



Selkirk Rex Breed Seminar

Presented by the TICA

Selkirk Rex Breed Committee



Selkirk Rex Breed Seminar Agenda:

- **Selkirk Rex Breed Origins & History - (20-years worth)**
- **Status & General Description - (what we see)**
- **Genetics - (simple stuff, maybe)**
- **Breed Standard - (the perfect Selkirk – where is it?)**
- **Examples & Comparison - (the good & needs improvement)**
- **Exhibition & Handling of Kittens/Cats/Alters - (the fun stuff)**
- **Grooming & Showing - (our secrets - Judges “please leave”)**
- **The Future, Emphasis, Problems, Changes - (in our opinion)**
- **Contributors – (many thanks to those who helped)**

Selkirk Rex Breed Origins

The Breed began in 1987 from a shelter cat mom in Sheridan, Montana and one of her kittens. A local breeder (Jeri Newman) was asked to look at the “strange” kitten which exhibited a slight curl on the coat. Jeri, who had an interest in feline genetics adopted the kitten and later bred the kitten to one of her cattery Persians, Photo Finish of Deekay. On July 4th, 1988 the year-old “kitten” by then named Miss DePesto of NoFace delivered 6 kittens. Surprisingly, 3 of the 6 kittens had a curly coat and the other 3 were straight-hair kittens. Thus the beginning of a Breed.

This 50% ratio of curly offspring is exactly what would be expected from a dominant gene for curl. This created even more interest in exploring the development of a new breed based on the curly-coat trait. Jeri selected one of her own family names, “Selkirk”; with the same theme as the Cornish and Devon Rex regional names, the Selkirk mountains and a stream by the same name were nearby. So Selkirk Rex it is. After years of exhibition showing, the Selkirk Rex was admitted to full Championship status by TICA in 1994.

Selkirk Rex - General Description

The Selkirk Rex is produced by a (complete) dominant gene affecting the guard, awn, and down hairs. The curl is most prominent around the neck, underside, and rear in both coat lengths. Guard hairs tend to have a coarse texture especially over the back, but the coat is very dense and overall soft and plush. The whiskers are curly as are the eyebrows.

The Selkirk Rex is a medium to large cat with body longer than legs, in good balance, with a slight rise to the rear. Heavy boning gives the cat surprising weight. Females are less massive than males, but both sexes have round heads and prominent jowls.

Kittens are curly at birth (especially the whiskers) and may lose their coat and begin to develop an adult curly coat at 8-10 months of age. The coat continues to develop until about 2 years of age, so kittens with moderate coat type or length should be evaluated mostly by head and body type. Whiskers become brittle and often appear broken off stubby hairs. Some Selkirks also molt, and coat texture is often seasonal and affected by hormonal influences.

Selkirk Rex Genetics for Curl

Persian - Straight

for this example, "C" is dominant curly, "s" is recessive straight



Sire: PFD, Black Persian



Dam: MDN, Curly, Blue Tortie/White, Domestic Shorthair

		s	s	
<u>Miss</u>	C	Cs	Cs	(50% Curly)
<u>DePesto</u>	s	ss	ss	(50% Straight)



Oscar Kowalski of NoFace Curly, Male, Shorthair

The first litter, July 4, 1988

Selkirk Rex - Curly

		C	s
<u>SR</u>	C	CC	Cs
	s	Cs	ss

(75% Curly, 25% Homozygous, 25% Straight)

Selkirk Rex - Homozygous

		C	C
<u>SR</u>	C	CC	CC
	s	Cs	Cs

(100% Curly, 50% Homozygous)

TICA, Selkirk Rex Breed Group Standard

Category III, Variant or Mutation Breed, All Categories & Divisions, and All Colors Acceptable

HEAD - 40: **Shape - 10:** Round, full-cheeked, with round and broad forehead.

Ears - 5: Medium-sized, rounded with pointed tip, set well apart.

Eyes - 5: Large and round, set well apart.

Chin - 2: Firm. **Muzzle - 10:** Short, square, visible beyond the cheeks

Curly whiskers. **Profile - 5:** Rounded forehead, nose stop and firm chin.

Neck - 3: Short and thick. Curly fur prominent on neck.

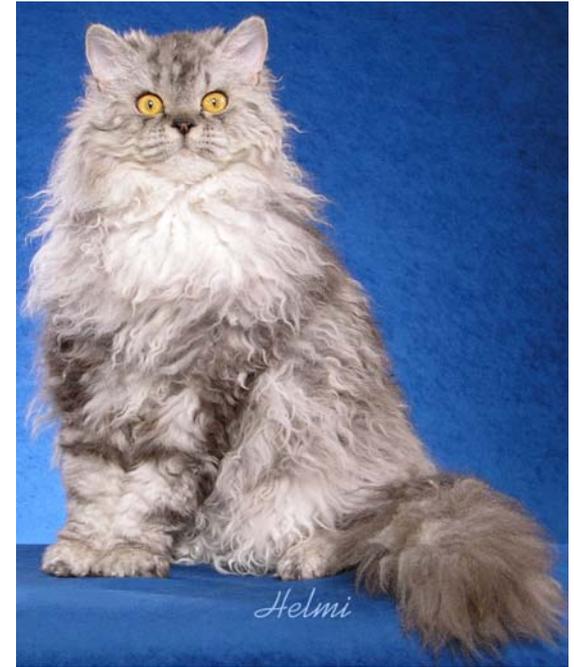
BODY - 30: **Torso - 10:** Chest full, muscular, semi-cobby.

Rectangular with a slight rise toward the hindquarters.

Legs - 4: Medium length, substantial boning. **Feet - 2:** Large and round.

Tail - 4: Medium length, thick, tapering to rounded tip.

Boning - 5: Substantial. **Musculature - 5:** Substantial.



COAT - 20: **Length - 5:** In both lengths, the curls are most prominent on the neck and tail. The curliness of the coat

on the saddle area of the back is variable due to climate, seasons and hormones, especially in females.

(SR): Medium (SL): Semi-long. **Texture - 10:** Soft and plush. (SR): Double coat, with thick undercoat and deep

waves with curled ends. (SL) Loose individual curls. **Color - 3:** Clear, intense colors preferred. Eye color

independent of coat color. **Pattern - 2:** All patterns acceptable.

OTHER - 10: **Balance-2:** Good proportions. **Condition-3:** Good muscle tone. **Temperament-5:** Sweet, loving.

ALLOWANCES: Kittens may lack fully curly coat. White lockets acceptable. **WITHHOLD ALL AWARDS:** Nose break.

