



Why Do Breeders Breed?

Beth Csomay of Sun O'er Sea



1. *Why do breeders breed?*

Reputable breeders breed Maine Coon cats to increase the overall health and genetic diversity of the Maine Coon cat breed. A common phrase among reputable breeders is our commitment to breeding *for the breed*. Any other reason—cute offspring, kitten money to fund health testing, feline research, show—is secondary to the fact that **good breeders breed for the breed**. The breed is the only reason to justify the mating of two Maine Coon Cats.

2. *You're contributing to the overpopulation problem! How dare you!*

Occasionally, cat enthusiasts do not understand that breeding and rescue both contribute to the health and future of the feline population, overall. Leftover funds from those within the cat fancy go often to research universities that fund cutting-edge science and technology to benefit not only the Maine Coon but the feline genus as a whole. Maine Coons, across the globe, are commonly used in veterinarian studies amongst other breeds and domestic cats.

The true causes of overpopulation are not your reputable breeders funding genetic studies and ensuring only a few litters a year contribute to the gene pool of the Maine Coon Cat.

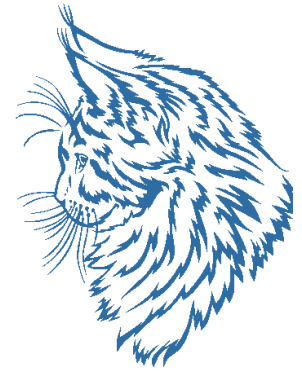
They are, quite frankly:

- a. uncontrolled breeding of outdoor, feral populations
- b. backyard breeders producing kittens for the wrong reasons without proper testing
- c. kitten mills—which are producing as many kittens for maximum profit
- d. pet owners not obeying contracts or simply refusing to alter a pet cat
- e. pet owners wanting just one litter and becoming backyard breeders



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3. *I have always rescued a kitten! You should give me one for free! or You must make so much money!*

While I wish that every person could own a Maine Coon cat for their fantastic personality, stunning beauty, and great health, the sheer level of resources (time, energy, funds) invested in this breed necessitates some sort of return.

I have now been a Maine Coon breeder for over a half decade and as I converse daily with other breeders—it is a sad, universal understanding that we precariously balance over a precipice: financial ruin.

We, blithely, invest thousands upon thousands of dollars each season in keeping our cats in their healthy condition. Just this season, I'm sitting well over ten thousand in debt—paid straight to our cattery veterinarians. That doesn't include the thousands I've already invested—in food, litter, and annual vet care; that doesn't even include general health testing, rather honestly. That's a few common complications from delivery, a dystocia, an intestinal intussusception, and the purchase and subsequent of hospitalization of an outcross feline that exhibited signs of FIP within 24 hours of arrival; quarantine measures and quarters prevented any threat to the other cats had the condition been contagious. *A reputable breeder always follows prevention protocol against any infectious disease from any cat being added to the cattery.*

The asking price of a reputable breeder doesn't include time, mental energy, any amount of worry, care, love, heartbreak—all these intangible resources are invested as well. As breeders, we give a little laugh and shovel a few more thousand on the heap, a little wide-eyed, wondering far too often—is this the year? Is this the year we close down? Is this the year the cattery breaks? Is this the year I fail to run the gauntlet and I close my doors?

It is the financial reality of many, many catteries; a reality we'd like to ignore and one that generally breaks new breeders who see \$\$\$ in the



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first three years, and one we try very hard not to say. Last year, it was 15k. This year, it's 11k. So far—we've barely kept our heads above water; in fact, we haven't, but we haven't sunk so far that it's over. Not yet.

Every kitten you purchase from a reputable breeder keeps us in the fancy another season, hoping the next one doesn't break us.

That is our reality and that is why—no matter how much we would absolutely love to—we cannot offer you a free kitten.

When you support us, you support the breed. You help us do everything right so that when we are breeding—we are truly breeding **for the Maine Coon breed.**

Backyard breeders undercutting the market while reputable breeders are fighting to stay afloat and people pushing back against the price because they think we are price gouging do not understand the realities of a reputable program nor do they realize that without us, the breed would cease to survive.

The breeders not health testing and not registering and not caring are the only ones who are able to actually profit from this enterprise; the rest of us eat the cost of health and shoulder the burden of their irresponsibility as they move farther away from the health and structure that we have worked so hard to instill in our breed. As they profit off our hard work and our tests and our love, they do us all a disservice because one day, unless our pet people realize, recognize, and support our mission, our doors will be forced to close.

Please support reputable breeders *breeding for the Maine Coon Cat breed.*