



## **FOOD & NUTRITION FERAL CATS & ELDERS**

**Food:** A good quality of food, both dry and canned is always recommended. We recommend the book, "The New Natural Cat", by Anitra Frazier as an excellent guidebook for cats in general. The many recipes and nutritional information will be a worthwhile investment in your feral cats.

**Your financial circumstances will probably determine what type of food you are able to provide your colony.** We want the best for our feral cats. Being informed about negative ingredients in certain types of cat food and how it is manufactured is important information everyone should know about. Most of us are familiar with the ingredients label – i.e. the first ingredient is the major portion of the food and so on. Even with inexpensive food, the first ingredient can be a factor to consider **such as a by-product** instead of corn meal as the first ingredient in dry and wet food. Your choices will be determined by how many feral cats you feed and what you can afford!

Food Banks can also be a resource for food. You can mix sardines, Mackerel and other products into the wet food and some banks carry cat food. Poultry can also be mixed into the food. Be creative if you are on a tight budget. Go to meat markets and bring home scraps to cook and mix.

### **Feral Cat Health on a budget:**

1. **Cleanliness of bowls is number one.** I wash all of the food bowls in the dishwasher to destroy bacteria. If you feed in plastic containers, either discard or use soap and water for cleaning. Be sure they do not blow around and the cats can easily get to the food. The bowls are set in either D-earth or soapy moat.
2. **Never add fresh food to old food (wet).** Clean bowls are supplied for each feeding and water containers are washed out with soap and water. Large gallon bottles are filled with tap water. Provide plenty of water. Water bowls get slimy and should be wiped out and cleaned when replenishing.

I mix the food in a large four-quart container and add supplements into the mix. In the winter, I bring two large thermos bottles filled with boiling water to warm the food and hot chicken broth.

3. Dry feeders 10-20 pounds, kept clean, free from ants, protected from the elements and out of sight!
4. I give the cats wet food treats, such as Fancy Feast, human grade tuna fish and Mackerel, boiled chicken, turkey and other goodies. They enjoy a change from the boring caldron of food I prepare for them. **Food is the most important aspect of their life and is good for their spirits.**
5. **I determine if there is enough food, by what is left over.** If there is no food left over, I add more until not all of the bowls are completely cleaned. It assures me that everyone has been fed adequately and no one arrived late to find an empty bowl. I use the same formula for the dry food. If there is wet food left over **consistently**; the amount needs to be reduced. Not relevant with the dry.
6. **It is vital to have wet food for the cats to provide supplements.** Elderly cats may not be able to eat the dry due to tooth loss or other issues with the mouth (which should be attended to by trapping) I have seen nearly starved older cats come to my colonies in search of food. Sometimes they would spit out and almost choke on the dry, but were able to eat and survive on the wet.
7. **NutraVet Brewers Yeast Formula** is a life saver for flea infestation. I mixt it into the dry food and shake it up well. If you do not have wet food, it also works in the dry.

**As a retired Yoga teacher I understand the movement of energy and practice sending loving thoughts to the cats as they are being fed. You are special to them and a loving energy can promote good health. Their food is the highlight of their day.**

**Supplements:** L-Lysine, Vitamin C, NutraVet Brewers Yeast Formula with Garlic (THE GARLIC IS POWDERED & PROCESSED) fresh garlic is not to be used. I ALSO USE Fish oil capsules. **Caution:** Begin by using the supplements sparingly, as they may not eat the food. Spread them out over several feedings and gradually build up to the dosage. We always use less than suggested on the directions and have had good results.