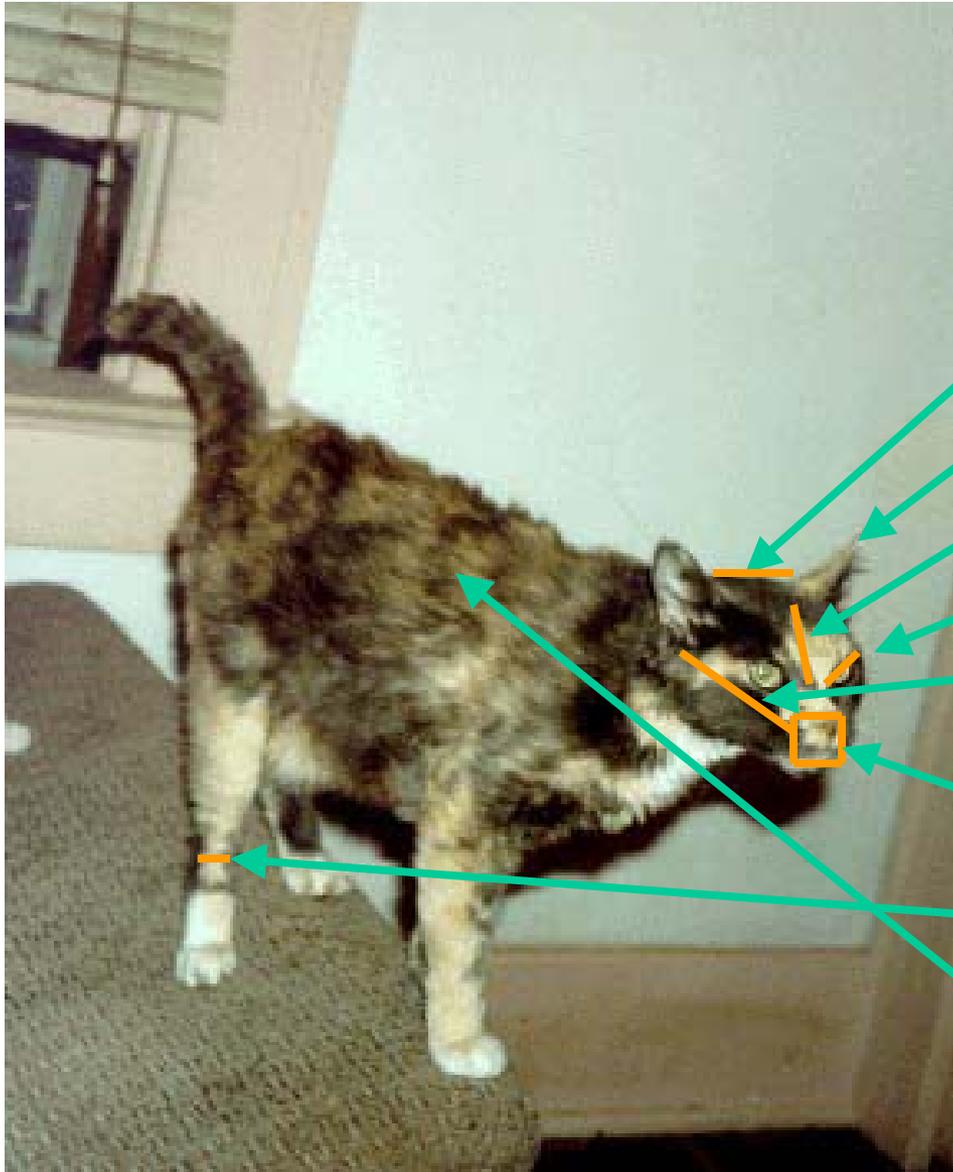
DISQUALIFY: Temperament must be unchallenging; any sign of definite challenge shall disqualify. The cat may exhibit fear, seek to flee, or generally complain aloud, but may not threaten to harm. **ACCEPTABLE OUTCROSSES (no time limit):**

American Shorthair, British Breed Group, Persian Breed Group

Selkirk Rex Examples & Comparison



HEAD, BODY, and COAT



The Beginnings:

Miss DePesto of NoFace

“a work in progress, and
the 1st Selkirk Rex”

Wide flat top head.

Rocker ear set.

Flat straight forehead.

Extreme eye bias.

High tapered cheeks,
triangular head shape.

Narrow muzzle.

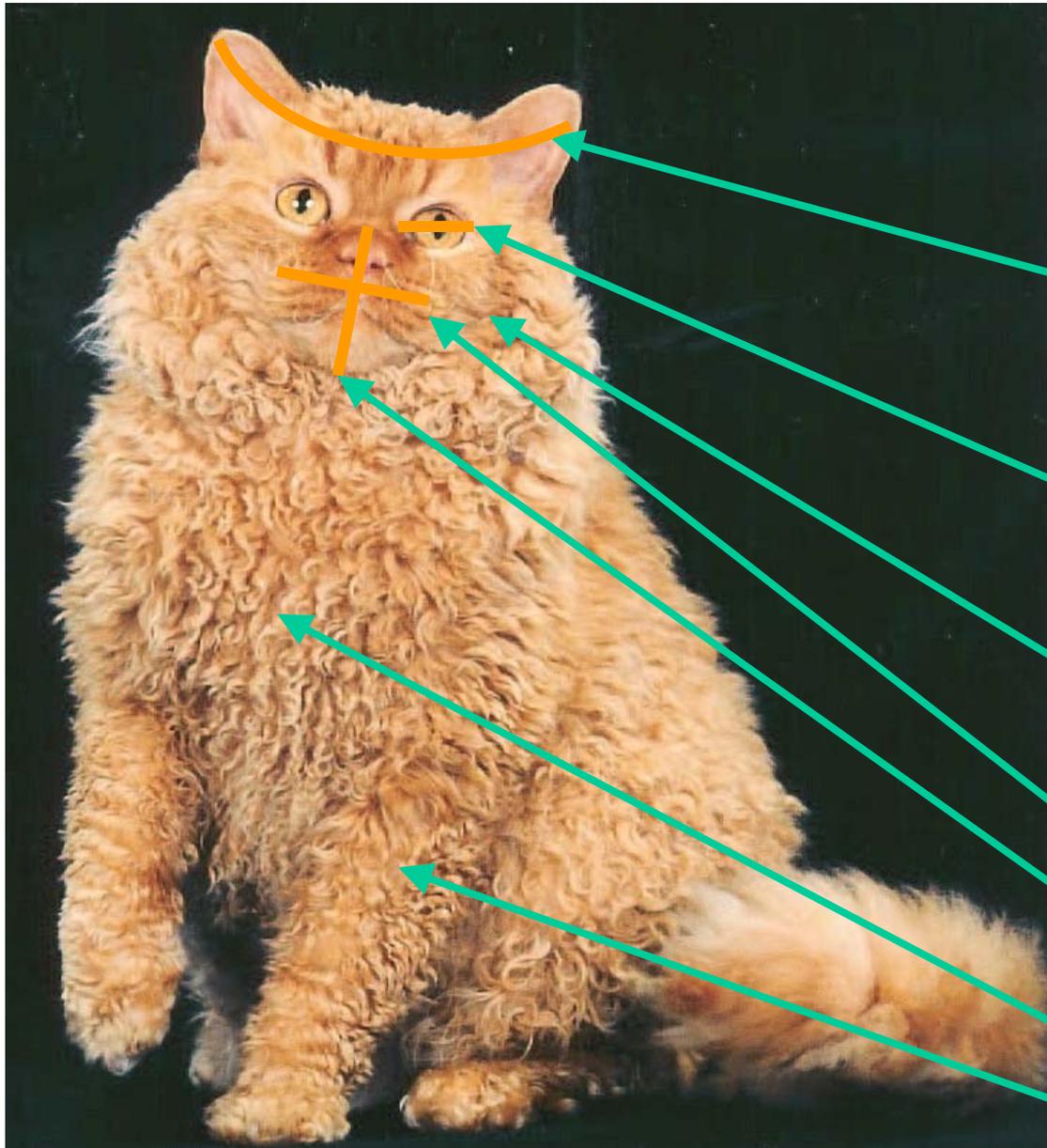
Slight boning.

