

Capable Cats

An Introduction to Cow Hocks and Structure





Structure in Action

The Makings of a Durable Dog

Pat Hastings with Wendy E. Wallace, DVM, cVA
and Erin Ann Rouse



Recommended
reference book -
order it from
www.dogfolk.com,
or
www.amazon.com

1.

What is a hock?



Human heel

Cat hock

Dog hock





Cats walk on their toes



2.

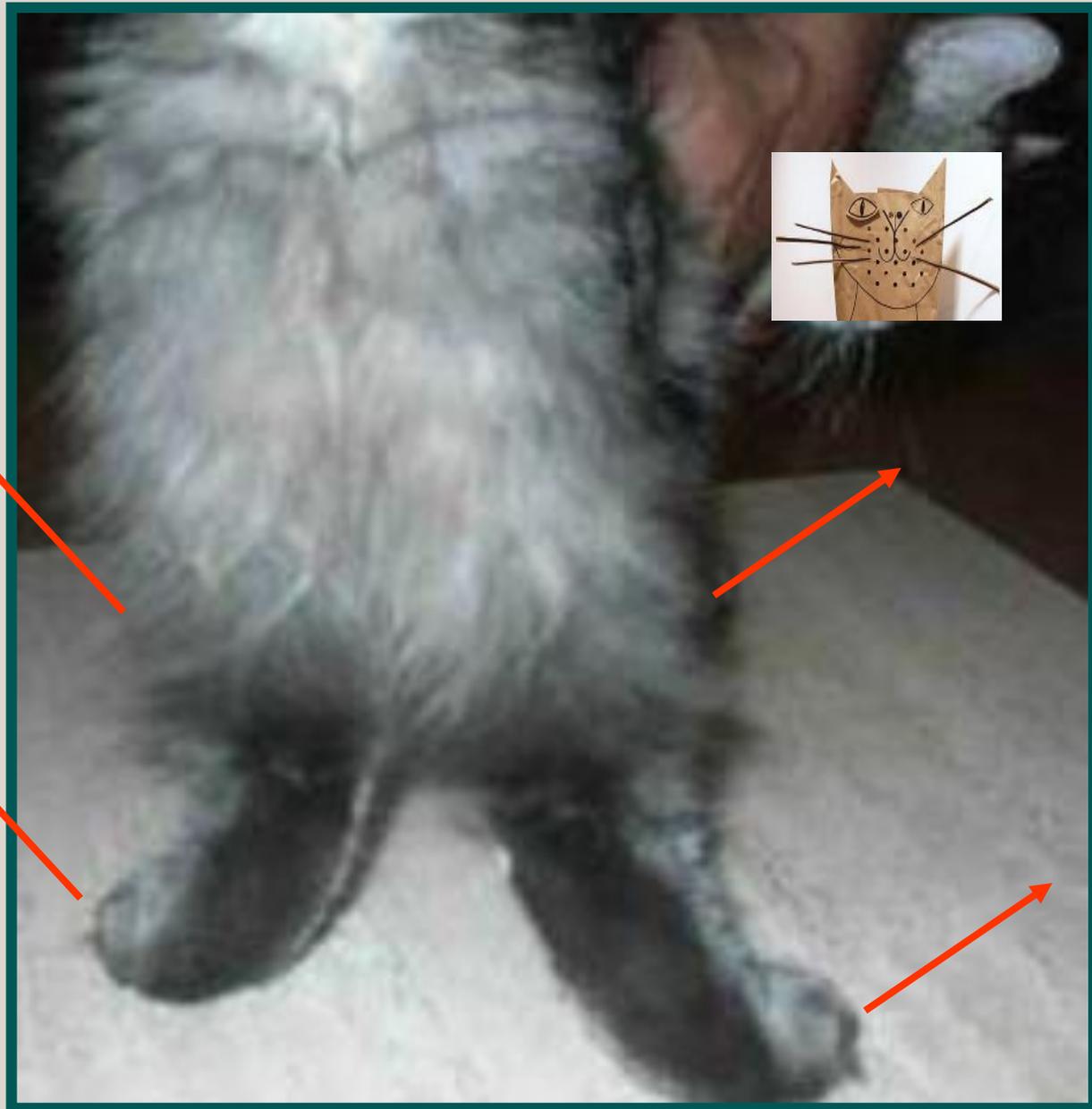
**What do cow hocks
look like?**

Cow hocks are a mis-alignment of the back leg joints.

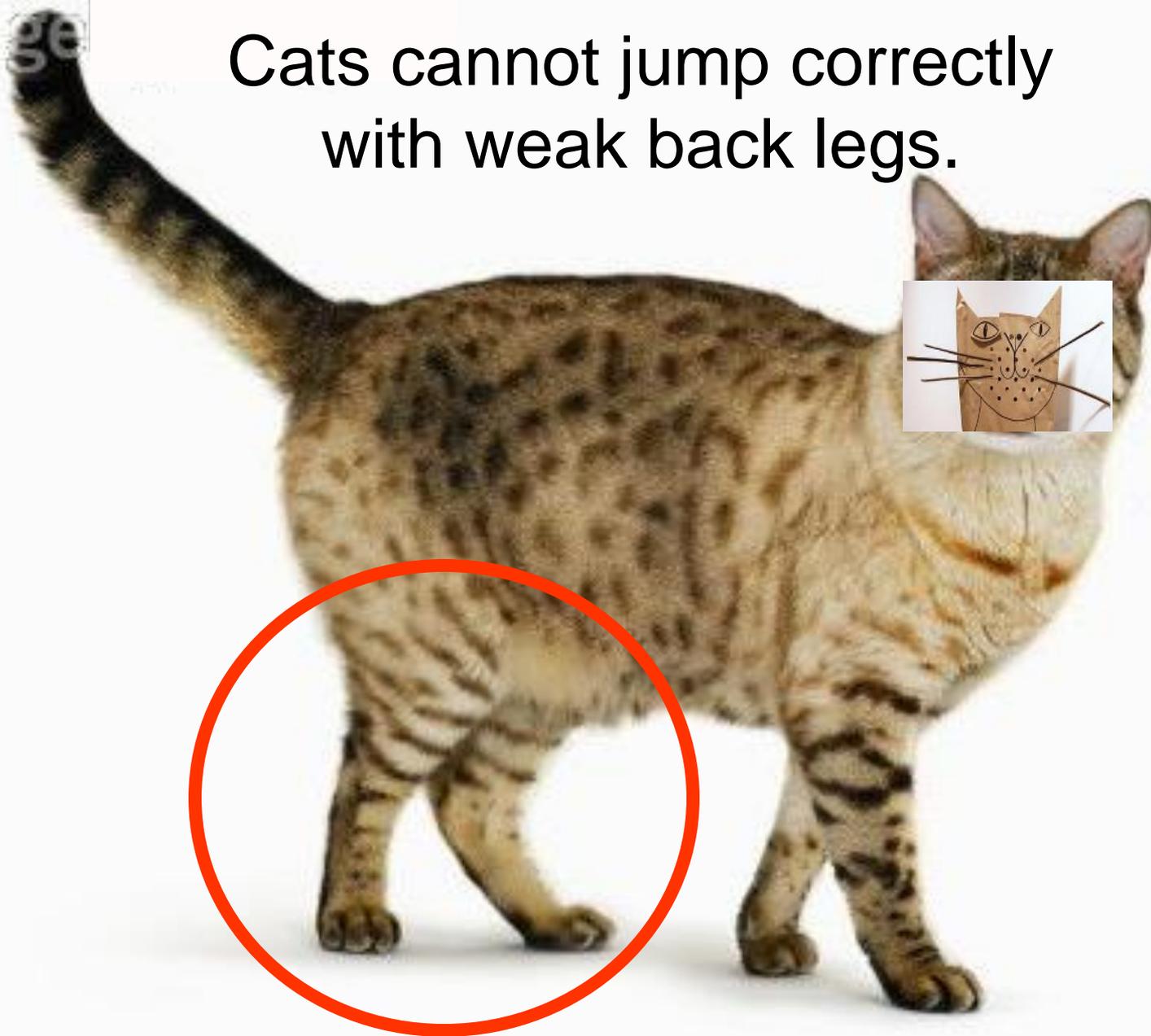
The hocks come together.

The knees and toes point outward.

The underlying cause sometimes is hip dysplasia, but sometimes not.



Cats cannot jump correctly
with weak back legs.



They have weak thrust, poor stability,
and diminished lateral strength

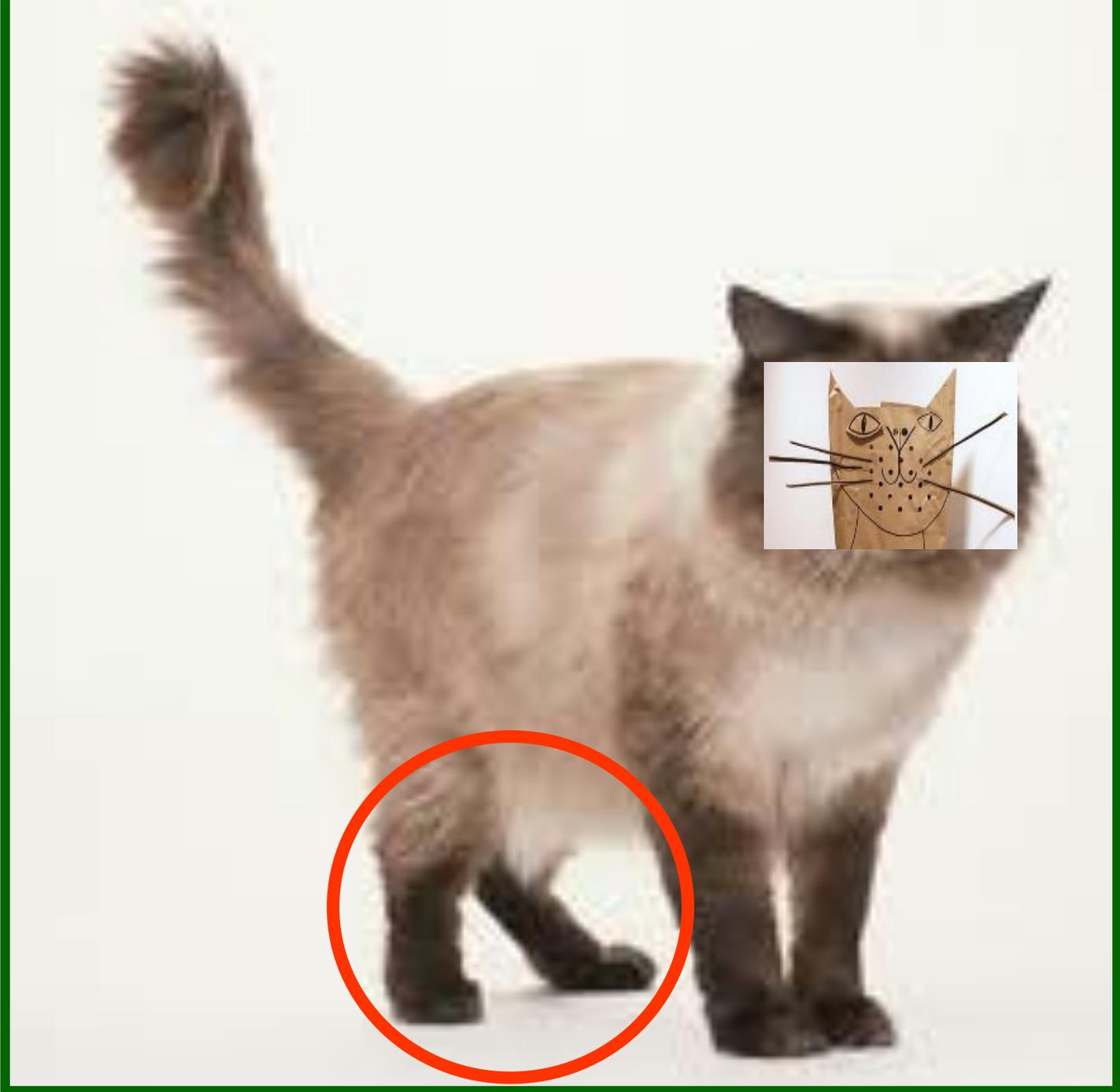


They cannot run powerfully, or change direction quickly, or land securely from a jump.

