

*Center for Companion Animal Health
School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California at Davis
One Shields Avenue, Davis, California 95616-8782
Phone (530) 752-7295, Fax (530) 752-7701*

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Dear Birman Breeder,

We are writing to request your help with FIP research at U. C. Davis. New tools and technology, coupled with sequencing of the feline genome, have provided an important window of opportunity to study a genetic basis for FIP susceptibility. As you may know, Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is an infectious disease that kills 1 in 100 to 1 in 300 of all cats in the U.S. However, the incidence is 5 to 10 times greater among young cats coming from catteries and shelters. It is a disease that is 100% lethal, and is heartbreaking for breeders and for the families that lose affected kittens and young cats.

Our purpose for this study is to find genetic markers to identify FIP susceptible cats and to use these markers to breed for resistance. In order to identify favorable or unfavorable genetic traits, we need to concentrate our studies on bloodlines within breeds of cats that are either inordinately susceptible or seemingly resistant. Such bloodlines exist in virtually all breeds of cats.

We have selected two breeds for this study, Burmese and Birman, not because they are more or less susceptible to FIP, but because they are of a manageable size with breeders who have assisted with genetic studies previously. **To be successful in this study, we need all Birman breeders to participate, even if you have not experienced FIP.** Samples are wanted from catteries and lines that have experienced FIP, as well as from catteries and lines that have not. We desire information on three groups of cats: 1) those that have developed FIP, regardless of age; 2) healthy cats of any age that are close relatives (sire, dam, sibling) to cats that have developed FIP; and 3) healthy cats of any age from bloodlines that have been so far free of FIP. "Any age" includes cats five years and older. We are also interested in three or more generation families that have both FIP affected and unaffected cats, but realize that such families will be hard to obtain.

We would also like to encourage all breeders to collect four buccal swabs using regular cotton swabs from all of their future litters and their sires and dams. These can be air dried and stored in regular paper envelopes. There should only be one cat or kitten per envelope, and you should make sure that each envelope is dated and has the name or other identification of the animal that is swabbed. The envelopes can be stored indefinitely at room temperature. Since the majority of FIP deaths occur in the first 3-16 months of life, some of these samples will unfortunately be needed.

Please complete the attached questionnaire, and send in DNA samples where possible. Instructions on how to take and store those samples prior to mailing is included in this packet. Please attach as much documentation as possible on cats that have died of FIP. Necropsies at U. C. Davis will be free to anyone bringing in a cat or kitten on a special appointment for confirmation of FIP and/or euthanasia. You will be charged only for a regular visit and for any further tests that might be indicated (tests, if any, will be kept to a minimum and per your approval). However, we need to be notified before your appointment so that proper preparations can be made. If you have a cat that you want to bring in to be evaluated or euthanized, please call (530) 752-1393 and ask for Mary Green in Community Services.

Please be assured that your answers will be kept in the strictest confidence. Each breeder or cattery will be assigned a unique case number that will be used for the study, with names kept confidential. If we are successful in identifying genetic markers for susceptibility or resistance to FIP, breeders who have contributed samples to this phase of the research will have first opportunity to participate in a subsequent genetic control program.

Thank you for helping with FIP research at U. C. Davis.

Sincerely,

Niels Pedersen, DVM, PhD

Leslie A. Lyons, PhD