But, she had the key
ingredient – an almost
curly coat.

MDN

This cat is in the pedigree of every Selkirk Rex.

HEAD, BODY, and COAT



3rd Generation from the original (Pest), and an early successful award-winning Selkirk.

Good ear set, short, set wide, rounded with semi-“rocker ears”.

Eye set with slight downward bias, but fully round when open.

Checks semi-rounded, with good width.

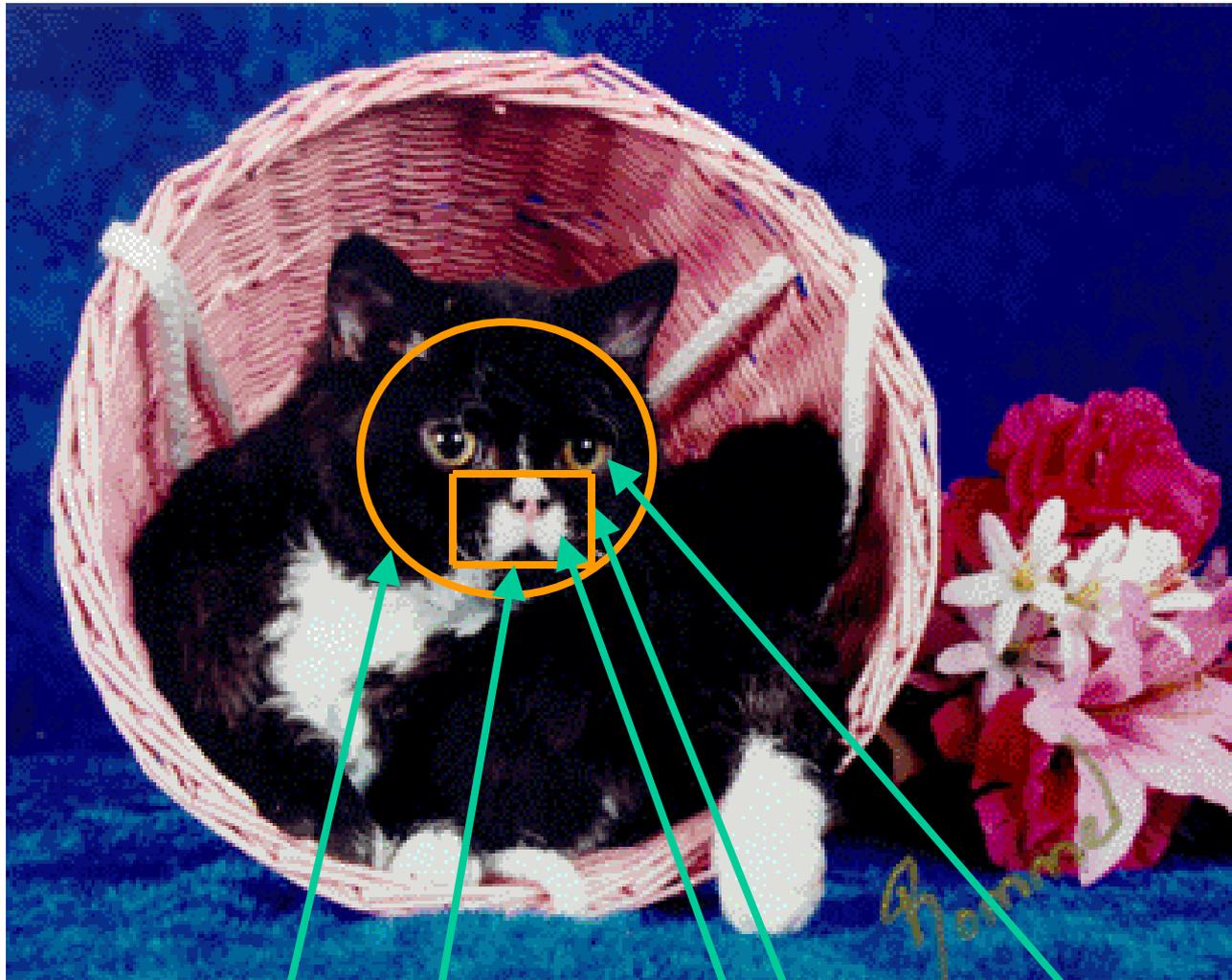
Good muzzle width, muzzle depth too “fat” from nose to chin.

Spectacular coat, boning, and color.

OS

This cat is in the pedigree of most of today’s Selkirk Rex.