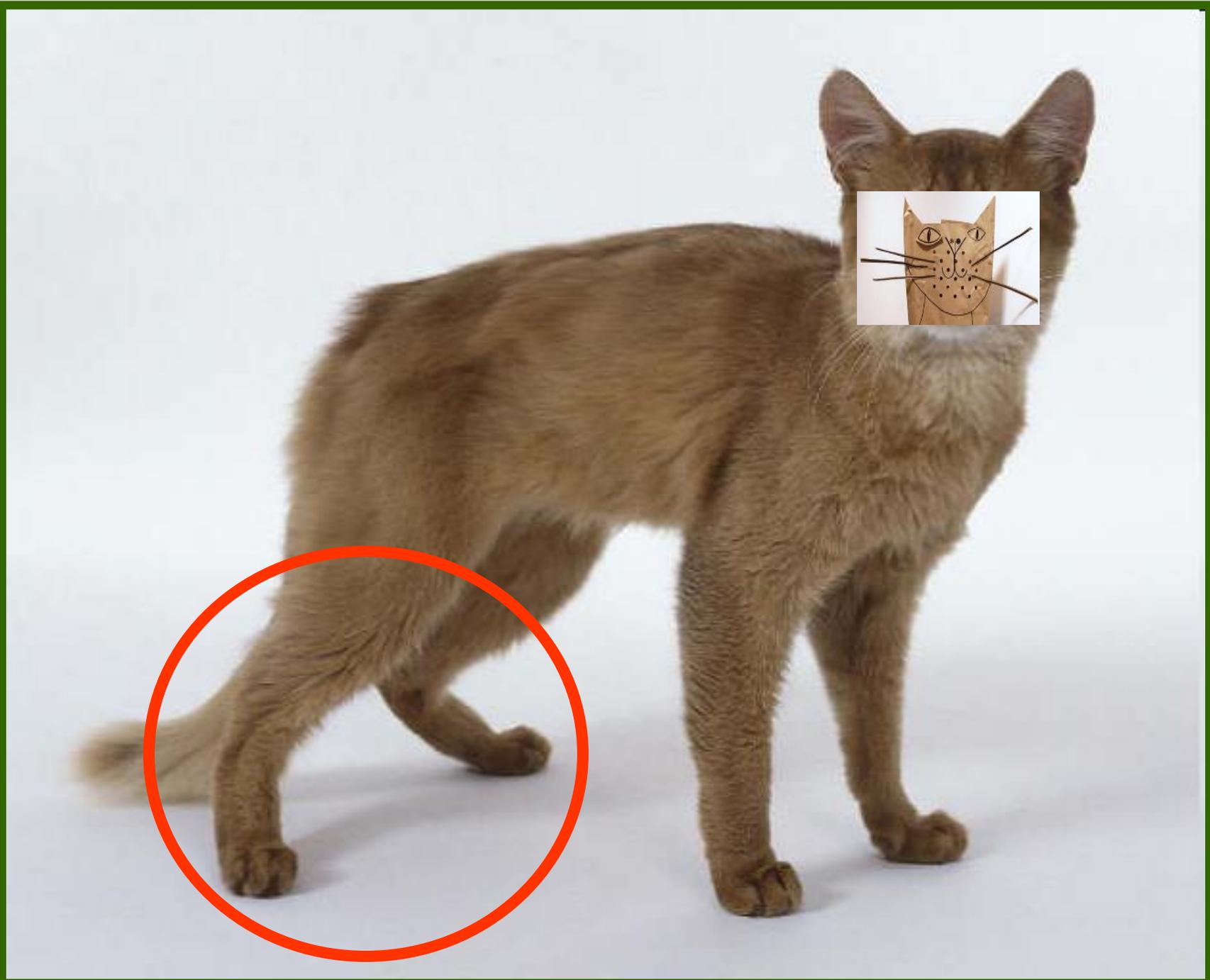


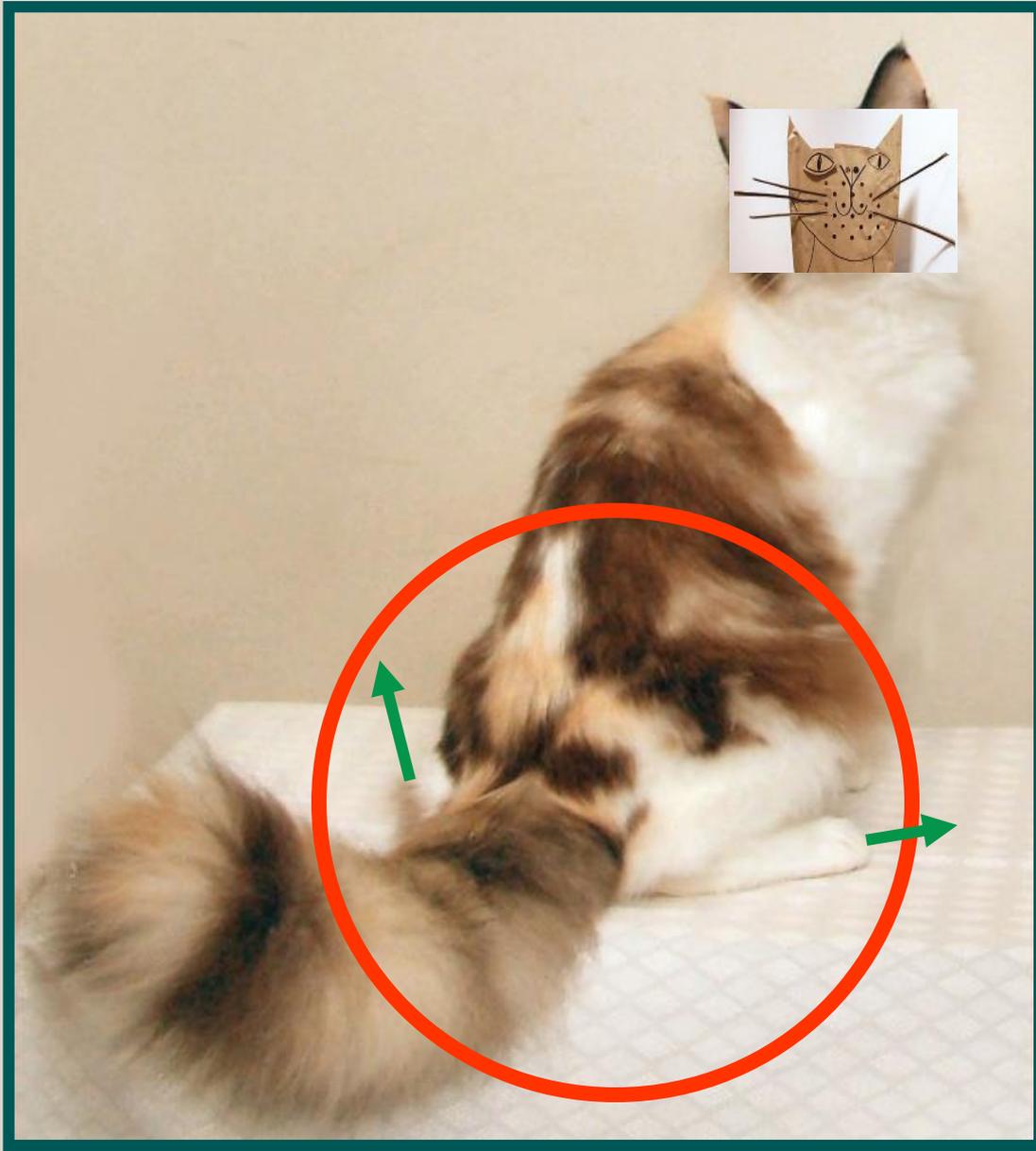
Cow-hocking is a physical disability.
It is a functional handicap to any animal.



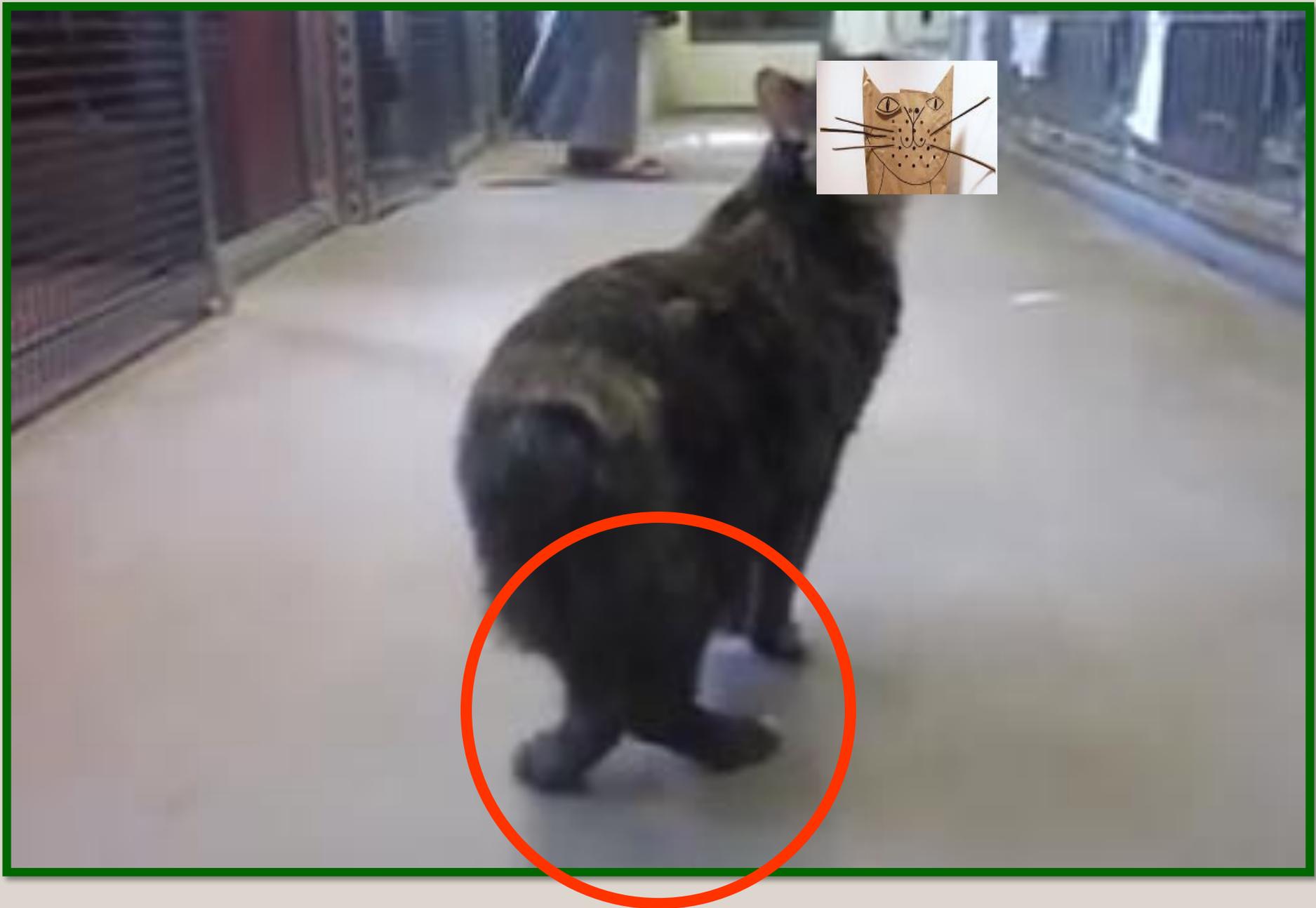
















Normal



Narrow



Wide



Cowhocked

Areas of stress

A few words about... **X-Rays**

Can x-rays determine cow hocking? **NO**, because of the positioning of the cats' legs during x-rays. (Unless the cow hocking is caused by hip dysplasia.) Looking at the cat standing is the best way to see cow hocks!



Right lateral (side) view



Ventrodorsal (like frog-leg) view

Structure is easy to see when the cat is standing



3.

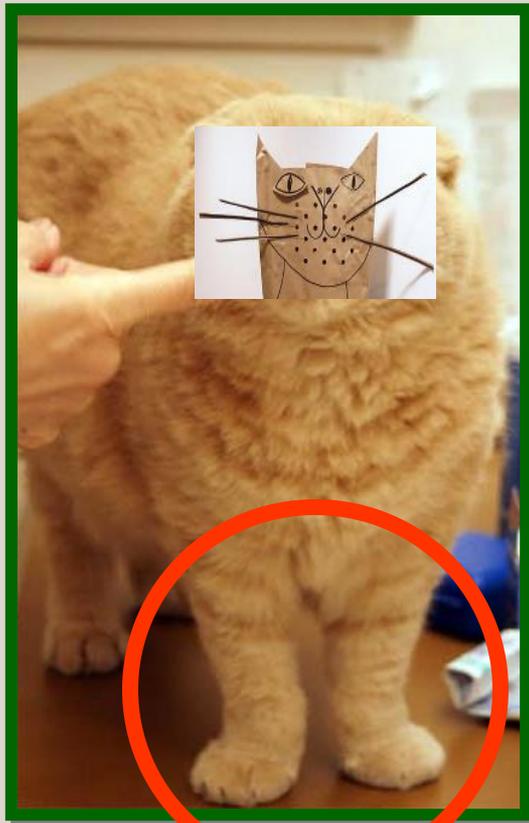
**What is toeing-out
in front?**



Toeing-out in front



“Toeing-out,” feet face out, elbows turn inward



4.

**Why is good
structure necessary?**

Correct Structure

- Power
- Accuracy
- Stability



“Build
the barn
before
you
paint it.”

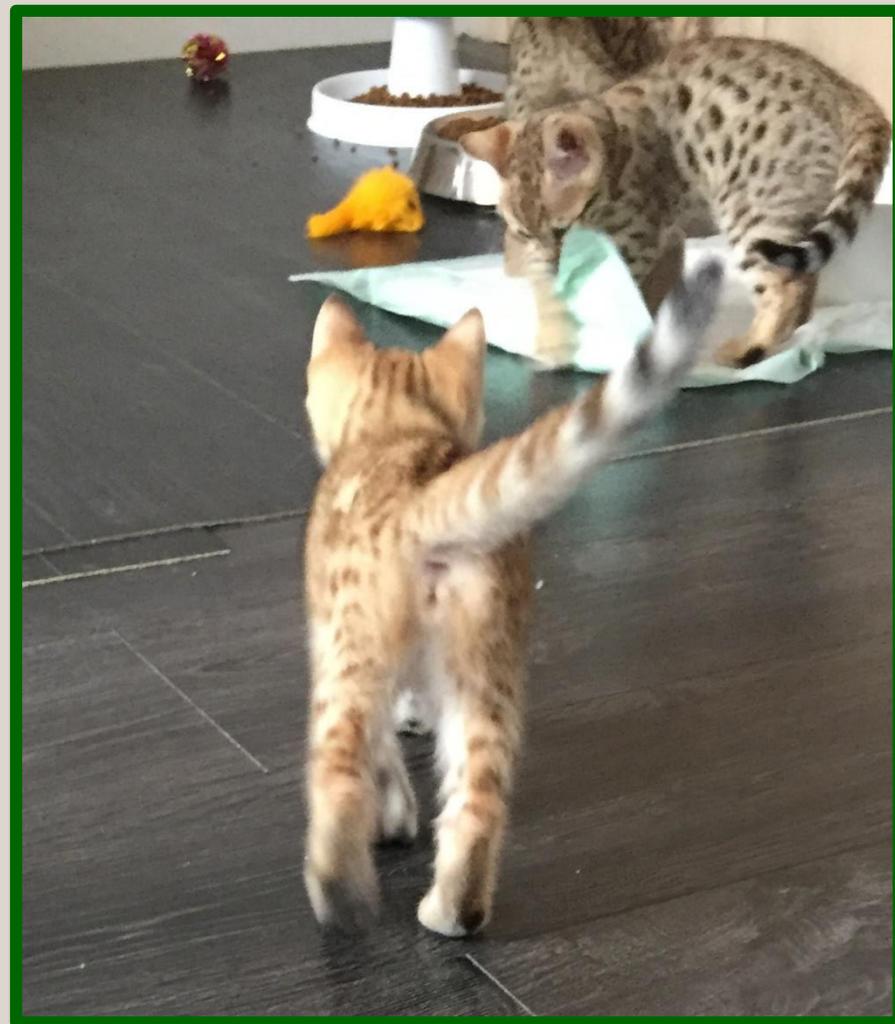


Conformation can be assessed in young kittens as soon as they stand up and start moving around. It does not change as they mature.

