



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

# Cats are not small dogs!

Dr Maggie Roberts  
Director of Veterinary Services  
Cats Protection



# What is this?



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



A small dog



The most  
handsome  
cat in the  
whole  
world!

Not a small dog

# The differences between dogs and cats!



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

- 🐕 Dogs come when you call them.  
Cats take a message and get back to you when they are good and ready.
- 🐕 Dogs will give you unconditional love forever. Cats will make you pay for every mistake you've ever made since the day you were born.
- 🐕 Dogs have owners, cats have staff.



# Evolutionary origins - dogs



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

- 🐕 Descended from wolves and other wild dogs
- 🐕 Pack animals
- 🐕 Social species
- 🐕 Hunt and scavenge
- 🐕 Been domesticated for 15-30,000 years
- 🐕 Huge variation in size, shape and use through domestication, genetics and selective breeding



# Evolutionary origin - cats



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



- 🐾 Descended from the African Wildcat
- 🐾 Solitary hunter
- 🐾 Not social as not evolved to live in close proximity to other cats
- 🐾 Highly territorial
- 🐾 Been domesticated for around 10,000 years
- 🐾 Have not changed much in shape and size since domestication
- 🐾 Only developed breeds in the last 200 years

# Behaviour - Dogs



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

- 🐕 Evolved to live in groups
- 🐕 Hunt co-operatively
- 🐕 Generally sociable and like company
- 🐕 Developed ways of communicating with others through facial expressions, stance and voice
- 🐕 Respond well to training



# Behaviour - cats



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



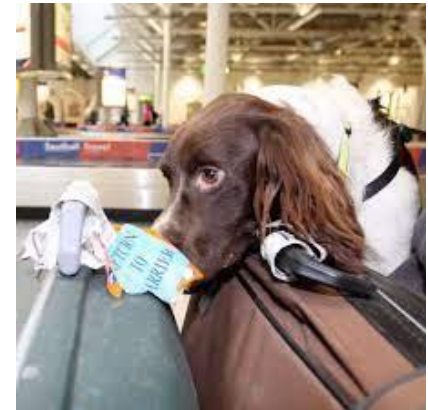
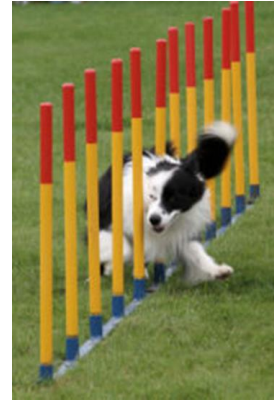
- 🐱 Can live in groups of related females and young males
- 🐱 Tend to act independently
- 🐱 Generally stressed by the presence of strange cats
- 🐱 Communicate through smell
- 🐱 Do not have a wide range of facial expressions
- 🐱 Deal with conflict by hiding/fleeing/climbing if possible

# Exercise and mental stimulation - dogs



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

- 🐕 Can be taken for walks
- 🐕 Changes environment
- 🐕 Allows exercise
- 🐕 Can undergo training, agility etc
- 🐕 Need variety of toys and activities



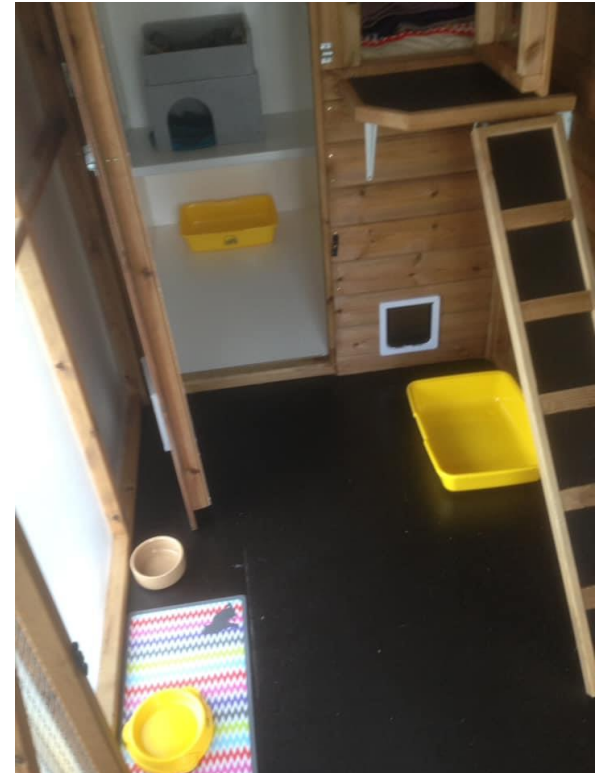


# Exercise and mental stimulation - cats



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

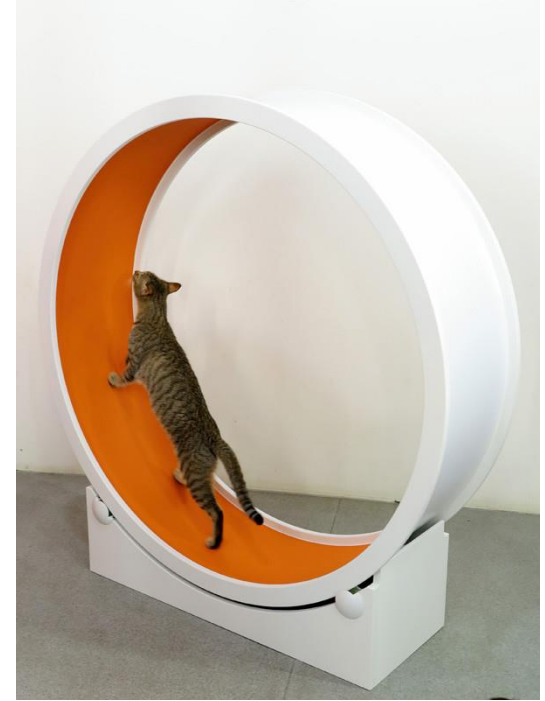
- 🐱 Need to exhibit hunting behaviour
- 🐱 Generally restricted to the run or pen
- 🐱 Need to be encouraged to exercise and play
- 🐱 Need to have something to scratch on
- 🐱 Need facilities on different levels for climbing, perching etc