HEAD and COAT

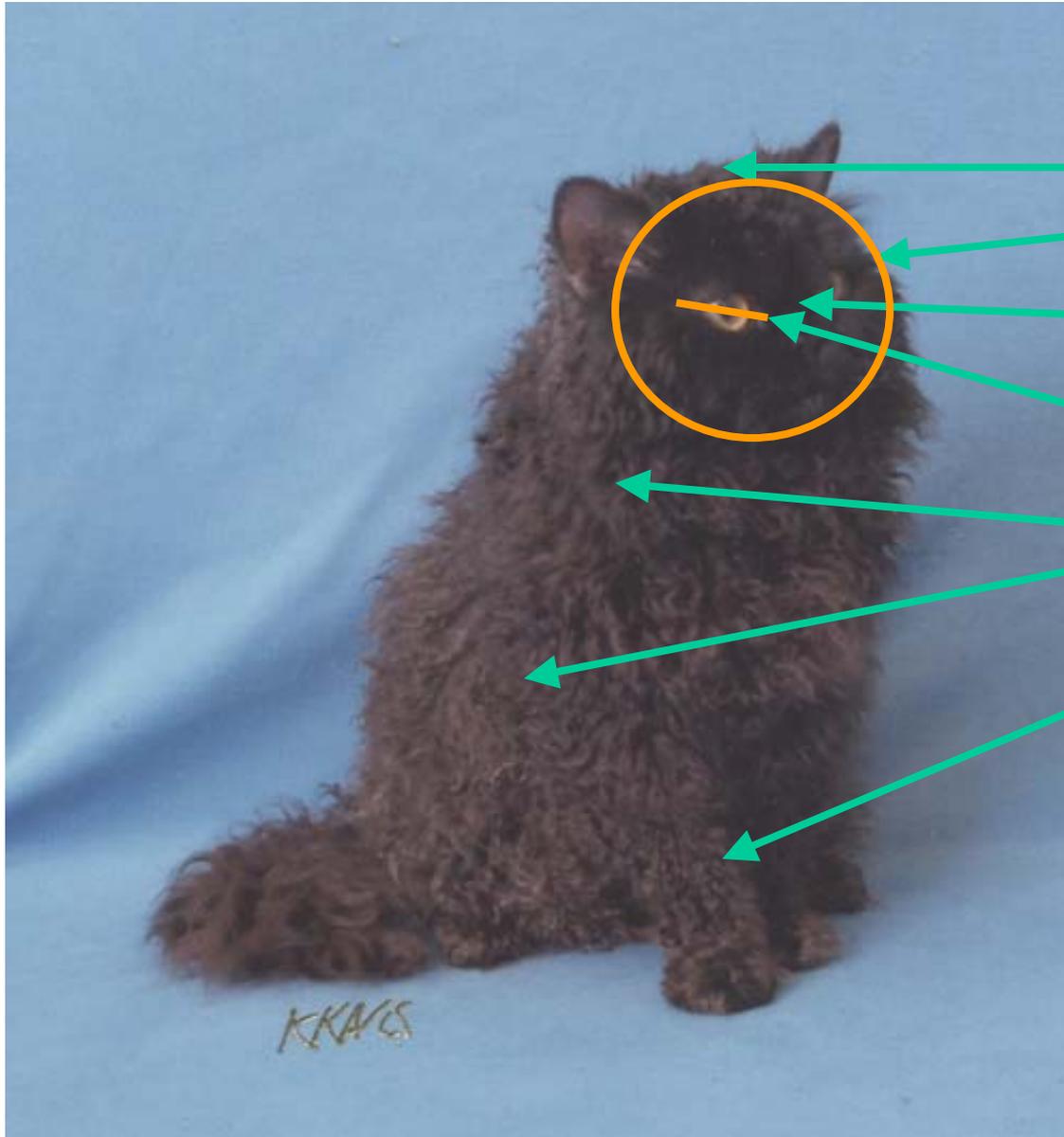


DT

Good head roundness, balance of muzzle and eye placement.

Good “matchbox” muzzle width (markings should not distort the shape).

HEAD, BODY, and COAT



Longhair Kitten

Good spacing to top, full round head shape.

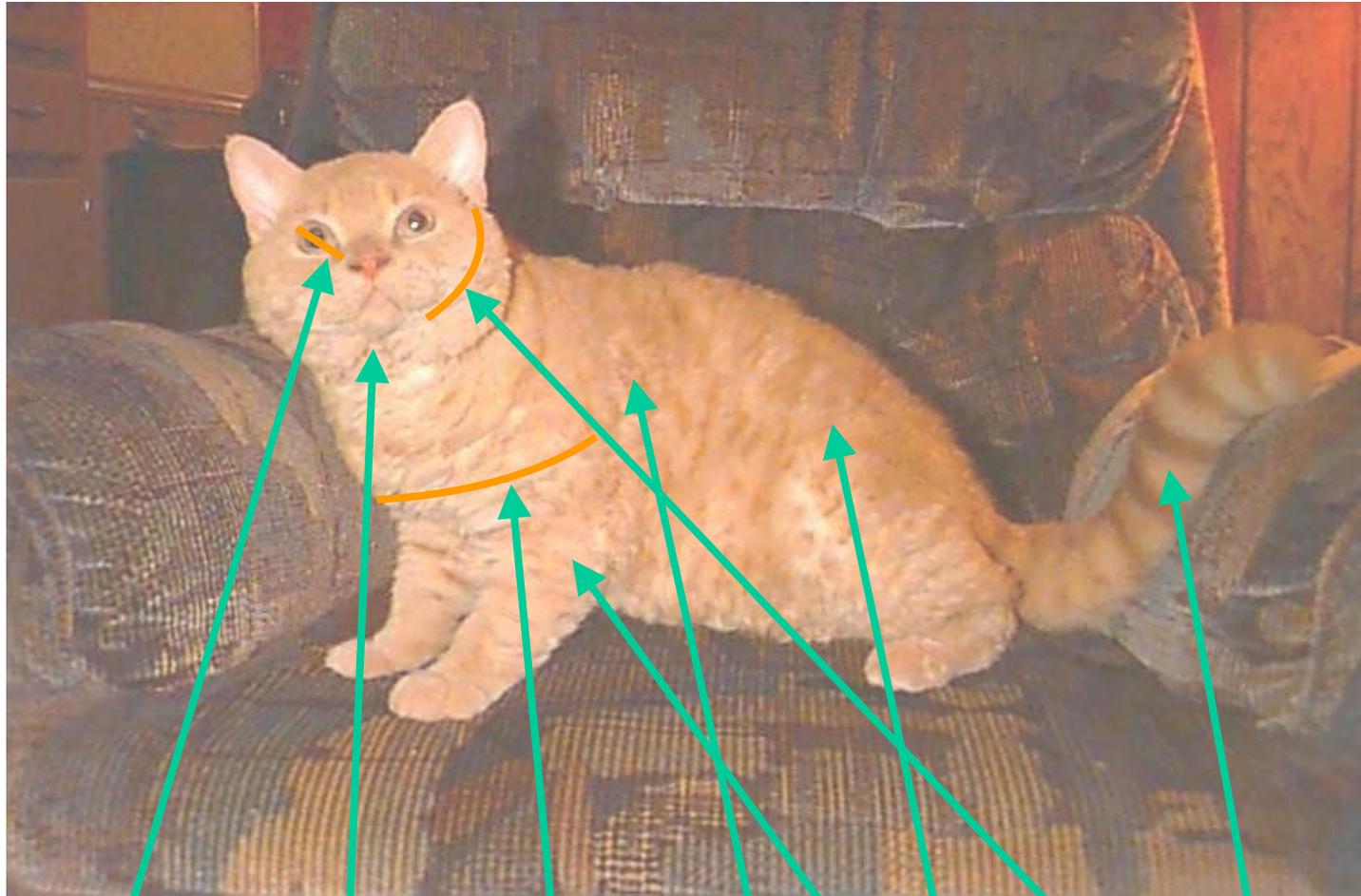
Great wide eye set, with acceptable slight downward bias.