A young Bengal kitten with excellent legs



The same Bengal kitten, older, same good legs



Devon Rex kittens, 8 weeks old

Sphynx kitten





Observe, observe, observe.

Did you know all of the TICA Breed Standards of Perfection require correct structure?



(Correct structure is not required for the Household Pet cats, of course.)

RAGDOLL (RD)

HEAD	40 points
Shape	10
Ears	5
Eyes	5
Chin	5
Muzzle	5
Profile	5
Neck	5

BODY	35 points
Torso	10
Legs	5
Feet	5
Tail	5
Boning	5
Musculature	5

Profile: Gentle curve, with straight last segment (at the nose). Chin well-developed, strong, in line with nose and upper lip.

Neck: Short, heavy, strong.

BODY:

Torso: Medium to large, long and substantial with full chest, rump slightly higher than shoulders, shoulder blades broad, not prominent. Fat pad on lower abdomen acceptable (Greater Omentum), heavier in hindquarters. Females may be appreciably smaller than males.

Legs: Substantial boning; medium

COLOR/PATTERN: Body and point color are weighted equally.

SOLID POINT DIVISION:

Points: Ears, mask, feet and tail to be darker, well-defined color.

Body: Definite contrast between body and points, chest, bib and chin areas may be somewhat lighter in color. Soft shadings of color are allowed on body. Allowance to be made for a cat under 2 years of age.

PARTICOLOR DIVISION:

Mitted Pattern:

Points: Legs (except for feet), ears, mask, and tail well-defined. A broken or evenly matched white blaze of even dimension on nose and/or between eyes to be acceptable. White not extending

ALLOWANCES: Lighter eye color in dilutes. Seasonal changes in coat length and texture.

PENALIZE:

General: Short tail, pointed ears, short legs; cobby body, Roman nose.

Mitted: Any dark spotting on white mittens, lack of white belly stripe, white on ears and/or tail.

Bicolor: Pigment on stomach; whiskers other than white, white on ears and/or tail, white beyond the outside edge of the eye, or pigment on any area designated white.

WITHHOLD ALL AWARDS (WW):

General: Any eye color other than

Where it is located in every breed's Standard

COLORS: All pointed colors.

PERMISSIBLE OUTCROSSES: None.

HEAD:

Shape: Broad modified wedge, with slightly rounded contours, slightly rounded forehead, appearance of flat plane in area between ears, skull medium in size.

Ears: Medium in size, continuation of modified wedge, broad at base, slight tilt forward, rounded tip, medium furnishings.

Eyes: Blue, large, oval, moderately wide-set, outer aperture to fall in line with base of ear, not oriental.

Chin: Well-developed.

Muzzle: Round, medium in length.

unaltered adults and seasonal variations.

Texture: Silky, plush.

Miscellaneous: The coat lies with the body and breaks as the cat moves. The coat is longest around the neck and the outer edges of the face giving the appearance of a tib. The coat is short on the face and increases in length from the top of the head down through the shoulder blades and back, with the coat on the sides and stomach being medium to long. The fur on the front legs is thick and short to medium in length. The fur on the hind legs is medium to long, thick and feather-like. The paws are feather-tufted. Abundant ruff desirable.

Bicolor Pattern:

Points: Ears, mask and tail to be well-defined. Mask to have an inverted "V" which should be as symmetrical as possible and should not extend beyond the outer edge of the eye on either side. The nose leather must be pink.

Body: Chest, stomach, all four legs, feet and ruff are to be white. Definite contrast between body and points, may have various markings of white and color patches. White should reach above the elbow on the front legs, and above the hock on the rear legs.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The ideal Ragdoll grows large and heavy. Full maturity of color is not achieved until 2 years old and full weight and size is not expected for at least 4 years. The cat is firm and muscular with no fat except on the lower abdomen. Overall impression is of subdued power.

cat may exhibit fear, seek to flee, or generally complain aloud but may not threaten to harm. In accordance with Show Rules, ARTICLE SIXTEEN, the following shall be considered mandatory disqualifications: a cat that bites (216.9), a cat showing evidence of intent to deceive (216.10), adult whole male cats not having two descended testicles (216.11), cats with all or part of the tail missing, except as authorized by a Board approved standard (216.12.1), cats with more than five toes on each front foot and four toes on each back foot, unless proved the result of an injury or as authorized by a Board approved standard (216.12.2), visible or invisible tail faults if Board approved standard requires disqualification (216.12.4), crossed eyes if Board approved standard requires disqualification (216.12.5), total blindness (216.12.6), markedly smaller size, not in keeping with the breed (216.12.9), and depression of the sternum or unusually small

See Show Rules, ARTICLE SIXTEEN for more comprehensive rules governing penalties and disqualifications.

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HEAD	40 points	Profile: Gentle curve, with straight last segment (at the nose). Chin well-developed, strong, in line with nose and upper lip.
Shape	10	
Ears	5	
Eyes	5	
Chin	5	
Muzzle	5	Neck: Short, heavy, strong.
Profile	5	
Neck	5	
BODY	35 points	Body: Medium to large, long and substantial with full chest, rump slightly higher than shoulders, shoulder blades broad, not prominent. Fat pad on lower abdomen acceptable (Greater Omentum), heavier in hindquarters. Females may be appreciably smaller than males.
Torso	10	
Legs	5	
Feet	5	
Tail	5	
Boning	5	Legs: Substantial boning, medium length, in proportion to body, hind legs slightly higher than front legs.
Musculature	5	
COAT/COLOR/PATTERN ..	25 points	Feet: Large, round, tufting desirable.
Length	5	Tail: Long, equal to body length from rump, medium at base with a slight taper,
Texture	5	
Pattern	5	

COLOR/PATTERN: Body and point color are weighted equally.

SOLID POINT DIVISION:
Points: Ears, mask, feet and tail to be darker, well-defined color.
Body: Definite contrast between body and points, chest, bib and chin areas may be somewhat lighter in color. Soft shadings of color are allowed on body. Allowance to be made for a cat under 2 years of age.

PARTICOLOR DIVISION:
Mitted Pattern:
Points: Legs (except for feet), ears, mask, and tail well-defined. A broken or evenly matched white blaze of even dimension on nose and/or between eyes to be acceptable. White not extending into the colored nose leather. Chin must be white.
Front feet: White mittens evenly matched.
Back Legs: Entirely white extending no higher than mid-thigh. White must oo

ALLOWANCES: Lighter eye color in dilutes. Seasonal changes in coat length and texture.

PENALIZE:
General: Short tail, pointed ears, short legs; cobby body, Roman nose.
Mitted: Any dark spotting on white mittens, lack of white belly stripe, white on ears and/or tail.
Bicolor: Pigment on stomach; whiskers other than white, white on ears and/or tail, white beyond the outside edge of the eye, or pigment on any area designated white.

WITHHOLD ALL AWARDS (WW):
General: Any eye color other than blue.
Pointed: Any white.
Mitted: Lack of white chin.
Bicolor: Any dark markings on area of white mask.

Where I recommend it should be located because of the importance of functional health

Ears: Medium in size, continuation of modified wedge, broad at base, slight tilt forward, rounded tip, medium furnishings.

Eyes: Blue, large, oval, moderately wide-set, outer aperture to fall in line with base of ear, not oriental.

Chin: Well-developed.

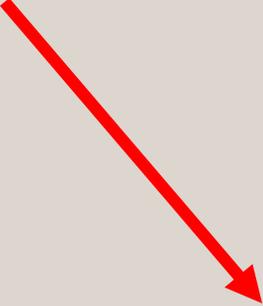
Muzzle: Round, medium in length.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The ideal Ragdoll grows large and heavy. Full maturity of color is not achieved until 2 years old and full weight and size is not expected for at least 4 years. The cat is firm and muscular with no fat except on the lower abdomen. Overall impression is of subdued power.

authorized by a Board approved standard (216.12.2), visible or invisible tail faults if Board approved standard requires disqualification (216.12.4), crossed eyes if Board approved standard requires disqualification (216.12.5), total blindness (216.12.6), markedly smaller size, not in keeping with the breed (216.12.9), and depression of the sternum or unusually small diameter of the rib cage itself (216.12.11.1). See Show Rules, ARTICLE SIXTEEN for more comprehensive rules governing penalties and disqualifications.



What it says:

“See Show Rules, ARTICLE SIXTEEN for more comprehensive rules governing penalties and disqualifications.”

TICA Show Rules

ARTICLE SIXTEEN – *Judging Procedures*

256.12

Many abnormalities which are detected in judging are not breed specific, but, rather occur in all cats.

Responsible breeding aims to conserve our breeds while maintaining their health which means focusing on reducing or eliminating these abnormalities.

Household Pets are excepted from this rule because they are not the result of planned breeding programs.

Except as otherwise stated in this rule,
judges shall penalize or disqualify,
depending upon severity,

championship cats, non-championship kittens,
Advanced New Breeds (ANB), and New Traits
Class (NT) [see TICA Standing Rules
701.4.3], and shall penalize championship
alters for the following:

...

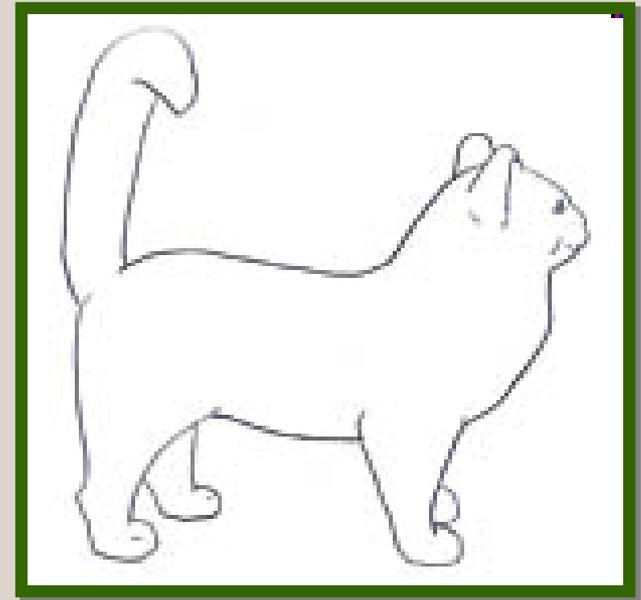
256.12.7

Inability to bear or support weight or to walk normally.

256.12.8

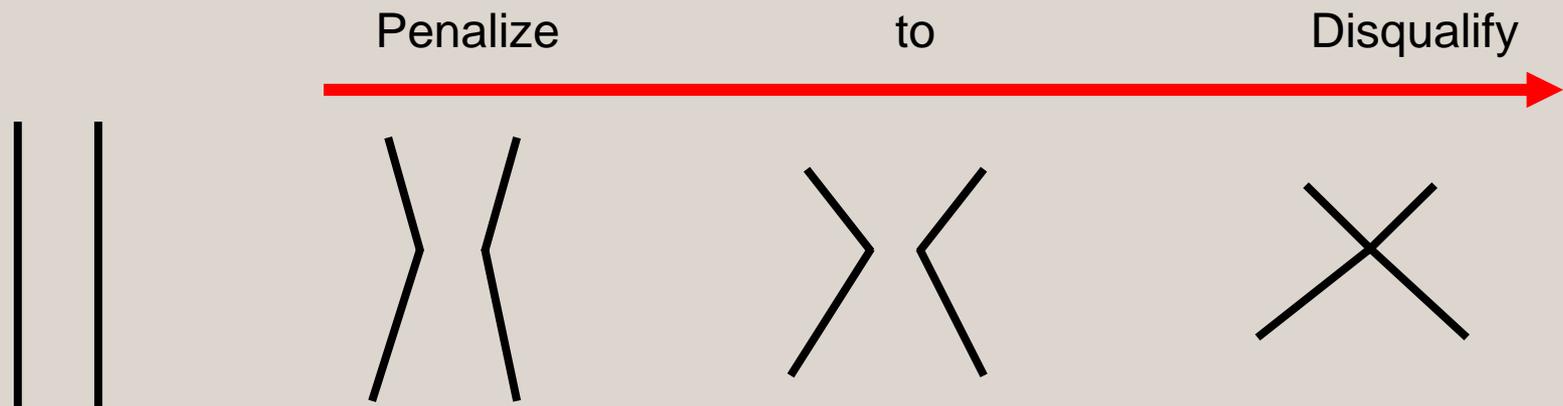
Abnormal positioning of the legs and feet while standing.

Examples include, but are not limited to, bowed or cow hocked legs, splaying of the feet, or obvious toeing in or out of the feet.



Excellent legs and feet

“judges *shall*
penalize or disqualify
depending upon severity”



TICA Show Rules say penalizing tail faults is discretionary, whereas penalizing or disqualifying structural problems is **mandatory**

Health

TICA Show Rules

Temperament

Breed Type

TICA Breed Standards

Color

According to TICA's By-Laws,
“The Registration Rules, Show Rules,
..**take precedence** over any individual
Breed Standard...

Therefore,
the Article 16 of Show Rules, should be
applied **FIRST**, and faults at the Show Rule
level are more important than faults under
the individual Breed Standards

Health

*Primary importance,
according to TICA's rules*

Temperament

Breed Type

*Secondary importance,
according to TICA's rules*

Color

All associations judge structure:

Cat Fanciers Association (CFA), U.S.A.

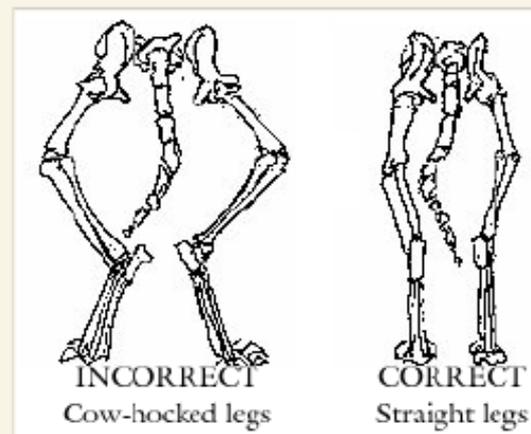
"The following descriptions and drawings of "normal" and "abnormal" are offered as an educational tool to help develop and refine the ability of cat fanciers to recognize and select against undesirable and potentially harmful physical characteristics."

