The Breeding Policy for the Suffolk Cat

Eastpoint Soigné Sorrel

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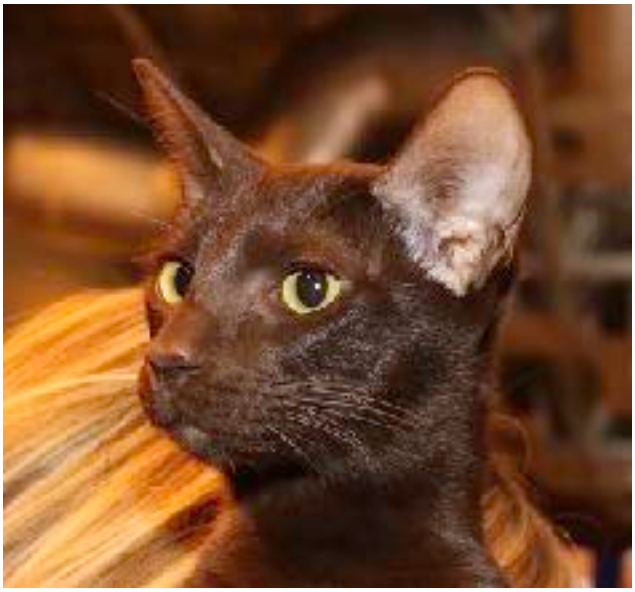
Introduction

The Suffolk Breed Cat Club is a Provisional member of the Governing Council for the Cat Fancy(GCCF). As such all members of the club agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the GCCF and subsequent amendments.

Members are bound by the rules and disciplinary powers of the GCCF in accordance with the Constitution of the Council. The SBCC is working with the GCCF to ensure that responsible Breeding Programme and Registration Policy is set out for the breed.

The GCCF require that all new breeds, and eventually all breeds, must have provision for an outcross policy within their Registration Policy. With this in mind the club is working extremely hard to produce a policy that is acceptable to the GCCF but maintains the integrity of the breed by only allowing three outcross breeds that are considered by the GCCF Genetics committee to provide integrity to the makeup of the Suffolk, while widening the gene pool. This is essential to maintain the genetic diversity of the breed, in fact any breed, as this prevents inbreeding and maintains the health and vigour of the breed.



Poolside Rhoda

The benefits of outcrossing are widely known and it is incumbent on responsible breeders to ensure that they are breeding from cats that are not inbred. Cats that are produced from an outcross programme by members of the club will be registered by the GCCF, will come with at least a 4 generation pedigree and will be correctly described when being advertised. It should be noted that, ideally, breeders that outcross should be experienced breeders with good knowledge of outcrossing in other breeds, and they understand and recognise the importance of widening genetic diversity. Outcrossing should not be undertaken lightly and we advise plenty of research and discussion takes place when embarking on an outcross breeding programme.

The club, as well as members of the GCCF Genetics Committee, are more than happy to offer help and advice, and experienced club members are willing to ”mentor” new owners and breeders. We believe that dedicated breeders should work together to both support each other and make a valuable contribution to developing and securing the future of the Suffolk cat. We do not set prices that breeders should charge for kittens sold as pets or as breeding cats, this is determined by the breeder. What we do ask is that there is honesty, fairness and combined agreement to develop the Suffolk under GCCF rules and guidance. Many breeders are taking an early neutering approach to the sale of their pet kittens, and while the club does not enforce this, it is a recommendation to protect the wellbeing of cats not specifically chosen to be breeding cats.

The History of the Suffolk Cat

The Suffolk is one of the newest breeds of cat, accepted for registration in June 2014 by the GCCF. It has been created in direct response to the extreme modernisation of the UK Havana. The Havana began life in the 1950s, it is a man-made cat and started life as the ideal of Edit von Ulmann (Roofspriger). At the same time, Mrs Armitage Hargreaves (Laurentide) was considering breeding a cat with more stamina and less highly strung nature than the Siamese. Working together, Edit and Armitage began in 1951 to produce a self brown cat. Edit had a knowledge of genetics and in order to transfer the chocolate dilution to a self black cat she mated a short haired black female, Maximilla Unterkatze, circa 1947 to a chocolate point Siamese Shusharo dob 1/8/1950 bred by Brian Stirling Webb. The progeny were as expected SH Blacks, a male and a female. Knowing that the recessive chocolate dilution would be present in both black cats together with the Siamese restriction factor, Edit used a sibling mating.