Full, dense, heavy, coat.

Heavy boning and good size.

Overall, excellent representation of the Breed, and the present and future sire of many good kittens.

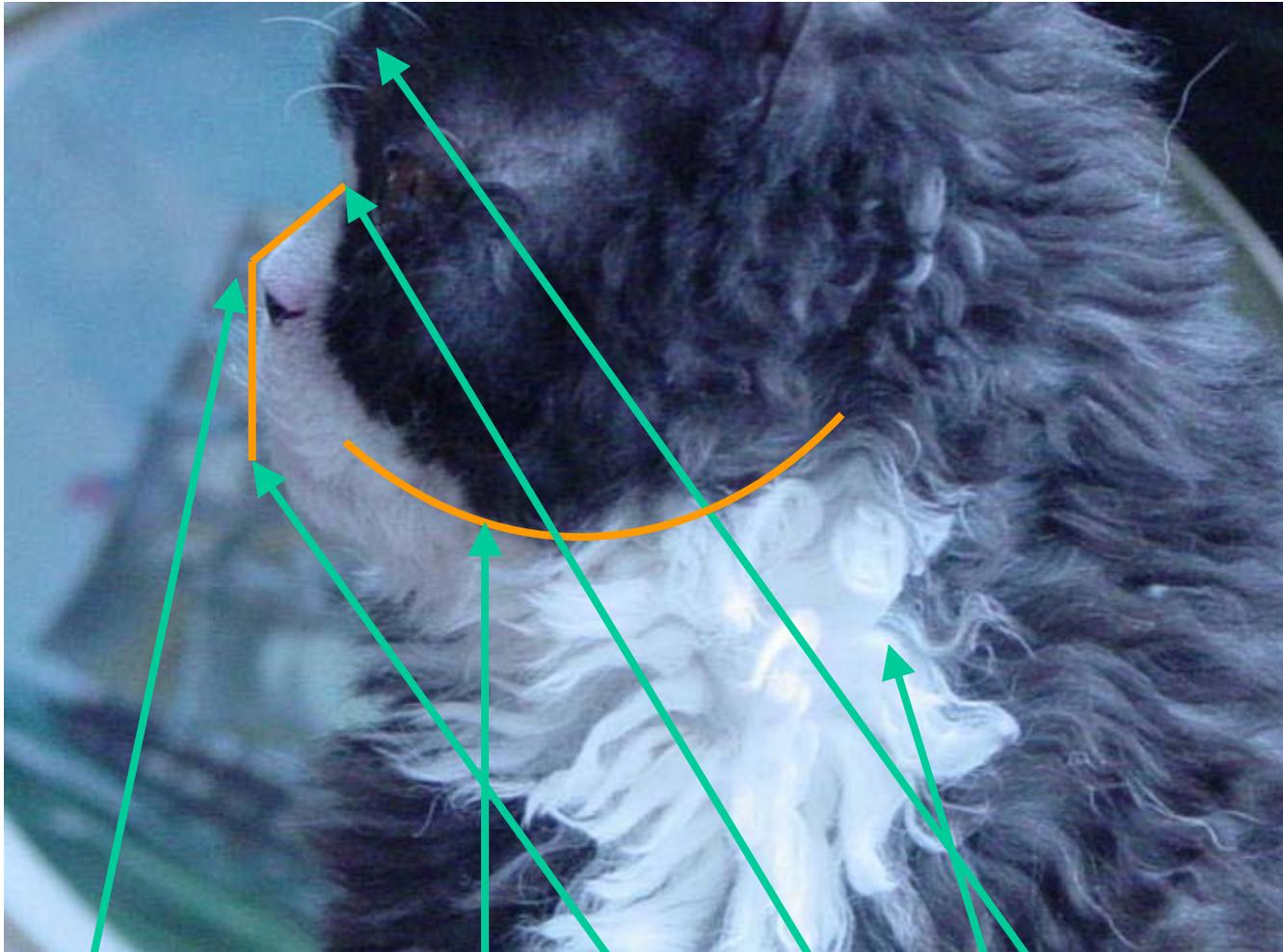
HEAD, BODY, and COAT



MF

**Strong eye bias. Good chest width and boning. Semi-rounded cheeks.
Too much chin depth. Good coat density, color, and pattern.**