"Judges help to promote the elimination of defects by recognizing and rewarding cats with structural soundness on the show bench."



The screenshot shows the website for The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc. The header includes the CFA logo and the text "The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc. World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Breeds, Cat Care, Exhibitors, Press, Contact Us, and Member Information. The main content area is titled "Feline Structure: Recognizing Normal and Abnormal" and includes a section for "BODY - Spine, Rib Cage, Limbs, Abdomen and Genitals". The text describes the spine and lists defects such as "Fixed Deviation of the Tail (Kink)" and "SIT Tail".

- ★ **Bowed legs** occur when the hocks are further apart than the feet
- ★ **Cow-hocked legs** - The hind hocks turn inward and cause the feet to point outwards rather than straight forward.





**FIFe Compulsory Seminar for Student Judges
FIFe Pflichtseminar für Richterschüler
Séminaire obligatoire FIFe pour la formation des élèves-juges**

Friday / Freitag / Vendredi 11. 12. 2015

Place / Ort / Lieu:

Marina Lepanto Yachting Club

Via Consiglio d'Europa, 38

34074 Monfalcone (GO)

Italy / Italien / Italie

<http://www.marinalepanto.it/en>

Programme - Programm - Programme

09.00 – 09.30	Diana Di Natale (Roll Call) / Donatella Mastrangelo (Introduction) Roll Call and introduction / Anwesenheitsliste und Einführung / Liste de présence et introduction	
09.30 – 10.00	FIFe structure / Struktur der FIFe / Structure de la FIFé	Dorte Kaae
10.00 – 10.30	Standards & Judges reports/ Standards & Richterberichte /Standards & rapports de juges	Steven L. Jones
10.30 – 11.00	Open discussion / Offene Diskussion / Discussion ouverte	
11.00 – 11.15	<i>coffee break - Kaffeepause - pause café</i>	
11.15 – 12.15	Anatomy of the cats and faults / Anatomie der Katze und Fehler / L'anatomie du chat et ses fautes	Pia Nyman
12.15 – 12.45	Open discussion / Offene Diskussion / Discussion ouverte	
12.45 – 14.15	<i>lunch break - Mittagspause - déjeuner</i>	
14.15 – 15.15	Genetics: colours, patterns and coat / Genetik: Farben, Zeichnungen und Fell / Génétiq ue: couleurs, dessins et fourrure	Steven L. Jones
15.15 – 16.00	Open discussion / Offene Diskussion / Discussion ouverte	
16.00 – 16.15	<i>coffee break - Kaffeepause - pause café</i>	
16.15 – 17.15	Show arena and ethics of judging / Die Showarena und Ethik des Richtens / L'arène de l'exposition et l'éthique du jugement	Donatella Mastrangelo
17.15 -18.00	Open discussion / Offene Diskussion / Discussion ouverte	
18.00	End of seminar / Ende des Seminars / Fin du séminaire	

Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF), U.K.

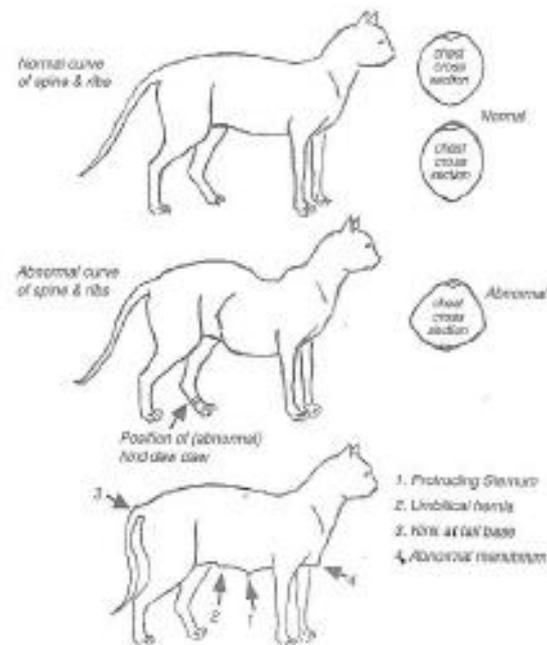
"As the desire of any concerned breeder must be to try to eliminate any defects which can affect the health or comfort of cats, it is obviously undesirable to breed from any cats with defects, and especially from those displaying severe examples of any defects."

"Judges too should help to eliminate defects by penalizing them on the show bench wherever they are encountered."

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE CAT FANCY
4-6 Penel Orleux
Bridgwater
Somerset TA6 3PG
Tel:(01278) 427575



GUIDE TO THE DEFECTS LISTED IN THE GCCF STANDARD OF POINTS



6.

A few words about...

- **Balance**
- **Breeding**
- **Tail Set**
- **Hip Dysplasia**
- **Giving Birth**

A few words about... Balance

Look at this cat and think about movement, power, and weight distribution:



Not balanced:



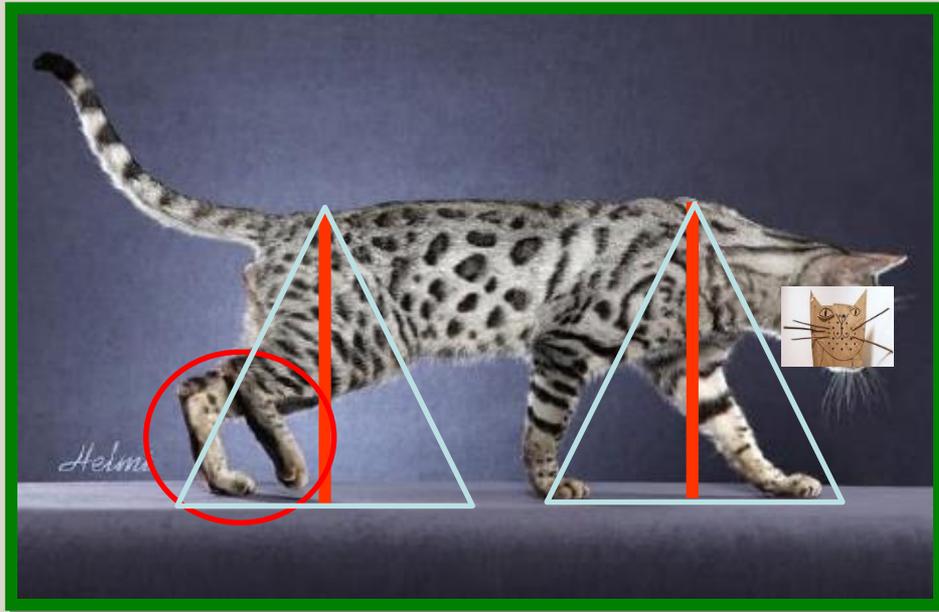
- Both back feet are *behind* the hips. He is cow hocked in his back legs (in real life).
- His front legs are compensating to hold rear weight, by reaching back behind shoulders. The cat pulls with front legs.
- Neck *straining* forward, to carry body weight on the stronger front legs.
- This cat lacks normal stability and thrust

Balanced:



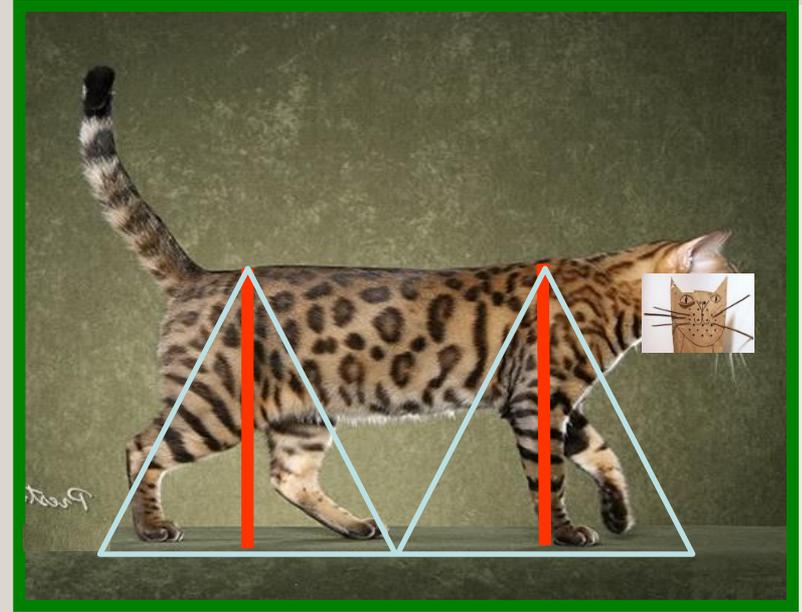
- Excellent. The back legs are supporting hip weight.
- The front legs evenly support the shoulders.
- Imagine rear legs as the engine, and front legs as the landing gear.
- This cat is stable, flexible, with agile movement, and balanced.

Not balanced:



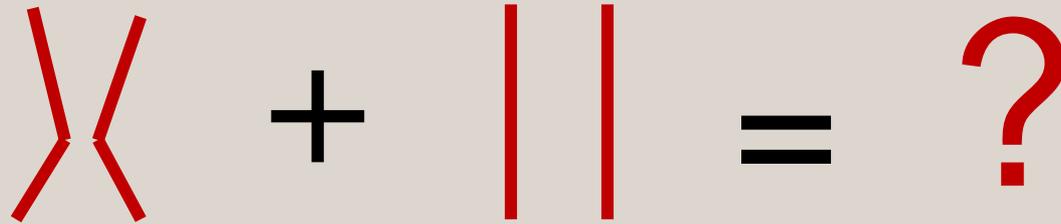
- *Both* back feet are *behind* the hips. He is cow hocked in his back legs (in real life).
- His front legs are compensating to hold rear weight, by reaching back behind shoulders. The cat pulls with front legs.
- Neck *straining* forward, to carry body weight on the stronger front legs.
- This cat is lacks normal stability and thrust

Balanced:



- Excellent. The back legs are supporting hip weight.
- The front legs evenly supporting the shoulders.
- Imagine rear legs as the engine, and front legs as the landing gear.
- This cat is stable, flexible, with agile movement, and balanced.

A few words about... Breeding



What happens when you breed a very cow hocked cat to one with good structure?

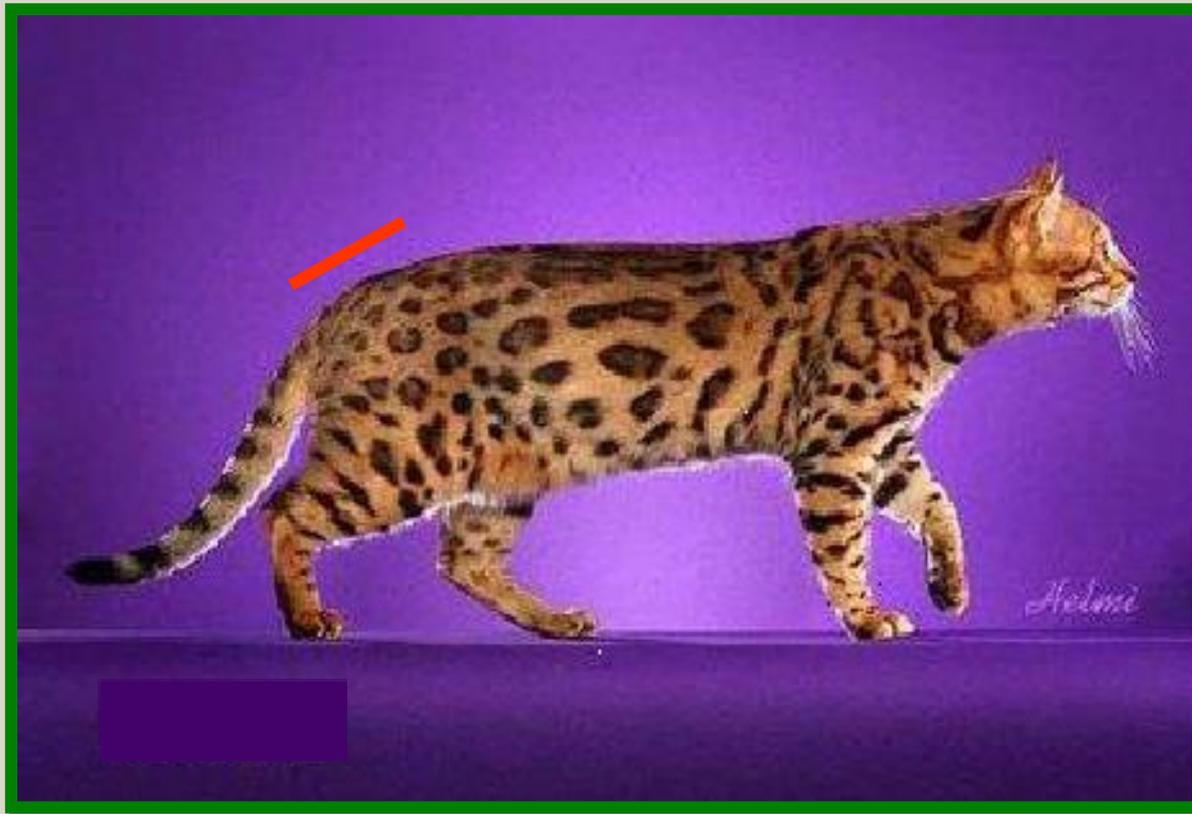
You can get a **range** from bad to fairly good. It also depends on the cause of the cow hocks. Hip dysplasia? Misaligned joints?

But bad structure **can** be bred out eventually.

It is better to start with a cat with correct structure.

