

In October of 1981 Denny Dayton and several members of RFC decided that the time to approach CFA for acceptance of the Ragdolls had come. They attended the CFA Annual held in Philadelphia that year and Denny Dayton made the presentation, the presentation went fairly well. However CFA had requested the Carnivore Genetics Research Center on September 16, 1981 to do an appraisal of the Ragdolls. Their letter was absolutely devastating to any hope that the Ragdolls had of being accepted into CFA. It was by far the most damaging blow to the Ragdoll presentation. It would be 1993 before another attempt would be made. Below is a copy of that letter.

## Carnivore Genetics Research Center

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### Report and suggestions on the position of 'Ragdoll' cats

Before even considering of this proposal, I would advise the CFA to insist on a more professional formulation of the advocacy. No photographs were sent with the proposal despite the fact that photographs were said to be enclosed. The proposal appears to serve as a vehicle for the vilification of a woman called Ann Baker. This is utterly irrelevant to the purpose of the communication, and self-defeating in that we are all begged to forget the ancient history of Ragdoll breeders.

If all the Ragdoll breeders have to refer to tables to discover what is the likely outcome of a cross, I am forced to doubt their competence as breeders. The fact that all but one of the possible crosses yields alternate probabilities, depending on the genotype (as opposed to phenotype) of the parents absolutely invalidates the usefulness of the table in any case. I am confident that the majority of Ragdoll breeders will be able to manage without this doubtful aid.

Their understanding of the inheritance of piebald white spotting is considerably at variance to my own. The expression of this allele is dependent on modifying genes almost to the same extent as whether the locus is heterozygous or homozygous. The former may have between 1% and 60% of white pelage, the latter may have between 40% and 99%, depending on which modifying genes are carried as well.

The justification for the fact that Ragdolls do not breed true is indefensible. Until some degree of homozygosity has been achieved, I cannot see much justification in considering the application.

My understanding is that Ragdolls carry genes for longhair, siamese dilution, non-agouti (solid), in the homozygous condition. Piebald spotting is necessarily present but in either heterozygous or homozygous dosage, as is convenient. Furthermore, either or both of blue and chocolate dilution may be present. It is hard to conceive of a genotype which is further removed from any naturally

occurring (normal ?) variety of Felis catus. There was a time when cat fanciers saw themselves as improving the natural breeds to a specified standard of perfection, by diligence, intelligent breeding and careful selection. The fact that such a product of accident and a fertile imagination as Ragdoll is on the verge of serious consideration by the CFA, shows how far the cat fancy has come from that time. Believe me that this need only be a beginning, for with between 10 and 20 loci controlling the major phenotypes in the domestic cat, the number of combinations is enormous. It may be that the policy of the CFA is produce cats as far removed from nature, as genetics and imagination permit, if so the acceptance of Ragdoll is a positive step.\*

I am forced to concede that in all probability Ragdolls will eventually be accepted to breed status by the CFA. May I recommend that this event is postponed until the following two problems have been overcome.

1) The breed needs, apparently, to be a good deal more homozygous, if a semblance of true breeding is to be the case within the breed.

2) The advocates of Ragdoll have not offered an explanation of what their type of cat will add to the Cat Fancy. I do not think that a proposed breed should be accepted merely because it is possible to produce. Is it any more than a combination of genes that happened to occur together, or was it, for example, ever the stated goal of a serious breeding programme? If that question can be answered favorably, it will give an indication of the seriousness with which Ragdolls should be entertained.

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\*It might be worth saying that aiming for 'unnatural' varieties is not necessarily a bad aim. Roses are obtainable today which are very far removed from their wild ancestors.