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Letter of Intent and Platform

TICA Somali Breed Committee 2021-2023

I wish to be reelected to the TICA Somali Breed Committee. I have been proudly serving on the Committee for the last three years and wish to continue to aid our beloved breed. After owning and showing Somalis in TICA since 1988-89 season, and breeding since 2008, I could no longer sit by and watch the rapid movement away from our breed standard. Some Somalis (and Abyssinians), particularly in other associations, are beginning to look like ticked Orientals. We have an amazingly beautiful breed. Why does it need to change? Why are some breeding for ears placed so far on the sides of the head? Why are the muzzles narrowing and the heads becoming wedges? Is that what you as a Breed Section want? We need to breed to meet the TICA standard, show cats meeting the TICA standard, and educate the TICA judges what the standard is. If the judges frequently see examples that do not meet the standard, it will become the standard in their minds.

Our TICA Somali standard calls for MODERATE features. The head is a modified wedge with rounded contours (not triangular.) Ears are large, alert, and moderately pointed, bored, and cupped forward (not off the side as an extension of a triangle.) The muzzle shall follow gentle contours in conformity with the head as viewed from the front and in profile. Chin shall be full...having a rounded appearance (not triangular.) The muzzle shall not be sharply pointed. As described in the standard, the body is semi-foreign: the ribcage is rounded and the back is slightly arched. This is not a dainty cat. It is an active, athletic, and strong cat.

Please look back online at photos of winning Somalis from 40 years ago or even 10 years ago. Look at what is shown now. Why are we straying so rapidly from a breed look (the Abyssinian) that we know has been around since at least the mid 1800s? If we keep this up, I foresee a Siamese/Thai situation in the not too distant future. Our friends at the Crystal Palace in 1868 would be shocked at what has happened, especially in the last 15 years.

As we are learning about feline genetics, it is of paramount importance to ethically breed healthy cats. We need to test our cats for those diseases that we can prevent with careful breeding. We need to consider genetic diversity in our lines to improve the overall health of the breed. We need to stay in contact with the owners of kittens we have placed to see if problems develop over time, and we must act on that information by altering breeding practices and by informing owners of other kittens from these parents that their might be a genetic problem with their cat in the future. We need to encourage more Somali breeders to submit samples, not only to the commercial feline genetics labs, but to those scientists whose labs are doing groundbreaking research on feline genetics. This will benefit the Somali breed immensely.

Earlier this year, the current Somali Breed Committee was able to rewrite the breed description for TICA to use for the website and for other uses for the public. We have procured a website

and are working on compiling a history of the Somali in TICA. I will be gathering the lists of the Somali winners from each yearbook over our 41 year history and scanning in the pages with this info and the photos of these cats.

We as a breed section need to look at our standard with a critical eye and make sure that the words are conveying what we want them to mean. It has been many years since the standard was scrutinized. Doing this will not only improve it, but it will give it the strength to show that it does describe the ideal TICA Somali and what the Somali Breed Section wants.

I am qualified for this position I started with a Somali alter in 1988 in TICA. I began my HowlingCoyote Cattery in 2006 with the arrival of my first queen. I have been a Somali Breed Section member for many years, and three years ago I was honored to have been elected to the Committee. I have lived and shown Somalis in three regions (SC, NE, and GL.) In 1991, I was one of two people to have the first Silver Somalis imported into the United States from Germany and showed in the "New Breed or Color" class at the time. This cat was shown on the East Coast, West Coast, and Midwest, as I worked to educate judges about silver colors in the Somali. I spoke to dozens of judges about the Somali, the standard, and the colors. I have a Somali International Winner and numerous Regional Winners. I have shown my Somalis to International Somali 2nd Best of Breed winner three times, a 3rd BoB once, and they have been the studs and the queens in my program. Multiple other cats from my cattery have been in the Top 3 of Breed in the Kitten and Alter classes. Over the last 6 years, I imported several cats from three different Russian breeders to improve genetic diversity. I have become friends with Somali breeders in many countries. I have personally helped to start two new Somali breeders in Texas.

I have also been a member of many TICA clubs over the last 28 years and I am the president of a club. I served as a Junior Exhibitor Liaison for the South Central Region for 10 years. I was awarded both SC Humanitarian of the Year and the Ripple Award for Mentorship in the SC Region. I attend more than 80% of the South Central shows and several in other regions each year. I have shown my cats in 26 states, TICA Regions, and 3 countries. I have attended 6 of the last 7 TICA Annuals and two others going back to the mid-1990s. Many members, judges, and TICA Board of Directors know me. This aids me in representing the breed. I have also shown HHPs, Turkish Vans, Abyssinians, and a Bengal, so my TICA footprint is both wide and deep.

I am excited at the prospects of the future of our breed. These beautiful "foxes" are gaining in popularity. Many of us have waiting lists that stretch from beyond months into years. Preserving the health and beauty of the breed is a serious duty, and I would be honored to once again serve the Somali Breed Section by reelection to the Committee.