A few words about... Tail Set

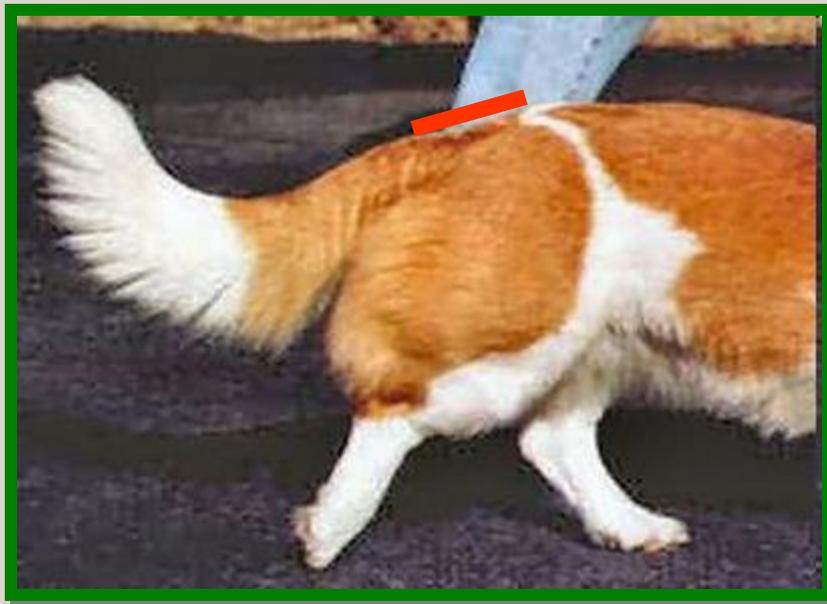
The TICA Bengal Standard says, “A thick, low-set, medium-length tail adds balance to the cat.”



This croup is gently sloping, with the tail set on just below the level of the back.

Great Pyrenees tail is “set low and carried low in repose”





Low tail set, displaying the soft flowing curve over the croup



Tail set is high off a flat croup



Tail is set very high on a short, flat croup

Japanese Bobtail, short, flat croup:

The pom-pom “appears to commence at the base of the spine.”



A few words about...

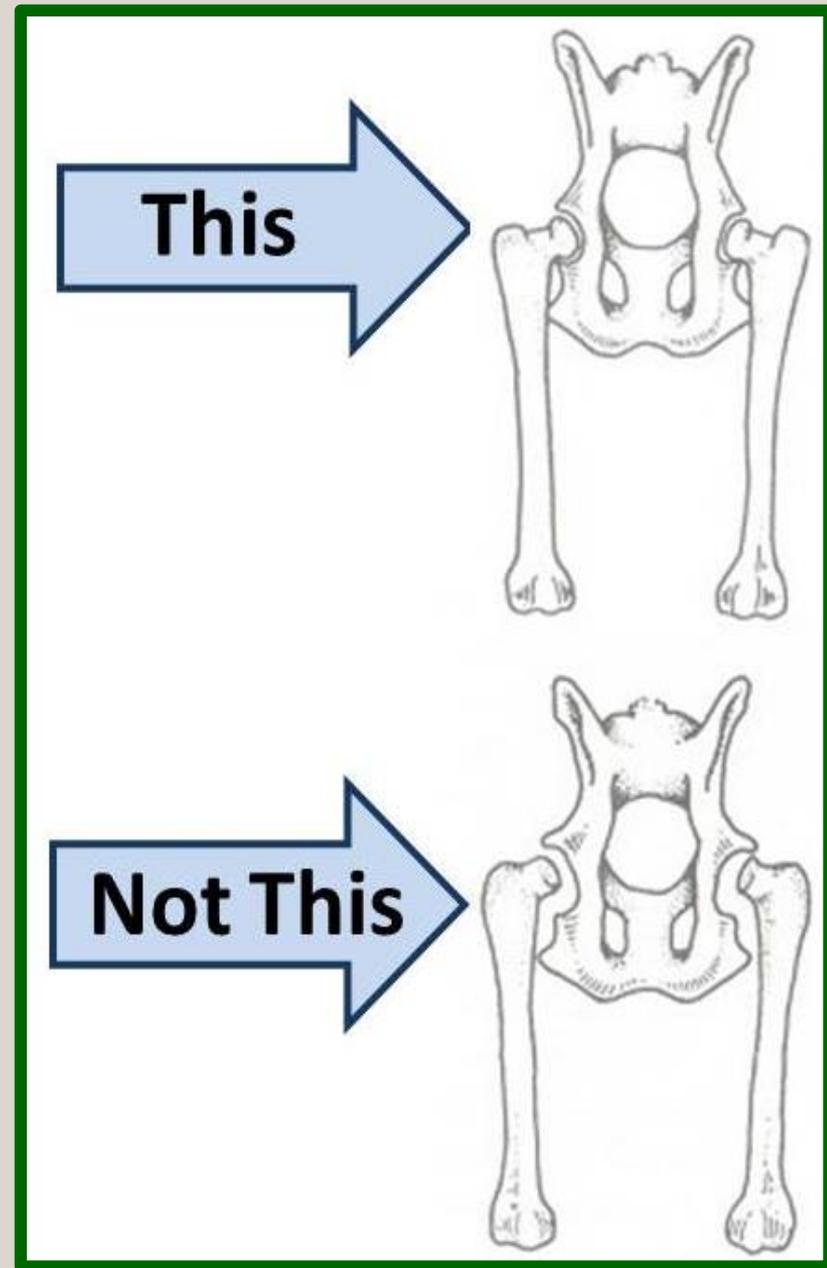
Hip Dysplasia

Yes, it exists in cats.

Hip Dysplasia is a hereditary defect in the socket joint that it is not as deep as it normally should be. (“Dysplasia” means “poorly developed.”)

Because of this the head of the femur does not fit exactly in the socket joint and the surfaces begin to rub against each other, causing the cartilage to degenerate, leaving a bone-against-bone joint surface which is painful.

(In the show ring, judges only need to observe structural irregularities, not guess the cause.)





This cat has hip dysplasia, diagnosed by a veterinarian by x-ray.

When judging, only the “abnormal positioning
of the feet and legs while standing,”
must be penalized, not the cause.

A few words about... Giving Birth

Dogs with cow hocks require more surgical intervention (Cesarean-sections) to give birth than dogs with good structure do.

Perhaps this is true with cats, too?



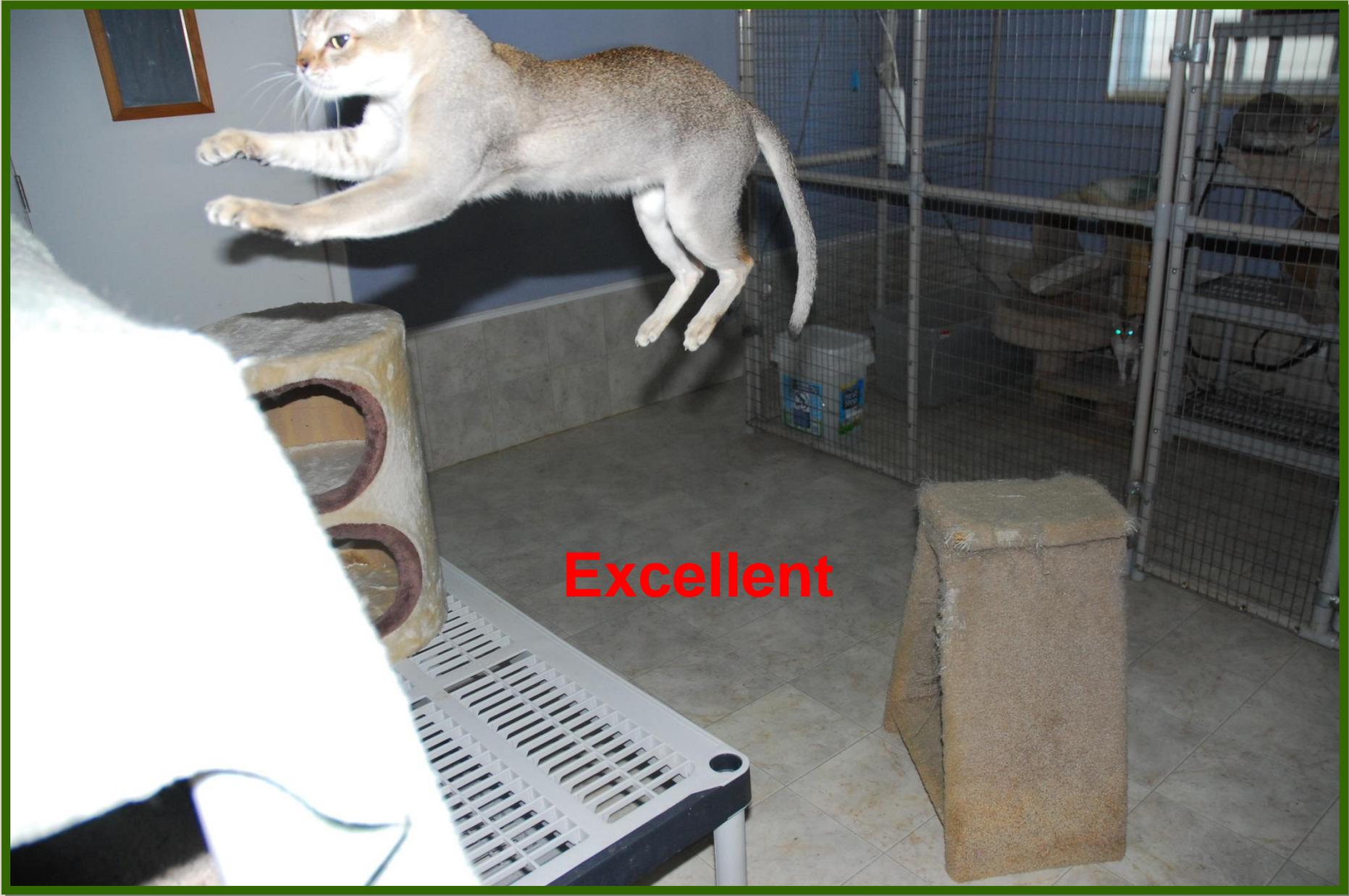
7. Examples of good structure



Excellent



Excellent





A close-up photograph of a cat's front paws. The paws are white with dark fur on the upper part of the legs. The cat is sitting on a dark surface, and the lighting highlights the texture of the fur and the shape of the paws. The word "Excellent" is written in red at the bottom of the image.

Excellent

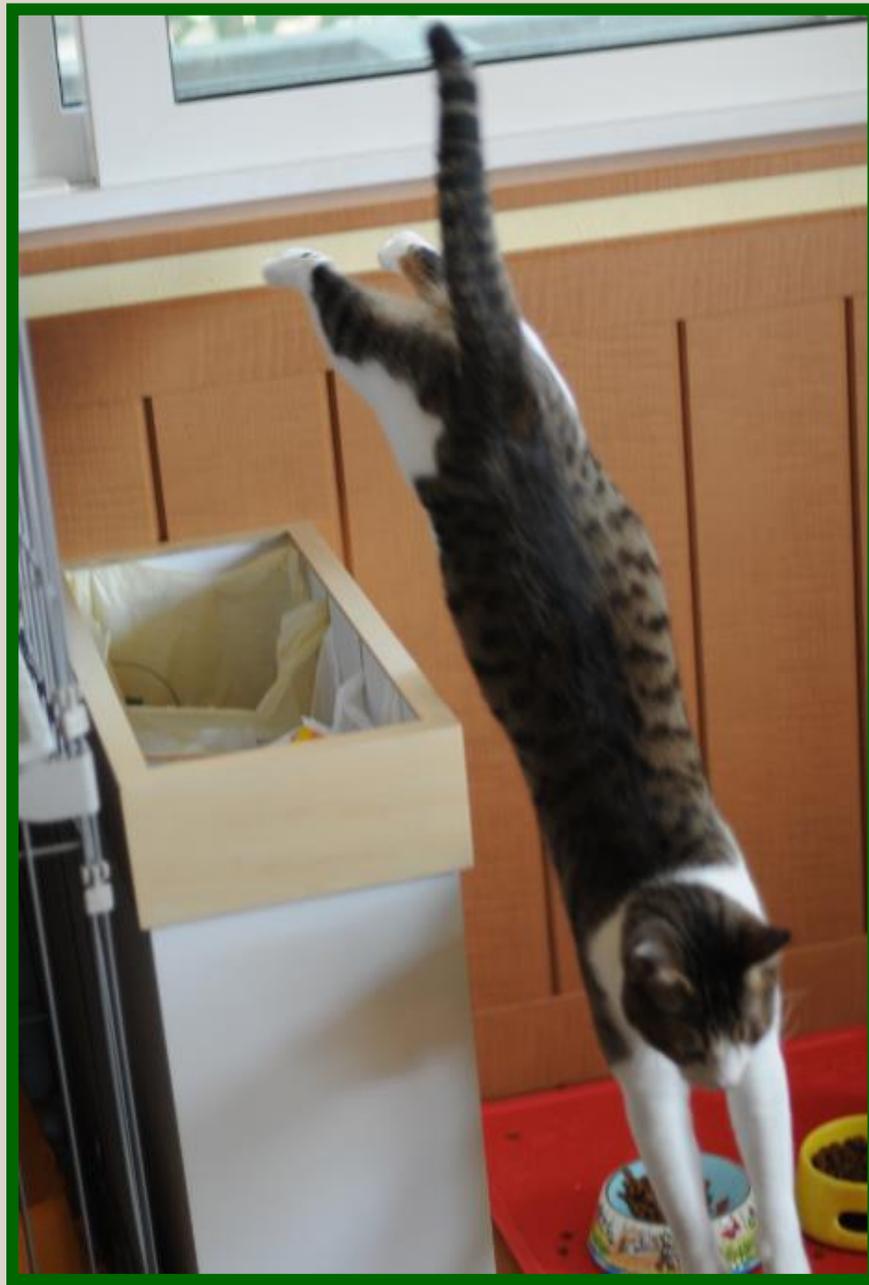


Munchkin

Excellent

Excellent

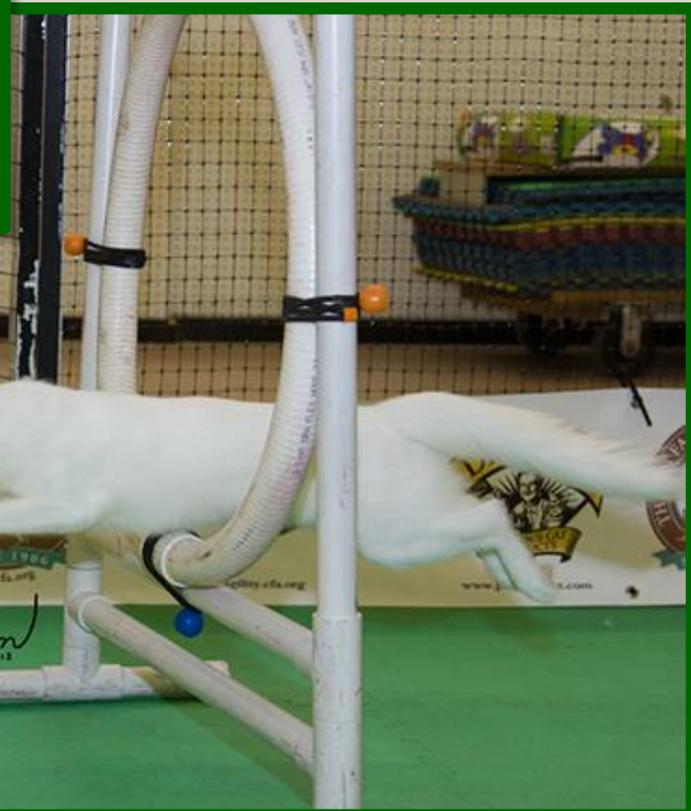
House cat in
Tokyo, Japan



Street cat in Buenos Aires, Argentina



Excellent



Excellent



Excellent

Here are
some
examples of
wild cats

Notice their
functional,
strong,
excellent
structure



Asian Leopard Cats, used in the development
of the Bengal and Toyger breeds





Jungle Cat, used in the development of the Chausie breed



Serval, used in the development of the Savannah breed





8. Judging

Judges and Breeders collaborate in a partnership to improve the breeds



Cats, like people, are not perfect.
But they should be the best they can be and
that is OUR responsibility.

