

Barn Cats “101”

Thank you for choosing placement of a barn cat through HAWS! The **Seeking Sanctuary** program is designed to give a home to cats that may be untamed, unsocial, or have problems using the litter box. In situations without any other resident “barn” cats, we suggest adopting them in pairs, as cats are social animals.

There is no fee for barn cat placement through HAWS, but we gladly accept donations in support of this important program.

Barn cat placement

Your “barn” cat will be spayed/neutered, vaccinated for rabies and tested for Feline Leukemia/FIV. In some cases, cats may also receive a FVRCP vaccination, dewormer and treatment for fleas and ear mites (as needed). In order to identify your cat as one that lives outdoors, it will receive an ear notch and/or a microchip.



While HAWS is unable to provide ongoing vet care for your barn cat(s), we strongly encourage owners to contact veterinary clinics in their area to find those that care for barn cats. If you are unable to find a clinic in your area, please contact HAWS for a referral. Also, for those cats that cannot be handled safely, live/humane traps can be rented from HAWS.

Acclimating a barn cat to its new home

Your new cat(s) should be confined for approximately 2-4 weeks. This will allow them to become familiar with their surroundings and know where to go for food and water once allowed to roam freely. We suggest using a tack room or an extra-large dog kennel for this process. During the adjustment time we suggest feeding canned food so the cat will associate the high value treat with its new feeding place (you do not need to continue to feed canned food once the cat is released). The cat should have access to a litter box even if one will not be used once that cat is released. Place a box or a smaller kennel inside the area facing away from the door; this will give the cat(s) a place to hide and feel safe when you come by to clean and feed.

Releasing your barn cat

Once your cat(s) is ready to start exploring its new home, you can simply open the door and let them roam free. It is important to do this during the day time so you can observe and watch for any problems that might occur. If you have other cats on the property they may scuffle and make odd noises during their initial encounters; this is perfectly normal and determines their social order. Within time they will learn to coexist.

Even though your barn cat’s main job will be to control the mice population, it is still important to offer food and water daily. Cats cannot live on mice alone. Feeding will also keep the cat(s) from wandering too far or finding another barn that offers food. Most cats will have a natural instinct to hunt for mice so withholding meals will not mean that they will catch more mice. Continue to feed your cat(s) in the same spot and call them when it is time to eat by saying “here kitty-kitty-kitty.” During the cold winter months we suggest making a cozy insulated shelter to keep your barn cat(s) warm and safe.

Please contact HAWS if you have any questions!

Our staff members will be happy to guide you through the process - call 262-542-8851, x0 and ask for Jessica R. or Jessica P., or email either of them at jessicar@hawspets.org or jessica@hawspets.org.