

## **FERAL CAT CARETAKERS' COALITION FEEDING PRIORITIES UNDER CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES**

**FIRST PRIORITY – FEEDING STATIONS MUST BE KEPT OUT OF SIGHT** with only those feeding knowing the exact location. This is to protect the food from being contaminated or destroyed. A water container must also be supplied and kept clean with fresh water.

**SECOND PRIORITY –** It is mandatory to have dry food available at all times in containers that will not be exposed to rain and fog. This may require innovative concealment and construction of special shelter-type covers.

**THIRD PRIORITY – HAVE A REGULAR FEEDING SCHEDULE – DRY** feeders are to be refilled, kept clean from debris and dirt, wet food plates or bowls (either dark brown or black) need to be cleaned and/or picked up each day to avoid exposing the feeding stations and complaints from the neighbors of trash-like appearance. Do not use white paper plates or anything that will draw attention. Any neglect or irresponsible actions will impact upon the ferals and may place their lives in jeopardy. **NEVER LET DOWN YOUR GUARD AND BECOME COMPLACENT WITH REGARD TO YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CARETAKING. THERE MAY BE PERSONS WHO WILL NOT TOLERATE THE CATS, NO MATTER HOW IMPROVED THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WILL USE ANY OPPORTUNITY TO REMOVE AND/OR DESTROY THEM.**

**FOURTH PRIORITY – IT IS BEST TO FEED AT THE SAME TIME EACH DAY.** They become used to you showing up. Cats are creatures of habit and this will assist you as well. Also, having dry food available keeps them from begging and searching for food in unsafe places, especially if you are late in arriving. **IF YOU CANNOT FEED ON YOUR DESIGNATED DAYS, ALWAYS ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO FILL IN FOR YOU. DO NOT LET MORE THAN A DAY GO BY WITHOUT SOMEONE CHECKING THE AREA.** Many things can happen in a 24 hour period that would require immediate attention. **VIGILANCE IS PART OF THE JOB. WE ARE THERE TO INSURE THEIR GOOD HEALTH AND SURVIVAL.**

**FIFTH PRIORITY – BE OBSERVANT** of those who show up for feeding. Check to see if they seem normal and there are no injuries or appearance of illness and take the necessary steps for their care. **ALSO,** notice if there are any newcomers without the ear nipped. They will need to be trapped, spayed and/or neutered and returned to your care.

SIXTH PRIORITY – DO NOT DISCUSS THE COLONY WITH STRANGERS. Do not give ANY INFORMATION as to how many there are or where they are. Be friendly, but vague. You do not need to identify yourself as their caretaker to anyone. If you are having a problem with any person in your area, contact us and we will advise you.

SEVENTH PRIORITY – TAKE SPECIAL CARE that the area where the ferals reside is kept clean from any unusual amount of feces. This will only be a concern if the colony is large in a limited space. Keep a spray bottle with a non-toxic odor deterrent and pick up any offending feces in a plastic bag and put into a garbage disposal container. We may not personally object to the presence of a bit of feces, but we have found that it is just one more reason for complaints. Even though there will be dog feces around, that is not our problem. We just see to it that we have covered ALL OF OUR BASES. There are some feral colonies in such close proximity to the neighbors, the Caretakers have large litter boxes installed in the area to avoid just such a problem.

AS CARETAKERS, WE HONOR AND PROTECT THOSE IN OUR CARE. WE TRY TO FORSEE ANY PROBLEMS THAT MAY OCCUR AND TAKE MEASURES TO CORRECT THEM. IF SOMEONE KNOWS YOU ARE THE CARETAKER AND COMPLAINS TO YOU, APOLOGIZE AND REASSURE THEM THAT THE PROBLEM WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF. IT IS USUALLY A NUSSIANCE SITUATION FOR THAT PARTICULAR PERSON AND CAN BE EASILY REMEDIED.

ALWAYS REMEMBER, WE ARE CARING FOR THE HOMELESS AND NEGLECTED. THEY ONLY HAVE US BETWEEN THEM, STARVATION, ABUSE OR EXTINCTION.

WE HAVE AN UNSPOKEN COVENANT WITH THE FERALS TO HONOR AND CARE FOR THEM. TO DO ALL THAT IS POSSIBLE TO SEE THEY ARE NEVER ABUSED OR NEEDLESSLY DESTROYED. THEY HAVE MUCH TO TEACH US ABOUT OURSELVES.

Dona Baker  
President and Founder

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