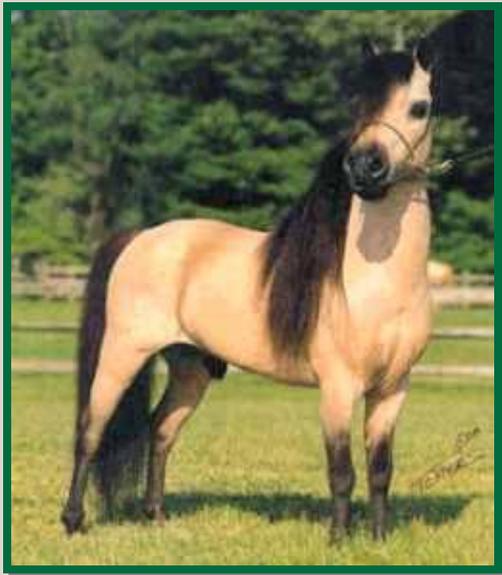
Judges have an important responsibility – they help select the future breeding cats, because the highly-awarded cats are often used more for breeding



Judges are the “**custodians of the breeds.**”



Judges are the **Quality Control Department**, experts who give informed, honest evaluations.



Excellent

It is the balance and interaction of length, size, substance, proportions and angles of conformation that give us our various breeds.



The uneducated eye might see only the superficial appearance.

The more knowledgeable eye of judges can evaluate more deeply.



The **owner** of this Bengal asked me to include him in this Structure seminar, as an example of a *cat which should NOT be awarded.*



The owner said to ask the judges to ***please check structure,*** because it is important to the breeders and the breed.



This cat was very successful in the show ring the year he was shown.



How can legs be checked when judging the cats at cat shows?





It may be easier to be a good dog show judge than it is to be a good cat show judge, because when the dogs are moving around the ring, their conformation is clearly visible.

When judging dogs (and cats),
it is important to look at them when they are
standing naturally.

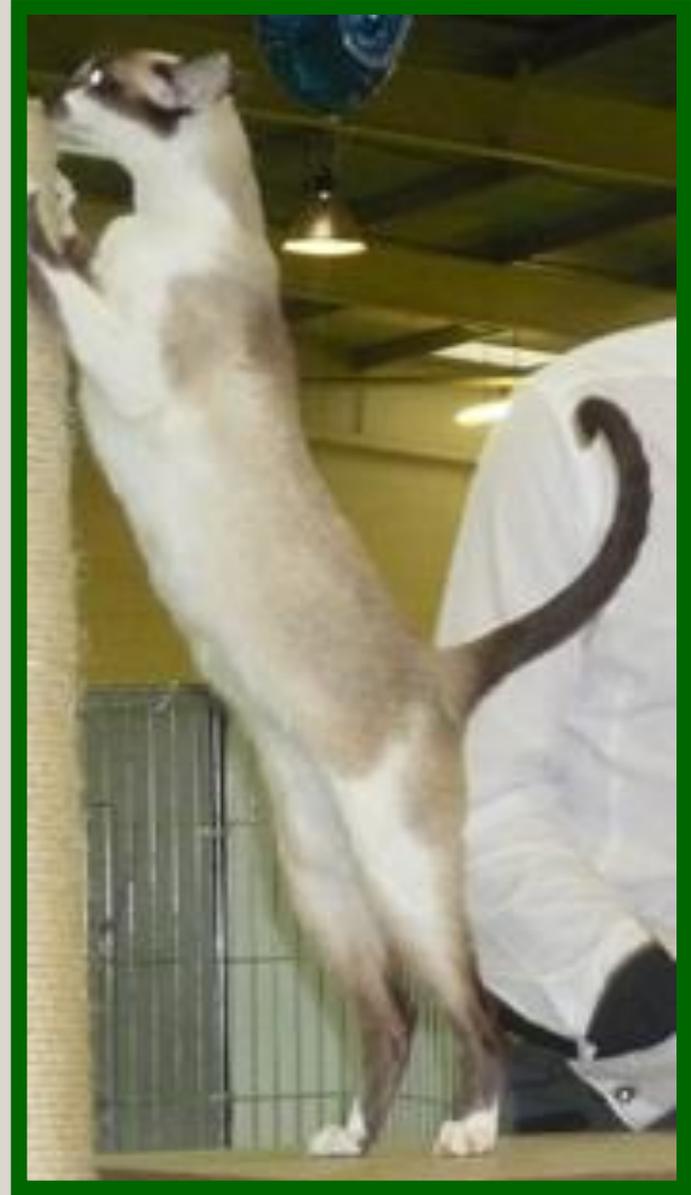
Structural problems or discomfort are evident if they shift weight
from one foot to another, or move one back foot forward to
adjust stability, or shift their body weight to the front or the back.



"Treat a work of art like a prince: let it speak to you first." – Arthur Schopenhauer

"Treat cats like royalty: let them speak to you first." – Vickie Shields

This is also a way to look at the legs.



9. Test

Question 1

Which cat is cow hocked?

A

B



Question 1

Which cat is cow hocked?

A



B

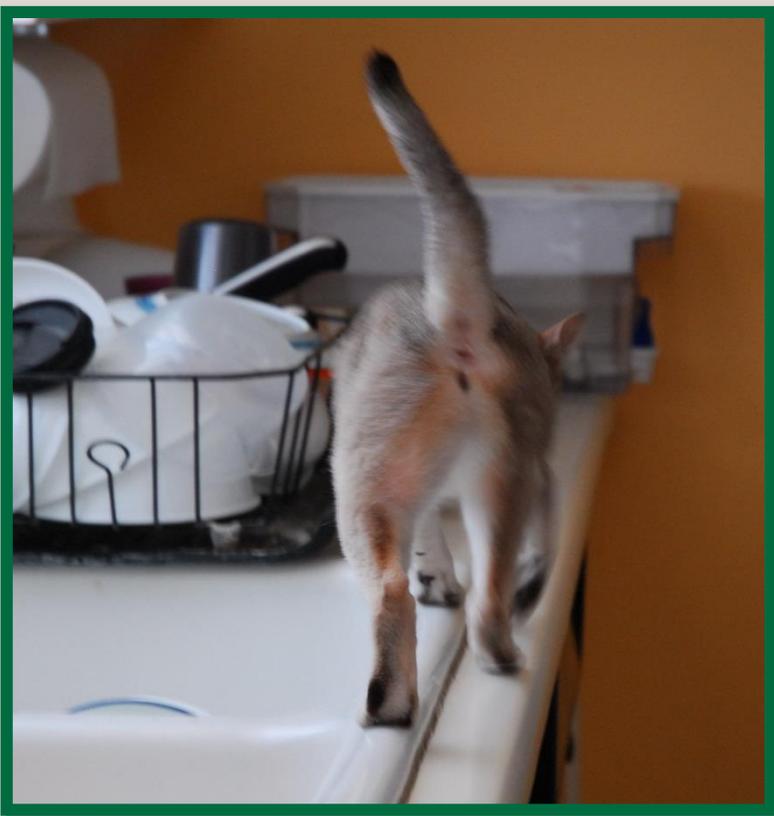


Correct!

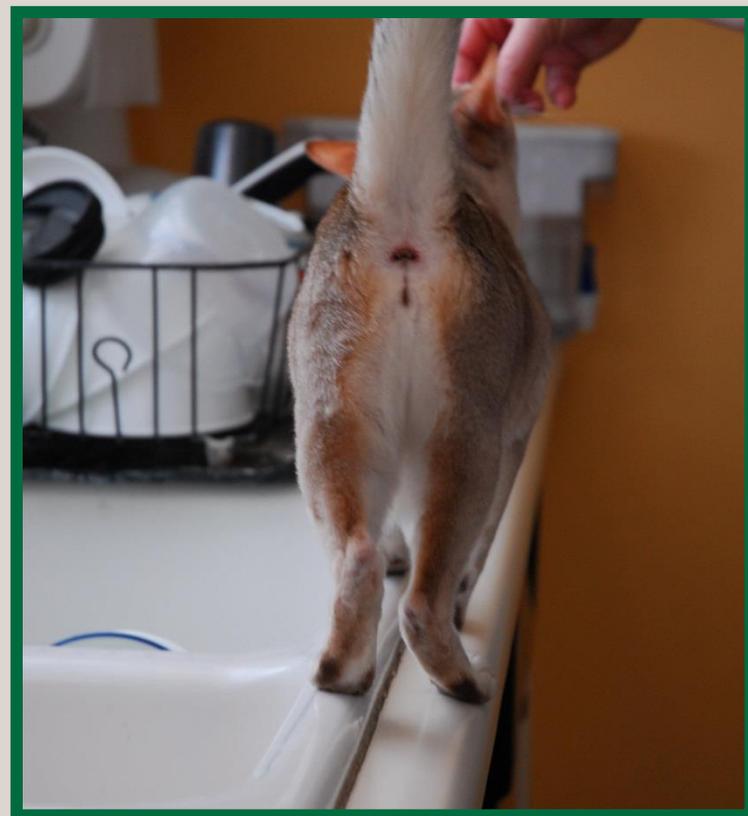
Question 2

Which cat is cow hocked?

A



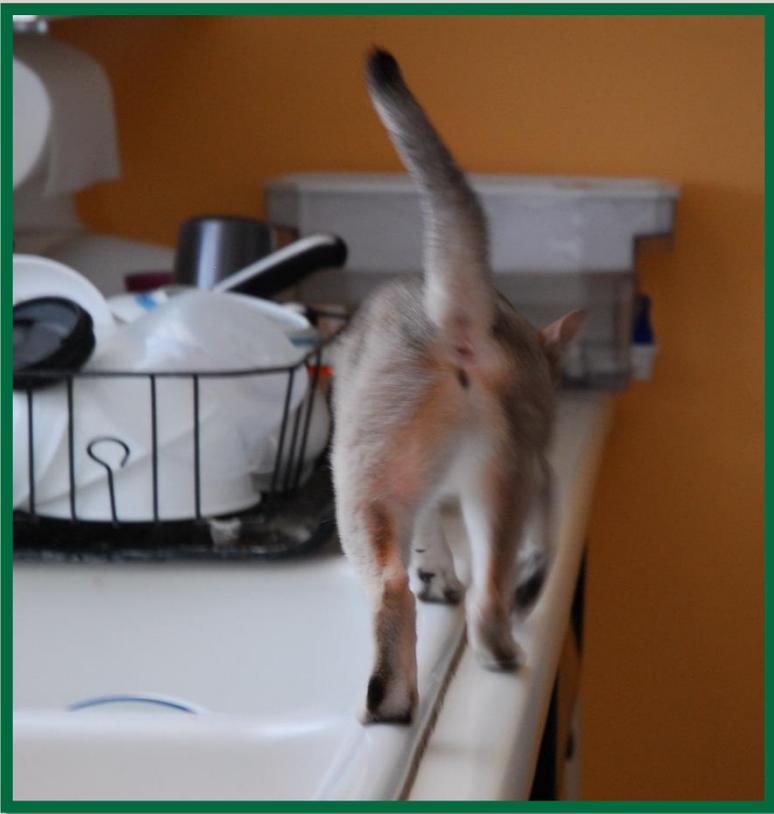
B



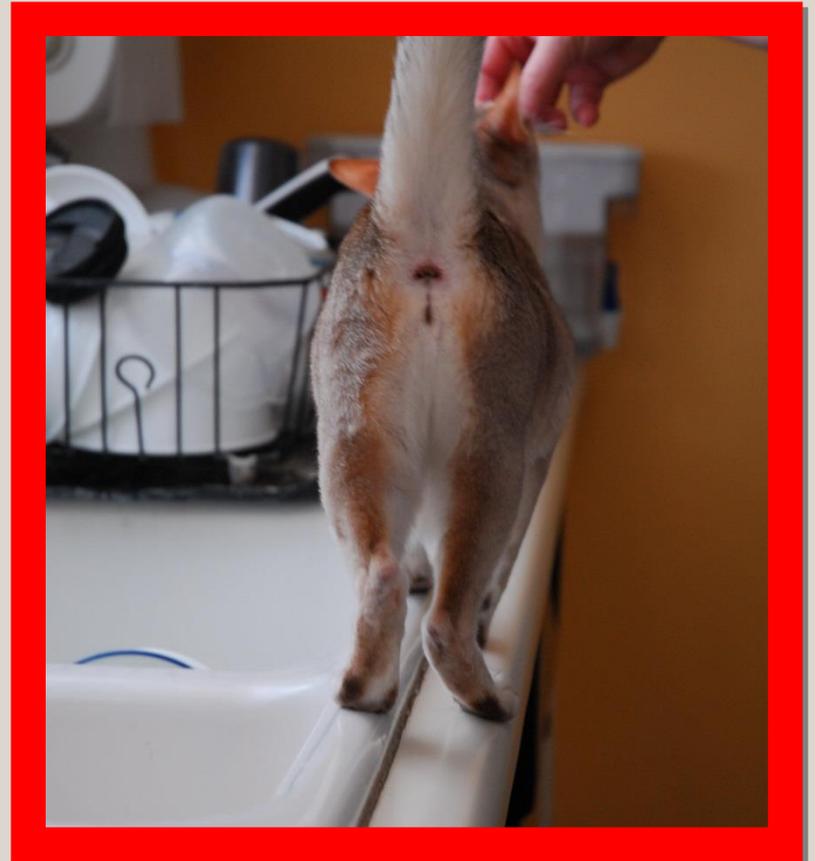
Question 2

Which cat is cow hocked?