Eastpoint Brexit Boris - part of the outcross programme

Unfortunately the birth was premature and the litter died but this litter had contained a brown kitten. However, repeated matings of these cats eventually produced a self chocolate female. While Edit was involved in her breeding programme she heard of a Reading breeder Mrs Isobel Munro-Smith who had bred a self brown cat Elmtower Bronze Idol (the first recorded Havana). Edit mated one of her females carrying the chocolate dilution with this cat resulting in two of the early Roofspringer Havanas - one male Roofspringer Muscatel and one female Roofspringer Shandy born in 1953. Muscatel was the father of Roofspringer Mahogany born in 1956, who later became one of the first Havanas to be exported to America. Mrs Joan Judd (Crossways) was extremely interested in the new breed but not happy with the type being produced from the Elmtower line. Instead she mated her Seal Point Female with a Havana, Praha Gypka breed by Mrs Elsie Fisher (Praha) who was working with Laurentide decedents. This gave Joyce her first Havana Crossways Velvet Toy dob 7/3/1955. The Crossways Havanas were to include the first Champion CH Crossways Honeysuckle Rose dob 27/9/1958.

The Havana was granted recognition by the GCCF in September 1958, the breed number being 29 and the name Chestnut Brown Foreign. Although the breeders who had been used to using the Havana name were not happy, this was not changed by the GCCF until 1972 when permission was granted to revert back to the original name Havana. At this time it became apparent that problems had developed within cats in America that had been imported from Britain. The Chestnut Brown group were extremely concerned and enlisted geneticists for advice, unfortunately not every breeder agreed to the lengthy

period of test matings needed to establish which cats were carriers of the dominant gene producing abnormalities.

The more responsible breeders were not able to influence the dissident element, and interest in the variety waned during the 1960s. Happy a few breeders kept the breed going until a re-kindled interest in the later part of the decade amongst these were Mrs Sybil Warren(Senilac), Mrs P Kirby (Crumberhill), Miss Swer (Elvyne), Mrs St Erme Cardew (Sterme) and Mrs Beryl Stewart (Sweetthorpe). Renaissance of the breed occurred when a female self brown kitten appeared in a breeding programme for the Foreign White cat, Scintilla Copper Beech dob 29/4/1967 bred by Miss P Turner owned by Mrs P Wilding, was some eight generations away from both the sire and the dam's side out of Laurentide Ludo x Silvershoen Blue Peter. Copper Beech also inherited the chocolate factor on both sides. She was mated in 1968 with Champion Tijha Ares, a lilac point Siamese and later in 1969 and 1972 to Champion Winceby Imperial another Lilac Point. The Havanas descending from Copper Beech culminated in the significant Dandycat Havanas bred by Mrs P Wilding, Mrs B Stewart, Mrs S Shaw and the Solitaire cats bred by Mrs A Sayer, all of which were credited for the Havana type.

Mrs J. JUDD, of Tockington, with her Havana kitten, Crossways Heidi, and—

The Western Daily Press & Bristol Mirror Thursday 26th September 1957

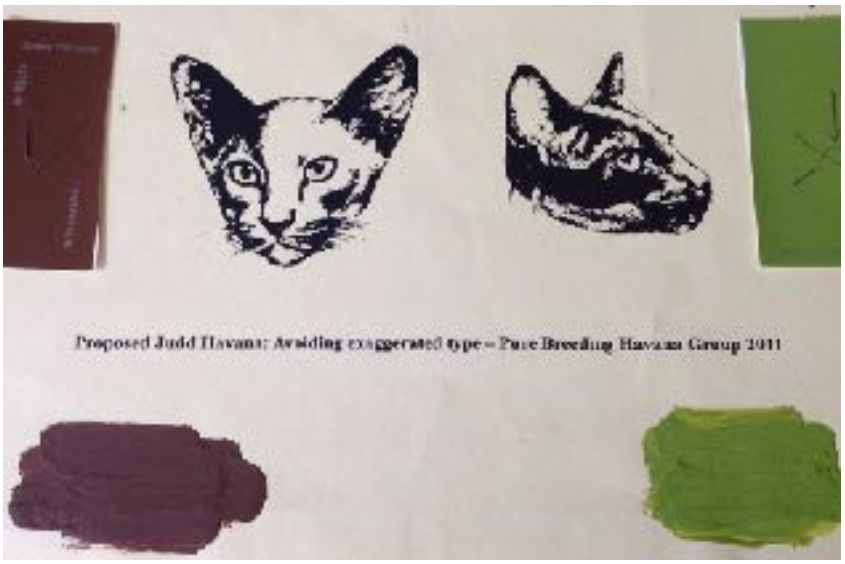
During the 1970s and 1980s, the interest in the breed waned once again, with the Havana cropping up in the occasional Oriental litter, rather than the dedicated breeding that had original created them as a breed in their own right. Joan Judd of Crossways strived to continue breeding the Havanas but only ever managed to get to F3 due to a lack of available bloodlines where the cats had been mixed back into the Siamese and Oriental gene pool.

