

Following is a breakdown of five types of breeders ... (in my opinion)

Hobby/Registered Breeders – Professional in every way other than most do not participate in shows. Follows CFA Breeder code of ethics and CFA cattery standard minimum requirements. Knowledgeable about feline genetics but leaves the science to the professional. Most Hobby breeders are familiar with the basic genetics of the breed and understand how to encourage procreation (mating) among their breeding stock, taking into account genealogy and characteristics to achieve the best results. Hobby breeders are fully registered with a cattery prefix. They purchase quality registered purebred cats with CFA breeder rights from other well-known catteries willing to share their “gene pool” to begin their breeding program and only breeds cats of the same breed. This type of breeder belongs to a Cat Association Club (i.e. CFA or TICA), and has all the heritage documentation and paperwork for their cats. Does all the genetic testing, has a spay/neuter contract, proper immunizations, and has a contract with a health guarantee, screens potential new owners and tries to match the kitten/cat with the best home. Overall quality care. Doesn't cage their cats, adheres to strict cleanliness, has social and active kittens. They care about food, bedding, litter, special toys and basic daily care. They are usually always available to the new owner for information, advice, etc. Willing to take back or assist in rehoming a kitten/cat that has been previously sold if the need arises. Maybe not as boisterous about the lineage of his/her program as a Show breeder would be because “pet quality” can be warranted back through the pedigree of the parents and are just as healthy and beautiful (traits) as “show quality” cats. Show breeders also produce and sell “pet quality” cats, it doesn't mean that a pet quality cat is not a good cat. Just not a show cat. Not everyone wants to show their cat and put their cat through such a lifestyle. They simply want a pet!

Show/Registered Breeders – A special group within the show classification; controlled breeding explains this type of breeder best. They follow all of the above requirements listed for Hobby breeders. Many of these breeders claim to be cage less but they have “some” of their cats caged /quarantined for periods of time whether for the showhall or for breeding purposes because of the need to control. Breeders (professional or not) are not required to have any formal training, they do not have to be educated in agricultural science or veterinary science. Some breeders professing to be professional breeders familiarize themselves with basics of the standard characteristics of the breed and are very knowledgeable due to years of experience but do not necessarily have a degree. This type of breeder enjoys participating in the showhalls around the country. While it is impressive to have a show quality (outstanding example of the breed that meets the “breed standard” closely) cat/kitten eligible for any type of exhibit ring, this doesn't mean that a “pet quality” cat/kitten is any less quality necessarily (i.e. show quality cat Vs pet quality) A pet quality cat/kitten can have the same characteristics, such as head, eyes, ears, tail, coat, condition etc. (known as the *standard of points*) as called for by the CFA standards of the breed (the breeder simply doesn't “show” the breeder cats) so, according to the Show/Registered Breeders having a lineage of show quality cats sets them apart from any other type of breeders. BUT it doesn't always mean the pet quality kitten that has minor cosmetic flaws (known as faults) such as a kink at the end of the tail, a locket of white fur, a misplaced marking etc. is not a good cat. Just not a show cat. Both show quality and pet quality cats should be in good physical health, and these cosmetic flaws (if any) have no impact on the health or the temperament of the cat. While it may sound callous to most companionate pet owners, this type of breeder considers the pet quality kitten as expendable. Pet quality just excludes the cat from becoming a show cat! Pet quality cats are perfect for pet homes that are not looking to show their cat (which is the majority of pet owners). Pet quality cats can also be shown, but should be entered into the “Household Pets (HHP)” group. This class is for mixed breed cats and purebred cats who don't meet the standard. The experienced breeder develops an “eye” for quality in their litters. Not every litter produces that one special kitten, but when the experienced breeder sees it, the bells and whistles ring out. This particular winning kitten that has been selected to present to the Fancy judges now gets the best care over the rest in the litter to begin conditioning/preparing this kitten for its show career beginning at three weeks of age on.

Backyard Breeders - A person who is motivated simply by profit and breeds with little or misguided effort towards selective breeding. Many (most) show breeders will assume anyone that breeds and does not show is a backyard breeder which is simply not true and very judgmental. Backyard breeders have probably purchased a cat from another backyard breeder who sold the kittens without qualifying and/or mentoring them. They pass themselves off as legitimate and sell cats that are usually sick or dying for a premium price. They breed a cat that is not registered or a cat that looks close enough to a specific breed to pass and start breeding and selling with no responsibility. They breed with little knowledge of emotional and physical safety procedures, and little concern for the overall wellbeing of the cat or kittens. Over all do not sell quality kittens. They usually do not have the kittens tested, immunized or offer any contract. Many backyard breeders' efforts for profit are legal, however there is a fine line between legality and safety, though, and you can influence efforts of local organizations by being vigilant and reporting suspicions of cruelty.

Kitten Mill Breeders - The absolute worst! Large commercial operations breeding many, many cats, over and over with little regard to the health or wellbeing of the cats and kittens involved. Increasing the risk that kittens will suffer from horrendous genetic defects and illnesses. The kittens from this type of breeder are considered substandard. They knowingly breed cats with faults. Buying one of these kittens can lead to a big expense and headaches for those who simply wanted a cute lovable kitten. Contact local animal rights organizations to report possible incidences of abuse or neglect in these situations.

Amateur/Non-registered Breeders - People who didn't get their cat spayed/neutered and ended up with a litter of kittens or unplanned pregnancy of their unaltered cats. They have no way to register cats or are not an active member of a Cat Association Club. They will typically care for the kittens but tend to adopt the kittens out too young, such as 6-8 weeks which can lead to a lifetime of physical and psychological problems. They don't always ask for money which is not a good idea in my opinion because serious buyers are normally willing to spend money caring for the kitten/cat.