A



B



Correct!

Question 3

Which cat is cow hocked?

A

B



Question 3

Which cat is cow hocked?

A

B



Correct!

Question 4

Which cat is cow hocked?

A

B



Question 4

Which cat is cow hocked?

A

B



Correct!

Question 5

Which cat is cow hocked?

A



B



Question 5

Which cat is cow hocked?

A



B

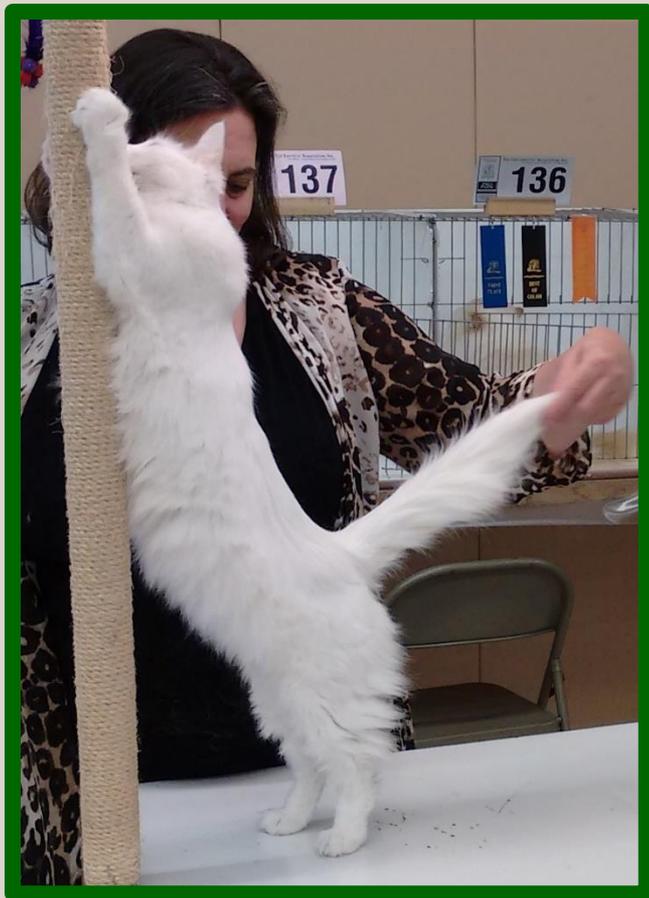


Correct!

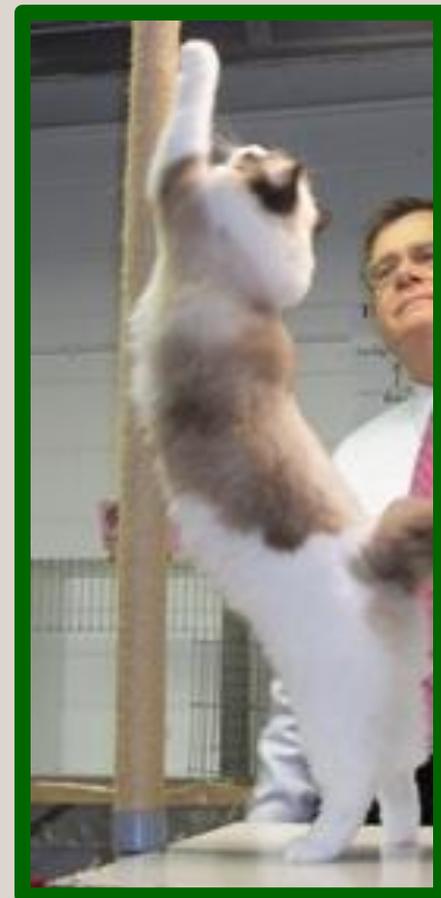
Question 6

Which cat has better back legs?

A



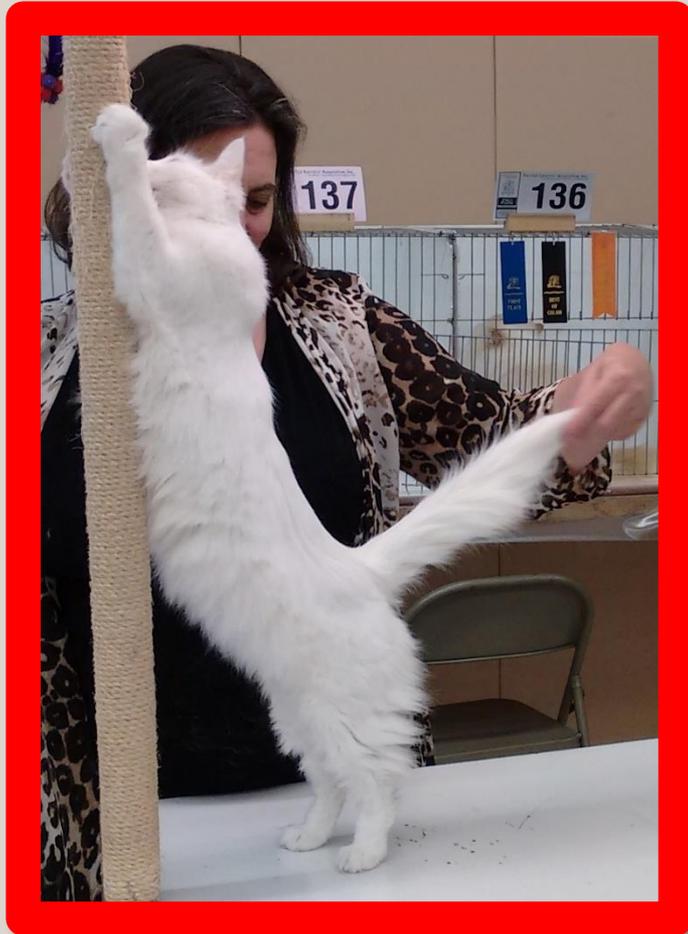
B



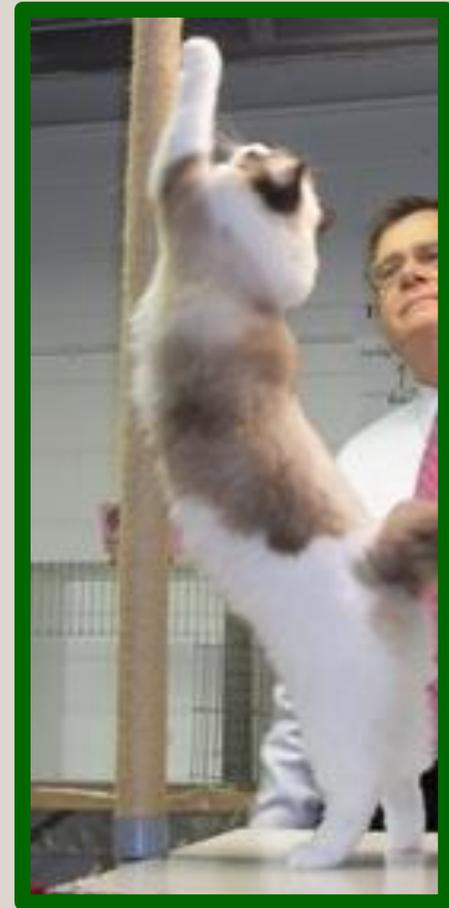
Question 6

Which cat has better back legs?

A



B



Correct!

Question 7

Which horse is cow hocked?

A



B



Question 7

Which horse is cow hocked?

A



B



Correct!

Question 8

Which dog is cow hocked?

A



B



Question 8

Which dog is cow hocked?

A



B



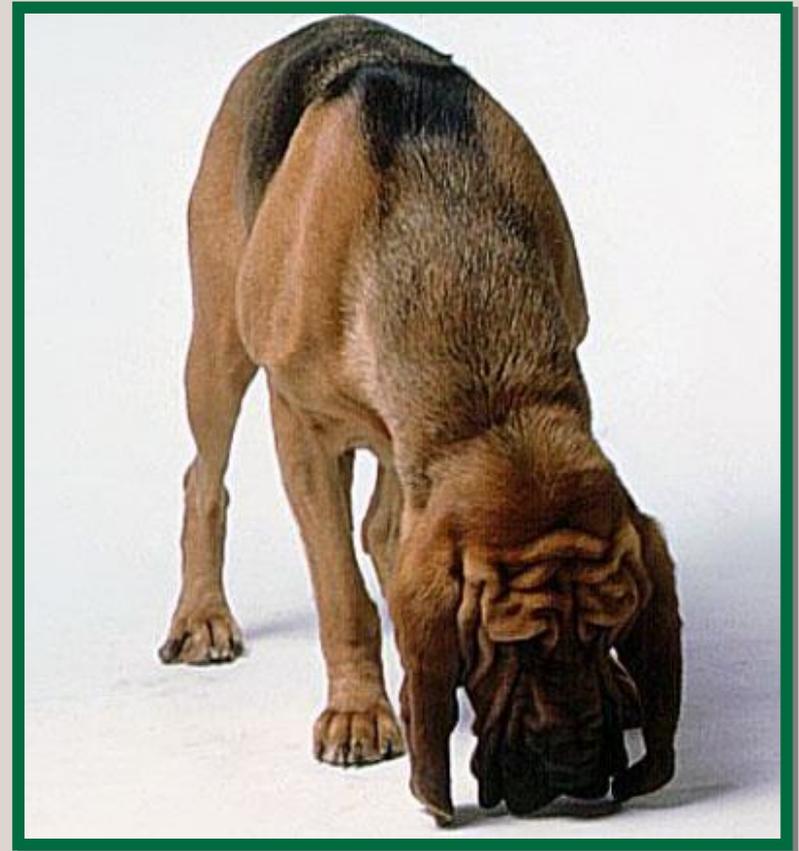
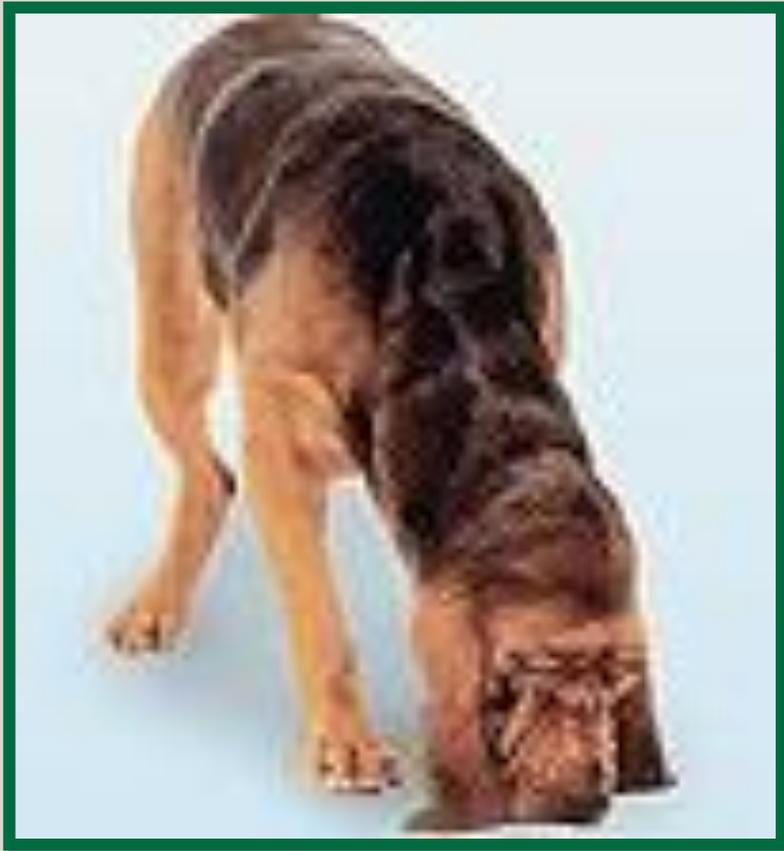
Correct!

Question 9

Which dog is cow hocked?

A

B

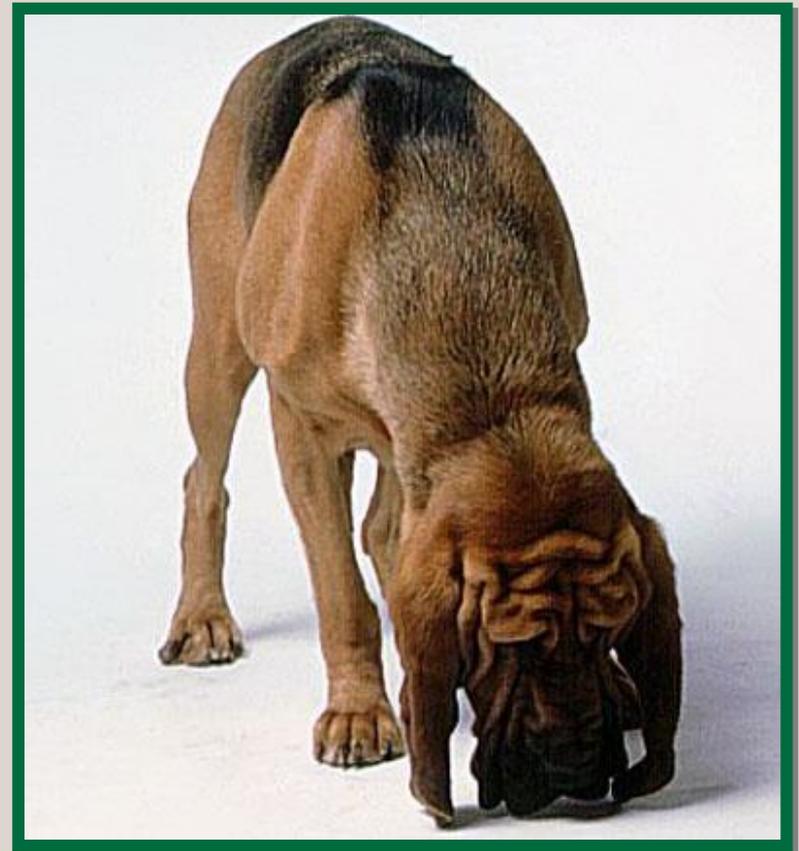


Question 9

Which dog is cow hocked?

