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AAFP and ISFM Release Environmental Needs Guidelines

HILLSBOROUGH, NJ – The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM) have released the Environmental Needs Guidelines, which have been published in the March issue of the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery.

These Guidelines, organized around five primary concepts that provide the framework for a healthy feline environment regardless of the cat's lifestyle, were established to address the needs of pet cats in any environment, including home, veterinary hospital and shelter.

Although cats often do not express overt signs of stress and anxiety, they do experience stress and this is frequently caused by their needs not being met, usually inadvertently, because of a lack of understanding of those needs.

When cats' needs are not met, there is an increase in abnormal behavior, or normal behavior considered undesirable by the owner. It is vitally important to meet cats' needs and allow them to express their natural behaviors, to prevent stress, unfavorable behaviors and to improve feline health and welfare.

By incorporating these Guidelines into the veterinary practice and home life, veterinarians and cat owners can help reduce unwanted behaviors, illness and feline stress, and improve their relationships with their cats. Incorporating these Guidelines into shelters can increase feline adoption rates by providing an environment where cats are more active and less fearful.

To view the Environmental Needs Guidelines, visit www.catvets.com/guidelines/.

The panel members include Sarah L. H. Ellis, BSc (Hons), Dip CABC, PhD, Co-Chair; Ilona Rodan, DVM, DABVP (Feline), Co-Chair; Hazel C. Carney, DVM, MS, DABVP; Sarah Heath, BVSc, Dip ECAWBM (BM), CCAB, MRCVS, European Veterinary Specialist in Behavioral Medicine (Companion Animals); Irene Rochlitz, BVSc, MSc, PhD, MRCVS; Lorinda D. Shearburn, DVM; Eliza Sundahl, DVM, DABVP (Feline); Jodi L. Westropp, DVM, PhD, DACVIM.

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About AAFP

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) improves the health and welfare of cats by supporting high standards of practice, continuing education, and scientific investigation. The AAFP has a long-standing reputation and track record in the veterinary community for facilitating high standards of practice and offers practice guidelines to veterinarians. Over the years, the AAFP has encouraged veterinarians to continuously re-evaluate preconceived notions of practice strategies in an effort to advance the quality of feline medicine. For more information, go to www.catvets.com.