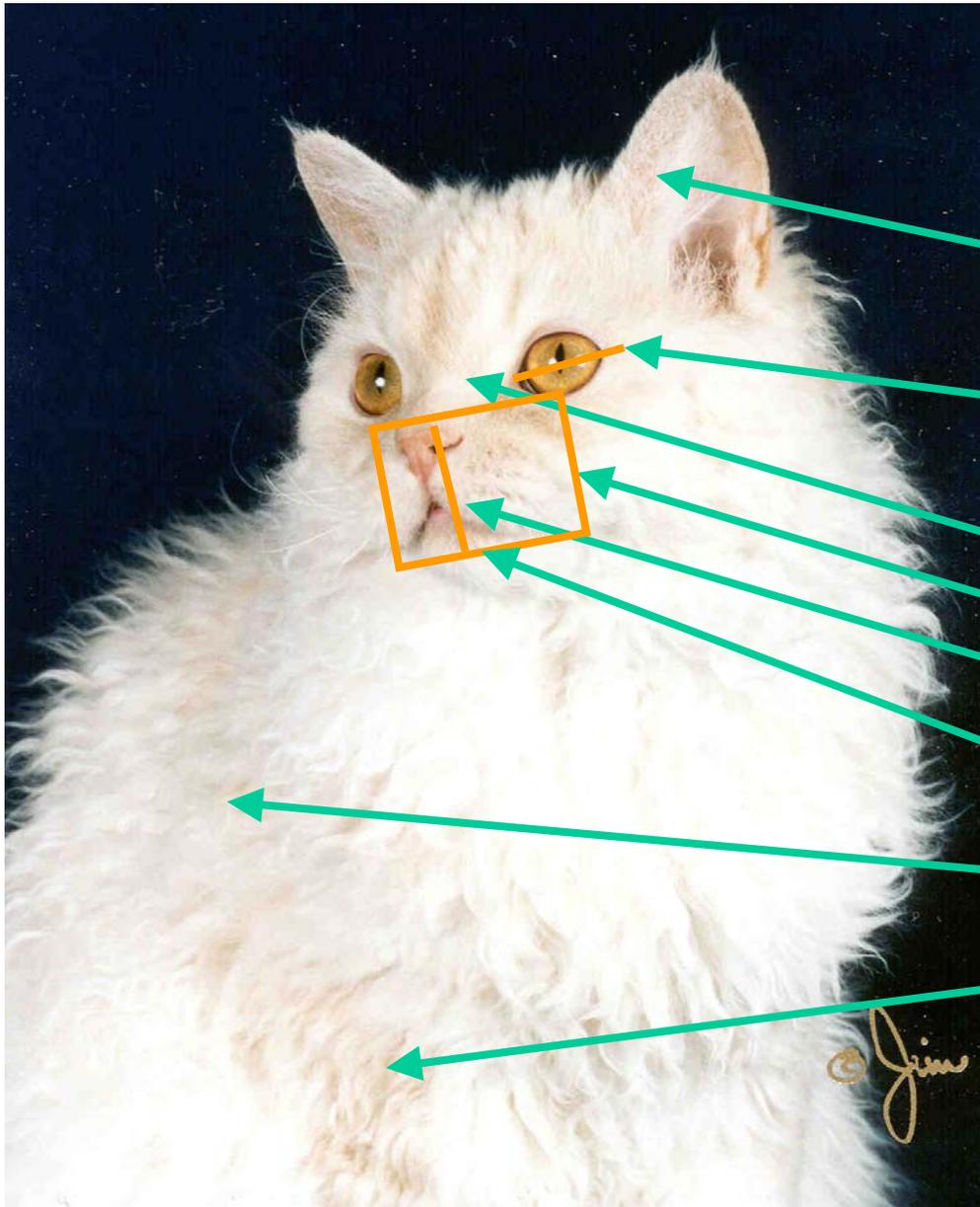
HEAD and COAT



14-week old Longhair kitten

**Excellent nose slope. Good profile, stop, and doming.
Good cheek roundness. Wonderful curl.**

HEAD and COAT



Longhair – 2 years old.

Good ear set – upright and forward; ears too tall.

Good eye width, slight downward bias.

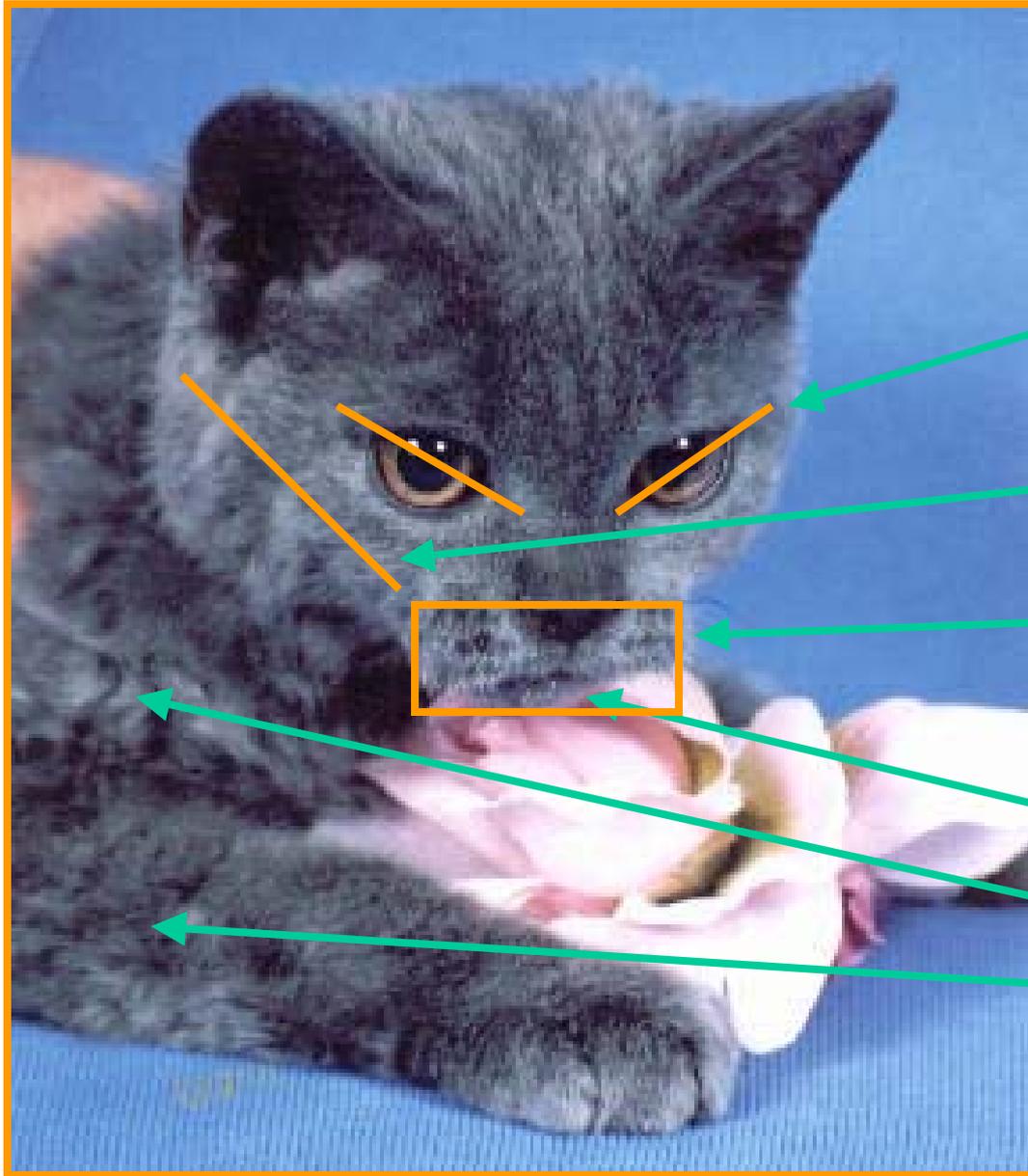
Good stop and matchbox muzzle shape and size with square alignment.

