers to ban the use of cat breeds with extreme conformation

International Cat Care's veterinary division, the International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM), is working with the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) to discourage the promotion of cat breeds with extreme conformation in advertising.

In recent years, veterinary professionals have seen an increase in the popularity of pedigree breeds with extreme body shapes and features, such as flat faces or folded ears. Though these features may seem endearing or striking to pet owners, many are unaware of the associated health and welfare issues that can result in lifelong suffering.

ISFM has created a letter in partnership with FECAVA, FVE and UEVP, which urges all companies that feature cats in their marketing materials to work collaboratively with veterinary professionals and pledge to avoid using such breeds in any advertisements.

Most severely affected are brachycephalic (flat-faced) cat breeds such as Persians, which suffer from difficulty breathing, skin and eye problems, as well as Scottish Folds, which develop painful arthritis from a young age due to cartilage abnormalities that are responsible for their folded ear shape.

Nearly 40% of veterinary professionals in the UK feel that exaggerated conformation in pedigree cats and dogs is the top welfare issue they would choose to resolve tomorrow if they could.¹ However, the impact of using these breeds in advertising and their popularity with celebrities and on social media influencing potential owners to choose them as pets cannot be overstated, with significant increases observed in the population of Scottish Folds and other pedigree cats in recent years.²

Dr Nathalie Dowgray, Head of ISFM, said:

"Seeing a cute cat in an advertisement can often be a trigger for people to seek out acquiring a cat of that breed without understanding the welfare concerns associated with some pedigree breeds. A rise in demand can lead to an increase in breeding practices that result in severe conformational issues and poorer welfare in these breeds. We encourage people to download this letter to use when they see breeds of concern being used in advertising, as health is always more important than looks."

A template letter to companies currently using cat breeds with extreme conformation is available to send to brands to encourage them to change their advertising standards here https://icatcare.org/app/uploads/2023/09/ISFM_FECAVA_FVE_UEVPAdvert_Letter.pdf. More information on health and welfare issues in pedigree cats can be found at <https://icatcare.org/our-campaigns/first-do-no-harm-breeding-of-pedigree-cats/>.

ISFM will continue to work with our partners across the sector to raise awareness of the health and welfare issues faced by cats bred with extreme conformation. For more

information and to download a template letter for dogs and other species, visit ([URL FECAVA/FVE/UEVP page](#))

References:

1. PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report 2023, Available from: <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/pdsa-animal-wellbeing-report/paw-report-2023>
2. Cats Protection. Cats and Their Stats 2022, Available from: <https://www.cats.org.uk/media/11908/cats-report-2022-uk.pdf>

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Notes to editors:

About the International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM)

The International Society of Feline Medicine is the veterinary division of the pioneering cat welfare charity International Cat Care. Trusted by vets and nurses, it provides a worldwide resource on feline health and wellbeing.

For more information, please visit <https://icatcare.org/veterinary/isfm/membership/>

About International Cat Care (iCatCare)

International Cat Care is a pioneering cat welfare charity. Since 1958 we've challenged cruelty, ignorance and misunderstanding to affect positive change in the lives of cats. With an estimated global population of 600 million cats, half of which are thought to be unowned, our work has never been more important.

The International Cat Care vision: A cat friendly world where each cat, owned and unowned, is treated with respect, compassion and understanding.

The International Cat Care mission: To enable more people to act in a cat friendly way to improve cat welfare

For more information, please visit <https://icatcare.org/> or <https://www.facebook.com/icatcare>

iCatCare's Cat Friendly Principles are available for download [here](#).

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