The change in type of the modern Siamese and Oriental had both an effect on the type and the quality of coat within the breed. Joan Judd wrote an article in 1996, expressing her concerns as to the future of the Havana. She also said that it would need bloodlines from abroad to ensure the survival of the traditional Havana. At this time a small group of breeders, Mrs P Sharp-Popple (Denson), Mrs S Miller (Sambuzouki) and Mr and Mrs Spendlove (Eastpoint) under the help and guidance of Joan Judd, had developed the Pure Havana group within the H&OLCC and were working on a like for like breeding programme. An opportunity arose for Linda and Charlie Spendlove to import a Havana Brown from St Evroult Havana Browns in France bred by Claire Rassat.

In 2011, St Evroult Gatsby was brought into the breeding programme, his pedigree dating back to the Roofspringer cattery. He was registered with the GCCF as Havana and sired five litters of Havana kittens, one of which Eastpoint Beatrix Noisette was shown at the Supreme as a kitten. The Oriental BAC were unhappy with Gatsby being incorporated into the breeding programme of Havanas due to his traditional type and put in a formal complaint to the GCCF to have him removed from registry. It had been noticeable that the

type of the majority of quality Havanas on the show bench was traditional and very much removed from what was becoming known more frequently as the Oriental Chocolate.

It was at this point the GCCF proposed that these cats formed a new breed in their own right, and after much discussion the name Suffolk was chosen and in June 2014 they were given new breed status, progressing in February 2016 to Preliminary level and were once again able to be back on the show bench. Eastpoint Beatrix Noisette then continued her show career and has qualified for the breed.



Joan Judd's colour chart depicting coat & eye colour

The interest in the new breed is developing and the knowledge that this beautiful cat is now on the Foreign show bench where it was originally destined would have pleased Joan Judd. The group still have the brown velvet material and the green button she used as colour references to develop the coat and eye colour of these wonderful cats. With dilute within the gene pool, the Suffolk Lilac has also been developed with as yet only one registered in 2016, Poolside Ed Sheran bred by Dorothy Tams.

Eastpoint Poolside Zimba, owned by Dorothy Tams, was also the first out on the show bench for merits in April 2016. She then went on to achieve her 4th merit to become the 15th qualifying cat for the breed in August 2017.

Genetics and Breeding Practice

The Suffolk...SUF b is homozygous for normal chocolate brown (b/b) colouration which is evenly distributed over the entire body.

The Suffolk SUF c is identical in every way except the colour which is the homozygosity of the blue dilution (d/d)

Suffolk breeders will strive to breed cats which will be on the Full Register, that is at least three generations of SUF X SUF breeding.

In this context it includes:

SUF b X SUF b
SUF b X SUF c
SUF c X SUF c

As genetic diversity is the most important factor in breeding, it is important that health is the overriding factor in any breeding programme.

The positive and negative features of individual cats should be assessed and weighed against each other before mating, this should include the possible passing on genetic faults or abnormalities.

Preference should be given to those individual cats that conform most closely to the GCCF Standard of Points, with particular emphasis on overall balance, size, quality, type and the soundness of the Suffolk coat.

All cats used for breeding should exhibit sound conformation, robust reproductive ability, good temperament and be free from deleterious and harmful alleles or defects known to be inheritable traits such as those listed in the GCCF Breeding Policy.

Genetic Defects

The Suffolk is a breed developed predominantly from an Oriental and Siamese background, and as of yet no reports have been made throughout the existing breeding group of any inherent problems. It is possible that the following conditions could be inherited disorders but it is likely to be very rare.