# Exercise



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



# Stimulation



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



# Toys



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



Items that mimic prey through shape, texture and movement

# Accommodation



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

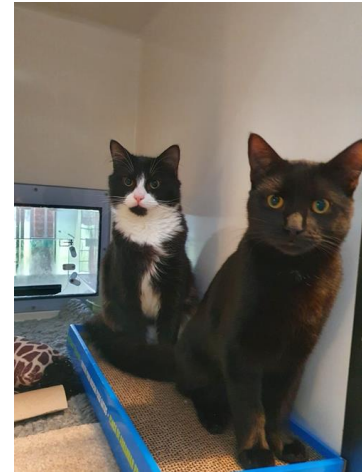
## Dogs

- 🐕 Happier with companions
- 🐕 Need adequate floor area but height not so important
- 🐕 Sound-proofing



## Cats

- 🐈 Prefer to be on their own (or with a familiar cat)
- 🐈 Stressed by seeing and smelling other cats
- 🐈 Need 3D space to hide, climb and perch



# Cat pen design



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

- ❧ Safe and secure – safety corridors
- ❧ Adequate ventilation
- ❧ Adequate temperature – Ideally 15-24°C
- ❧ Smooth surfaces, non-porous surfaces
- ❧ Solid (ideally opaque) barriers between cats – sneeze barriers



# Cat pen design



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



- 🐾 Ease of cleaning/access
- 🐾 Ease of public viewing
- 🐾 Adequate space for cats to exercise
- 🐾 Ideally separate sleeping area and run
- 🐾 Food bowls and litter trays kept separately
- 🐾 Areas for cats to feel secure and hide
- 🐾 Areas to climb and perch

# Reproductive cycle



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

## Dog

- 🐕 Comes into season twice yearly
- 🐕 Easier to control whether bitch is mated



shutterstock.com · 1260253951

## Cat

- 🐈 Has many seasons in one year
- 🐈 Can have up to 3 litters a year
- 🐈 Up to 18 kittens a year
- 🐈 Difficult to avoid pregnancy if going outside and un-neutered



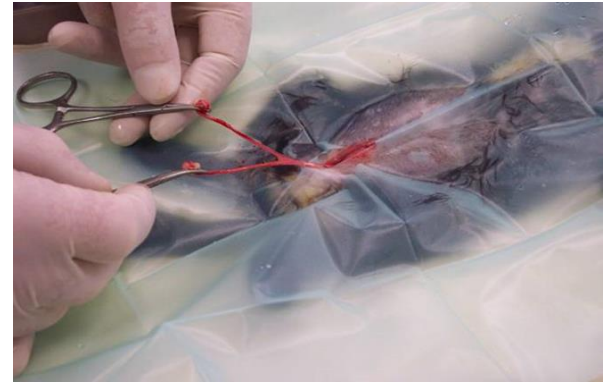
# Early neutering



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

Neutering before puberty (by 4 months)

- 🐾 Fewer unwanted kittens
- 🐾 Fewer homed cats to follow up
- 🐾 Fewer cats presented for neutering being pregnant
- 🐾 Easier surgically due to less body fat and smaller blood vessels
- 🐾 Quicker recovery
- 🐾 Very safe
- 🐾 No longer term negative effects



# Diet



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



## Dogs

- 🐕 Originally predators and scavengers
- 🐕 Although generally considered carnivores are more omnivorous
- 🐕 Can survive on a vegetarian diet
- 🐕 Can tolerate prolonged fasting and can use body fat efficiently



## Cats

- 🐈 Supreme predators
- 🐈 Obligate carnivores
- 🐈 Cannot survive on a vegetarian diet
- 🐈 Do not tolerate starvation well

# Disease



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



## Dogs

- 🐕 Show pain or illness more overtly
- 🐕 Show stress more overtly
- 🐕 When ill with infectious disease tend to get better or die
- 🐕 Carrier states less common

## Cats

- 🐈 Hide pain very well
- 🐈 May not show overt signs of stress
- 🐈 With infectious disease, can often be symptomless carriers or recover but still shed the organism especially when stressed
- 🐈 Do not tolerate certain drugs such as NSAIDs as well as dogs

# Avoiding stress in shelters



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE

**Acute** stress on arrival is helped by

- 🐾 Giving the cat somewhere to hide
- 🐾 Preventing the cats looking directly at other cats
- 🐾 Providing a regular and predictable routine
- 🐾 Having the same person deal with the cat each day
- 🐾 Scent continuity

**Chronic** stress occurs after time and is helped by

- 🐾 Using different toys and active play
- 🐾 Using puzzle feeders and making them work for their food
- 🐾 Varying the routine with regard to people and timing



**Get them homed!**

# Thank You!



INTERNATIONAL COMPANION  
ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



Cats were once worshipped as gods and they've never forgotten it!