

Help Anemic Cats

An effective experimental treatment may offer hope for felines with non-regenerative anemia.

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In 1993, Robin Bell, Ph.D., Professor of Immunology, and Richard Goodman, of the James A. Baker Institute for Animal Health at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine isolated the feline EPO gene. Then MacLeod, John F. Randolph, Ph.D., professor of medicine at Cornell University, and their Cornell colleagues, proved that the cat gene could be manipulated to make a highly purified form of recombinant feline EPO (rfEPO) using genetically engineered cell lines. Initial testing occurred in 1999. Randolph and MacLeod have been conducting FDA-approved clinical trials of rfEPO on cats with non-regenerative anemia. According to Macleod, the trials are complete and the raw data is being evaluated, with full analysis of the data still pending. The only way for rfEPO to become available for general use is for a pharmaceutical company to invest the resources necessary to obtain FDA-approval. Until then, rfEPO is unavailable for privately owned cats. Without FDA approval, Cornell University is legally prohibited from dispensing this drug. Hopefully, in the near future, rfEPO will be available for cats to give veterinarians one more piece of ammunition in the continuing battle against this insidious disease.