

Now You're Talkin Cat

Learn cat terminology that any cat fancier should know.

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Even the pros debate such words as pedigree, hybrid and echo, but the following basic cat lingo defines coat patterns, breeder terminology and anatomy to help you better understand the fancy.

Excerpted from The Cat Dictionary: Feline Lingo From A to Z (BowTie Press, 2005).

A

Agility: An activity during which a cat and its handler negotiate an obstacle course designed to demonstrate the cats athletic ability, speed, coordination and the quality of the animals training relationship with its owner.

Agouti: A coat pattern that affects the individual hairs, often referred to as ticked. It features bands of different colors along each hair shaft. The agouti pattern looks wild, kind of like rabbit fur, and can come in a variety of hues.

Alter: A cat that has been surgically spayed or neutered, meaning the cat can't reproduce. A castrated (neutered) male or a female cat that has had her reproductive organs removed (spayed).

B

Bi-color: A coat of two colors, possibly with a small amount of a third.

Bloodline: A group of cats related by ancestry or pedigree.

Blue: Term for the color gray. For example, a dilute calico that sports gray patches will be said to have blue patches.

Breeder: A person who uses pedigrees to help predict what kind of offspring a particular cat mating may produce, striving to preserve and improve the integrity of a given breed.

C

Calico: A color and pattern related to the sex-linked red gene. The typical calico is a white female cat with large areas of black and red patching, but the calico pattern can be colored in with a number of other colors. Calico-patterned cats are generally regarded as bi-colors.

Cattery: A place for the breeding, raising, or care of cats and kittens. In most cases, the cattery itself is part of ones household, be it a bedroom, a spare room or a special room built in the basement. The care and comfort of the cats is of primary importance when designing the room that will serve as the cattery. **Cat fancy (or cat fanciers):** The overall group of people, clubs and registration associations involved with breeding and showing, all having an interest in the betterment of the cat.

Crossbreed: Mating of two pedigreed varieties, allowed in some breeds. The resulting offspring would be considered hybrids. See hybrid.