



## **THANK YOU FOR ADOPTING A WORKING CAT!**

To help your new cat best transition to life on your property, we suggest following these three important steps.

### **→ Step 1: CONFINEMENT**

For the first week after bringing your working cat home, they should be set up and confined to a comfortable and safe area inside the barn, shed, garage or building that you wish them to reside in. If the doors of this barn can close tightly and securely, you may wish to simply confine them in the barn itself. Most people, however, prefer to confine their working cat in a smaller space within the barn, at least at first. You may use a large crate or cage with a towel or cloth covering it to reduce stress levels.

This confinement area should contain clean food and water and a litter box for elimination, even if your cat will not have access to a box once they are released.

Don't be surprised if your new cat struggles to escape or meows during the first day or two of confinement. Most working cats eventually calm down and begin to start to feel at home during this period. By keeping them confined to a specific building during the week, your cat will associate the barn or shed as "home base" and hopefully return to it once they are released. It's important to make sure they feel safe on the property, so they know where to go for food, water and shelter.

If your cat does happen to escape during this confinement time, make sure food and water are left out and that their used litter and sprinkled around the area as a familiar scent. This will hopefully help to lure them back to the property.

If there are other animals that reside in the barn or building you wish to keep your cat in, it is recommended to keep their confinement space away from these animals at this time. Being confined while surrounded by unfamiliar animals can be intimidating to a new working cat

and make them feel as if the space is already marked territory. You want them to feel as safe and comfortable as possible.

It's important during the confinement period to attempt to bond with your new cat. Make sure to regularly check on your cat and softly speak to them so they can begin to recognize you. We recommend bonding with them at least twice a day by bringing fresh food and water and always talking out loud to them.

## → Step 2: RELEASE

After about a week of confinement, it's time to release your new working cat and let them begin to explore the property. We recommend that this first be done during the daytime so you can easily monitor your cat for any problems or concerns. During this time, your cat will be seeing, smelling, hearing, and interacting with things in the environment that they may have never encountered before, so it's important to keep this as stress-free as possible. If you have free-roaming dogs, cats or other animals, we recommend leaving them inside if possible, and having children or other family members stay calm and quiet.

It's important during this second step of releasing your cat to continue feeding and watering in the same area on the property, and at the usual time. Going forward, you should always continue to leave food and water out for your cat, even if they catch and eat their own prey.

Don't be surprised if your working cat immediately runs and hides after initial release. It's typical for cats to hunker down for a period of time in a new space. They typically will stay close to the building or property, especially if their food and water is nearby. You should begin to see them explore more as time goes by.

It's also important to note that if you have other cats on the property, they may sometime scuffle with or screech at your new cat. This is normal behavior for working cats upon meeting a new member, and they should be left alone to work it out. Of course, always monitor your new cat for serious injury or problems, but most of these scuffles are harmless and more about the social hierarchy than they are about causing actual harm.

During this time, continue to attempt to bond with your new cat by speaking or cooing at them, especially when bringing them food.

## → Step 3: INTEGRATION

After a period of time, your new working cat should begin to learn the routine of the barn and life on their new property. As stated above, if you have other animals, your new cat will need time to adjust to living alongside them. Please give them this time!

Each animal is different and has a unique personality, so how long it takes them to warm up to new members could differ. When given enough time and space, most working cats will learn to coexist peacefully and may even form special bonds with different cats. Others will learn to be friendly with one another but may prefer to have no direct contact. Either way, giving your new cat time to learn their role is important.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

### FEEDING

Even if your working cat is an effective mouser, it's important to always give them access to fresh food and water. Working cats will not hunt more or "work harder" if denied food and may actually leave the property if none is provided. Always keep your cat healthy and happy by feeding them daily. Make sure to feed your cat(s) on a regular schedule at least twice a day. Rattling the food box or bowl each time you feed will help to associate the sound with food so you may eventually lure them out for feedings. You can also attempt to occasionally give tasty treats to keep your cats coming back.

### MEDICAL CARE

Your new working cat is up to date on (at least) their Rabies vaccine and has already been spayed or neutered. Your cat has also been treated for fleas. Please review the documentation provided with your adoption for other information on your new cat's veterinary care.

We recommend that you continue your cat's vaccination schedule as the years progress. Keeping your cat up to date on shots is an important part of keeping them healthy while living outside. It's also necessary for you to care for them like you would an indoor cat—if you notice an injury or any sick behavior, please take them to the vet for a check-up.