Haematological and or Immunological Conditions

Mast cell tumours are reported to be the second most common tumour in the cat (Miller & others 1991). Two distinct forms of cutaneous mast cell tumours are recognised in cats. The more common mastogenic mast cell tumour is histologically very similar to mast cell tumours seen in dogs. The test frequently sees histolytic mast cell tumours that have similar morphological characteristics to histolytic mast cells. As some of the genetic make up of the Suffolk breed originates in Siamese, which are predisposed to developing both types, it is something to be aware of.

Mediastinal/Thymic Lymphoma

Again Siamese cats are over represented with cases of these types of Lymphoscarcoma, with cats typically under two years of age when diagnosed. The mode of inheritance has not been confirmed but is suspected to be autosomal recessive in nature.

Amyloidosis

This is a diverse group of diseases. Amyloid is a type of protein and has been seen to cause liver dysfunction and haemorrhage from the liver. It has also been known to cause sudden death in Siamese and Oriental cats. It appears in related cats and therefore could be an inherited disease and although theorised, it has never been proven.

Mucopolysaccharidosis type VI (MPS VI)

This is a Lysosomal storage disease, with an autosomal recessive mode of inheritance. It is caused by a deficiency of the enzyme Arylsulfatase B. This leads to an accumulation of Derma Sulphate within numerous cells of the body including liver, skin, muscle and bone marrow. Clinical signs include reduced growth rate and skeletal deformity. The face appears flattened, with wide spread eyes and small ears. The cornea of the eye appears cloudy.

Signs become evident between 6 - 8 weeks, with skeletal deformities giving rise to a crouching gait. Two different mutations have been identified by means of PCR based molecular analysis of DNA samples. A study in to the prevalence of mutations failed to find either mutation in Siamese cats from the United Kingdom. Therefore it is highly unlikely that this will become an issue within Suffolk cats.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy

This is caused by a mutation in the CEP290 gene, which produces a defective protein, in turn causing progressive degeneration of the photo-receptors in the retina. There is testing available to help eradicate this disease.

Permitted Outcrosses

To extend the gene pool for this new breed, the GCCF have given the following choice of outcross breeds:

Siamese SIA b,c only for at least 3 generations
(NB: It is advised that if such an outcross is planned this should be confined to Siamese of more moderate type)

Thai lilac (TAI c)

Colourpointed Tonkinese (TOS b, c33)

GCCF Thai Lilacs and also Colourpointed Tonkinese are more moderate outcrosses than the Siamese and these could be confined to the same colours.

The permitted outcross breeds provide the option of further improvement in the diversity of the breeds bloodlines, whilst staying within the confines of what the Registration Policy allows.

These outcrosses are for a limited period only, to strengthen diversity within the new breed.

Inbreeding

Inbreeding is an inclusive term covering many different breeding combinations and degrees of relationship, including the more distant, less intense.

It is consistently more efficient in eliminating heterozygous (varying and diverse) genotypes and increasing homozygous (similar) genotype, thereby ensuring a greater likelihood that kittens will closely resemble their parents.

Used here, the term does not mean close, purposeful, inbreeding of closely related cats (brother/sister, father/daughter), but rather the moderate form that results from the mating of not too distantly related (but not directly related) cats (first cousins, half brother/half sister, second cousins etc).

Some in-breeding is essential to stabilise formation around a definite type. In-breeding is the act of mating individuals of various degrees of kinship, and if continued it produces ever increasing homogeneity in the offspring.

It is important to monitor the intensity of inbreeding for any mating. Use this consideration as a key part of a decision making process when considering any mating and remember: ”The more intense the inbreeding, the more careful must be the selection. Loss of innate genetic variability must not be too great”

The overall approach should be one of balance and moderation in the degree of inbreeding coupled with constant selective breeding with a clear objective in mind, i.e. To eliminate weak traits or defective genes.

Breeders need to use acceptable levels of inbreeding to fix Suffolk type, but with sufficient variation to enable improvement and maintain health and vigour. No cat with any evidence of health problems or lack of vigour should be used for breeding.
Breeders should also be aware that research shows that highly inbred animals are less likely to be show winners.

Acceptable levels of Inbreeding Coefficients

0 to 10% = Low
10 to 20% = Fair
20 to 25% = Acceptable
25 to 40% = High. (Only to be undertaken by experienced breeders for specific reasons.)
40%+ = Not advised.

Eastpoint Kalon Karobin