Strong chin.

Full, dense, heavy curl.

Beautiful color – Cream Shaded.

HEAD and COAT



Young Adult Shorthair

Eye set with bias.

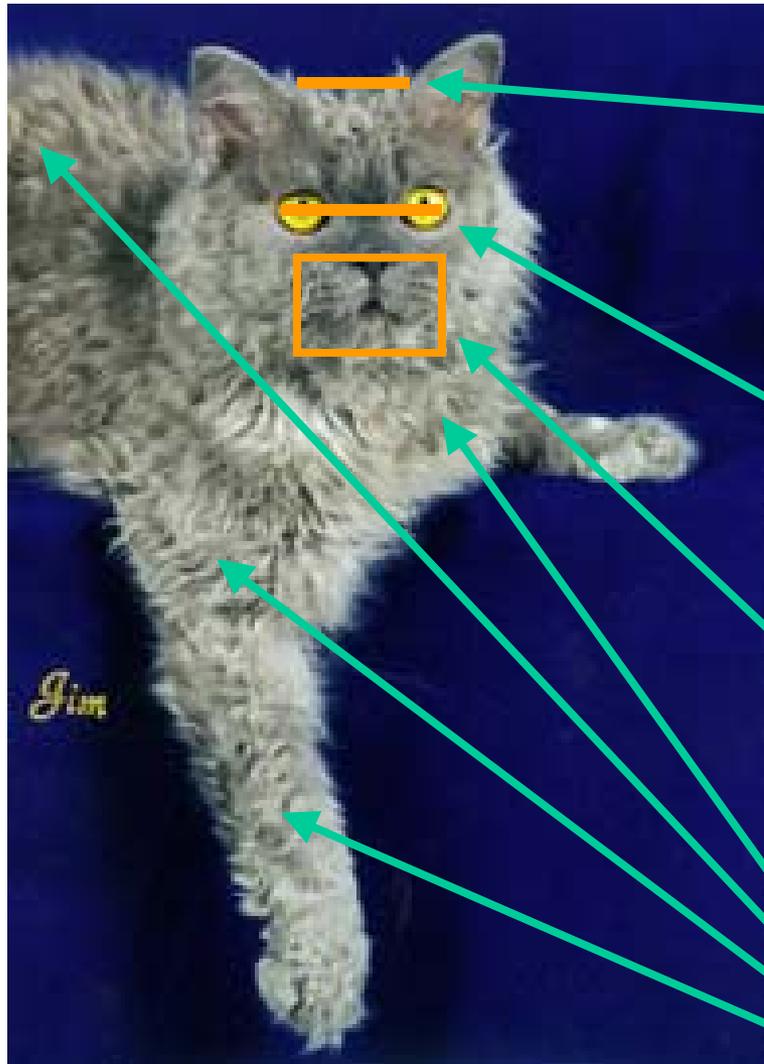
Cheek boning too angular, needs more rounding.

Rectangular muzzle, with good whisker pad.

Muzzle may lack depth (thin chin).

Nice curl, and striking deep blue color.

HEAD and COAT



RJS

Longhair – 18-months old.

Lack of space between ears, forehead should be broader & more rounded – ears need to set upright, and forward.

Good horizontal head structure. Perfect horizontal eye set. Full open round eyes.

Rectangular muzzle, to center of eye or beyond. “Matchbox look”, square alignment – nose to chin.

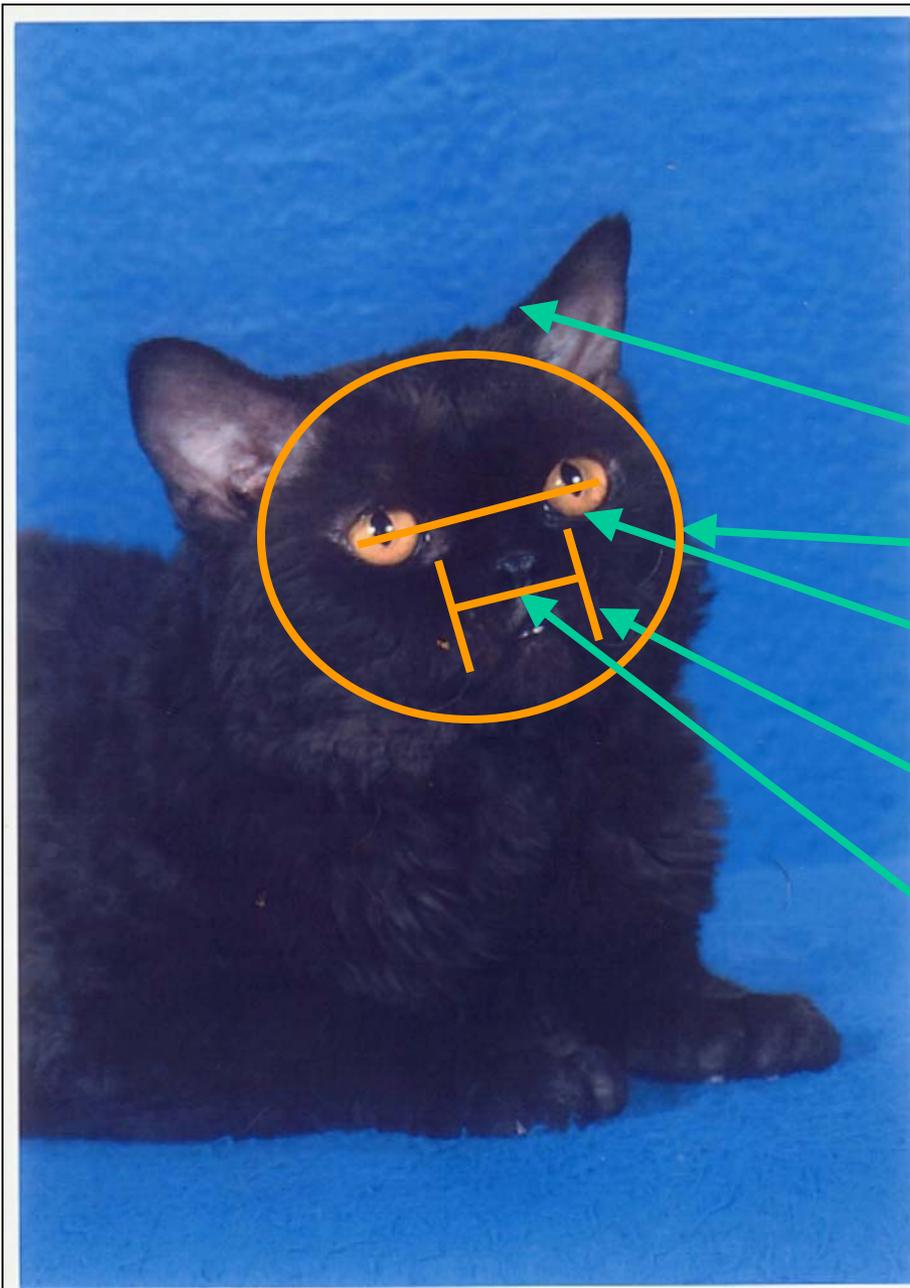
Spectacular coat density & complete curl. Nice blue color.

Selkirk Rex Longhair, Homozygous
has bred 5 kittens (all curly).

**Type: Triangular head – narrow ear set,
weak chin, pointed ears, slight boning.**

But, curly coat, and ALL CURLY KITTENS.

Because this Selkirk lady is homozygous for curl, she will always have curly kittens, making her especially valuable to a Selkirk Rex breeding program, but the type needs improvement.



Homozygous Male (young shorthair)

“Improved” overall type (fewer angles, more roundness). Better compliance with the standard.

Semi-“Rocker ears” - set too far out and tilted out. Head semi-rounded.

Good horizontal eye set and full eye roundness.

Muzzle needs more rectangular “match box” shape and should be as wide (including whisker pads) as center of eyes.

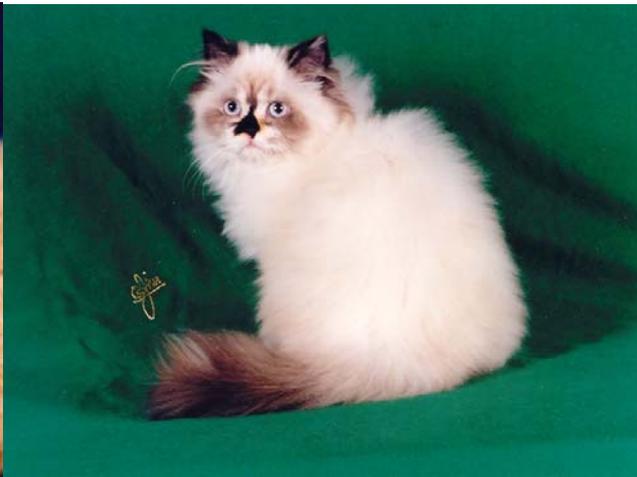
Very much improved type over previous homozygous examples. The “zygotes” are getting better.

Exhibition & Handling of Kittens/Cats/Alter

For your handling enjoyment, we have:

4 Adults - 1 Shorthair, 3 Longhairs

7 Kittens - 4 Shorthairs, 3 Longhairs



Selkirk Rex Grooming

We are often asked if the coat mats; practically any coat will mat (especially longhairs) if not periodically groomed. Combing with the largest (long wide tooth, for longhairs) comb you can find works well. Back to front combing, while working the comb to skin level works best, and gentleness helps the most. Even non-show cats, should be regularly bathed; this helps with coat maintenance.

The bath process is: thoroughly comb, clean the ears, thoroughly wet/rinse, apply degreaser (if needed), rinse, normal shampoo, rinse, a color enhancer/brightener (if needed), rinse, perhaps a finishing shampoo, and several rinses, and rinse some more. Most Selkirk exhibitors do not use any conditioner or “top coating.” A good, full-curl coat does not require any additives; it will feel wonderfully soft as is, once it dries. Do not blow dry; after a towel drying, the coat will air dry on its own and look and feel great. After drying, another combing is sometimes helpful, and afterward the coat can be water spritzed or rubbed down with a damp cloth, and when dry, the curl will bounce back. Truly - a wash & wear cat.

Selkirk Rex Showing

The Selkirk Rex is an easy cat to groom, and therefore an easy cat to show well. The bath routine does not need to be done days before to allow the coat to “recover” for best appearance. The bath can be done the night before the show, which may be preferable since the curls in the coat tend to collect debris, especially litter particles. This is the result of the curls acting as “pickup and sweeping devices.” Because the hair is not straight, debris tend to remain in the coat rather than fall out.

At the show (between rings), some exhibitors lightly water (no conditioners or additives) spritz the coat and scrunch the back, side, and flank hair to enhance the curl. This requires good timing since the hair should be dry for judging. From experience, the biggest problem during the show is maintaining a clean coat due to the tendency of the curly hair to pickup small particles (mostly lint and litter). Combing during the show is discouraged as it may temporarily straighten the hair, but it will bounce back with a water spritz, scrunch, and dry. The wash & wear cat – they're amazing.

The Future, Emphasis, Problems, Changes

Refine the Breed Standard. Add points for curl, eliminate points for “other”, reword: rectangular muzzle, body longer than legs, and better describe the ear (“round with pointed”?) and eye shape when open.

- Encouraging more Selkirk to Selkirk breeding.
- Developing healthy homozygous type to Breed standard.
- Blood Type A & B incompatibility – no statistics for SR/SL, but Persian estimated at 14% type B, and British Shorthair estimated at 25% - 50% type B.

The solution : Type Testing

- PKD inheritance – common (25% - 40%) in Persians.

The solution : DNA Testing

- Expiration and changes in permissible outcrosses.

(American Shorthair, British Shorthair/Longhair, Exotic Shorthair, Persian/Himalayan)

Seminar Contributors:

Thank you for your help and encouragement.

Jeri Newman, Montana (the Breed originator)

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Natasha Berry, Washington (images)

Mary Jones, Wisconsin (images)

Debi Kallmeyer, California (advice & images)

Lynn Landers-Dickinson, Iowa (images)

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Pam Sharp, Idaho (advice & images)

Patricia Simmes, Arizona (cats & images)

Debra Sutherland, Texas (advice, cats & images)

Karen Williams, Arizona (images)

Arnold Farley, Colorado (cats, images, author & seminar presentation)

Like the Selkirk Rex, this document is a work in progress; please send any changes, comments, or suggestions to: Arnold, E-Mail: WHF@comcast.net

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