A

B



Correct!

Question 10

Which dog has the **best** rear structure?

A

B

C



Question 10

Which dog has the **best** rear structure?

A

B

C



Cow hocked



Correct!



Too narrow

Question 11

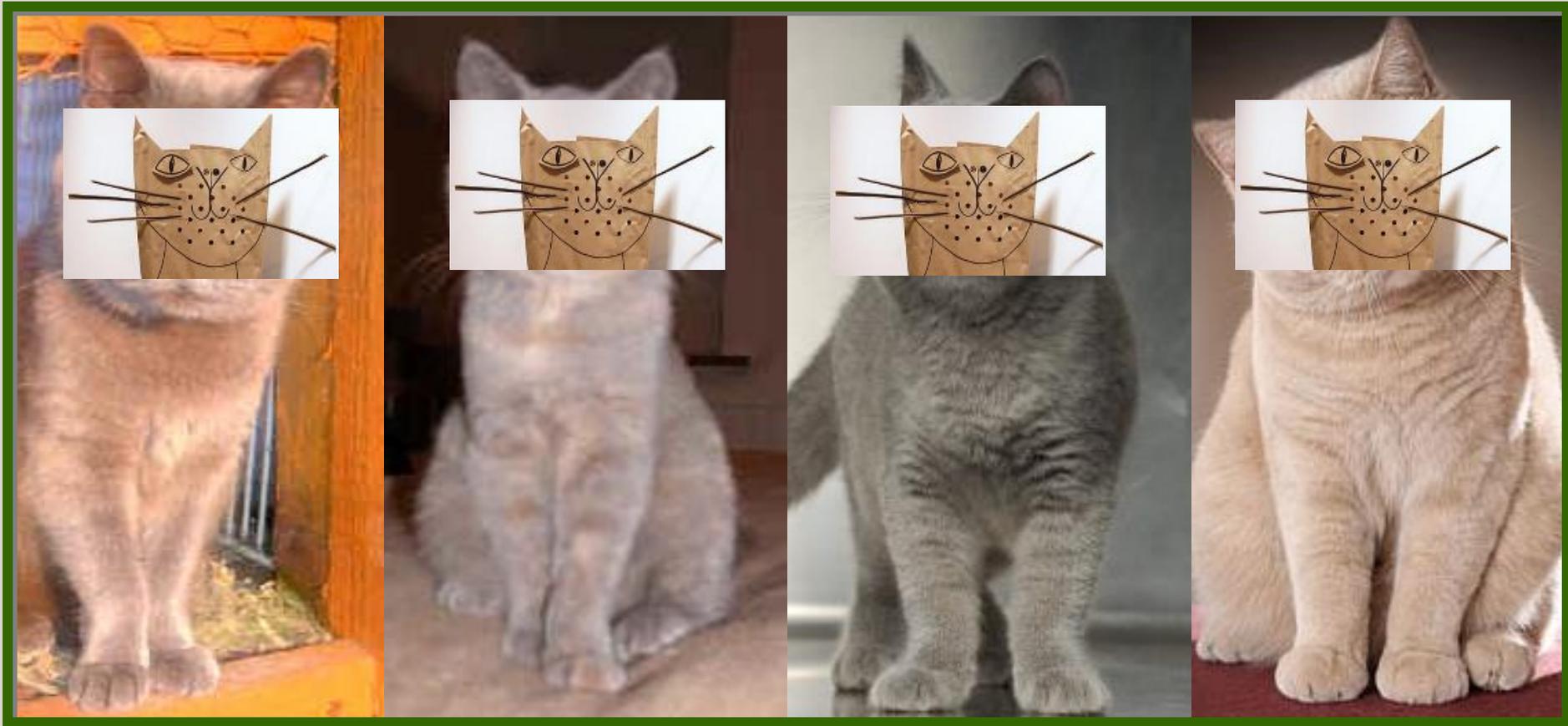
Which cat has the *best* front structure?

A

B

C

D



Question 11

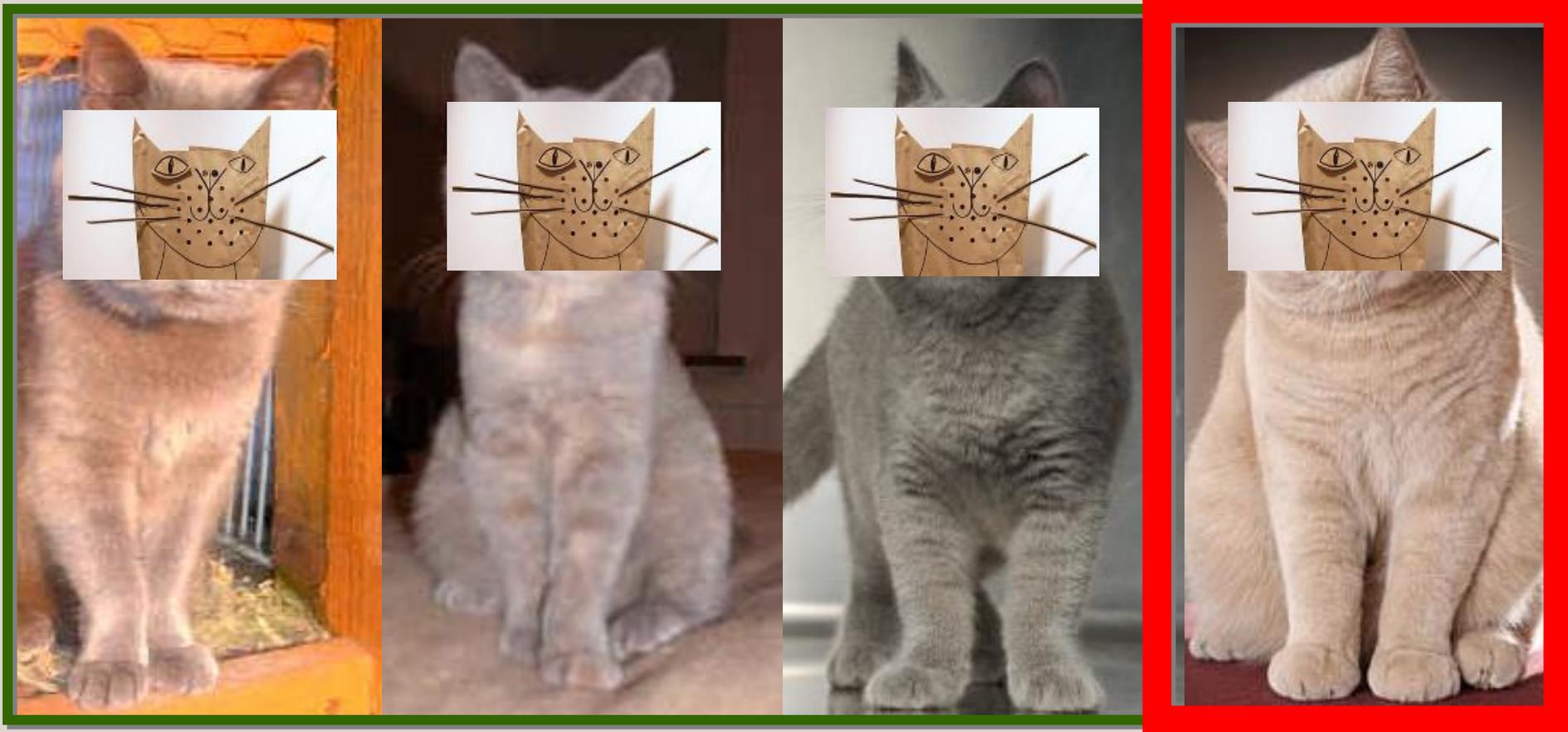
Which cat has the **best** front structure?

A

B

C

D



Correct!

Question 12

Which dog has the **best** front structure?

A



B



Question 12

Which dog has the **best** front structure?

A



B



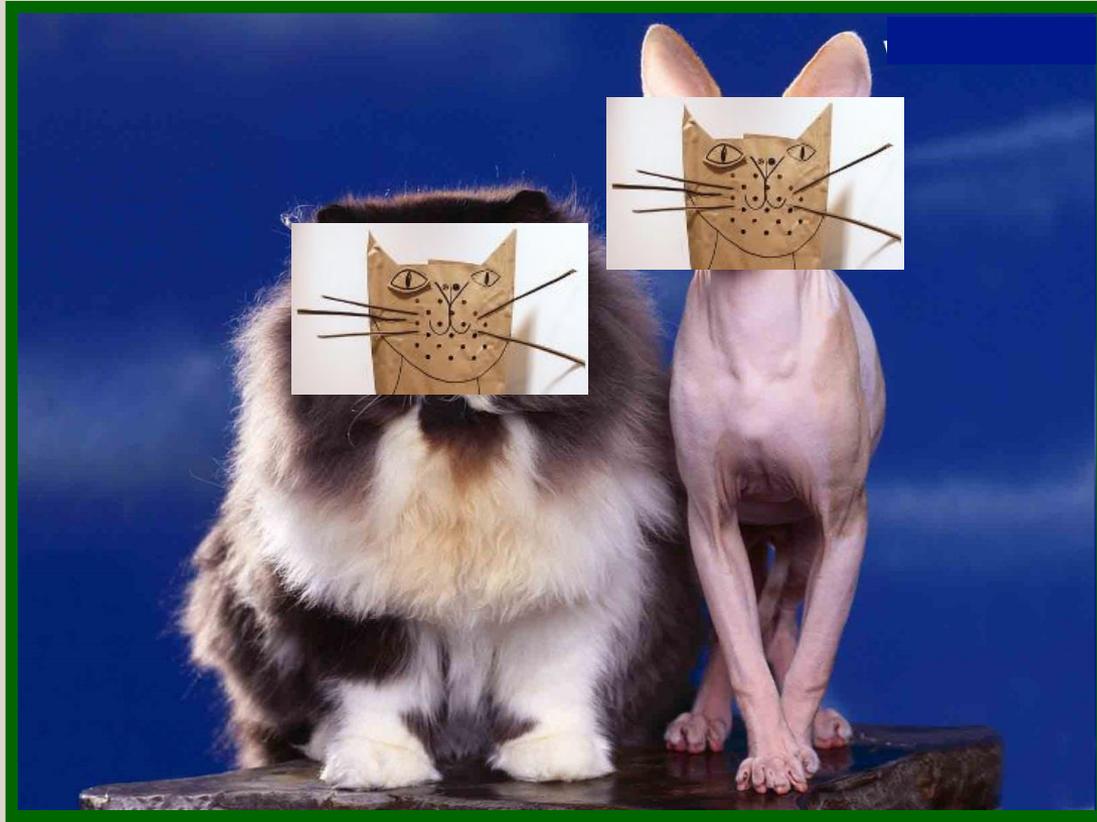
Correct!

Question 13

What do you observe about these two cats?

A

B

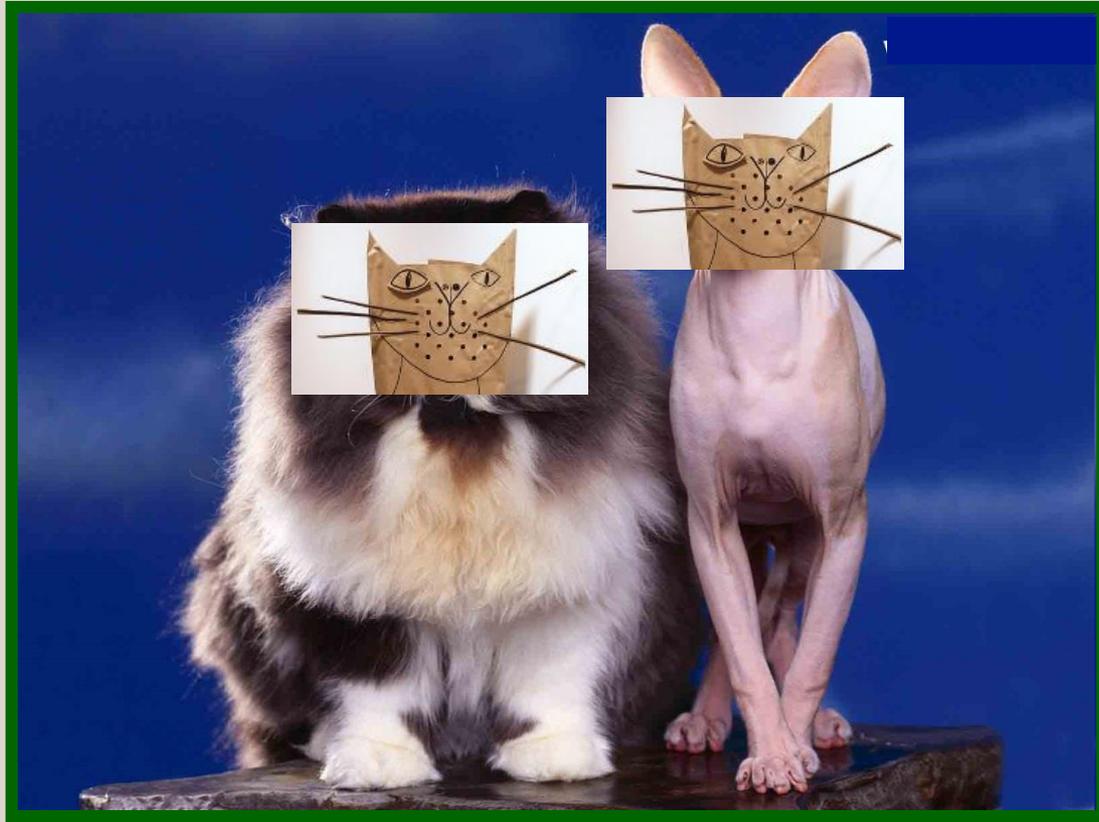


Question 13

What do you observe about these two cats?

A

B



A is excellent

B has cow hocks, front ankles together, and elbows out

Question 14

Which cat has better balance and structure?

A



B



Question 14

Which cat has better balance and structure?

A



B



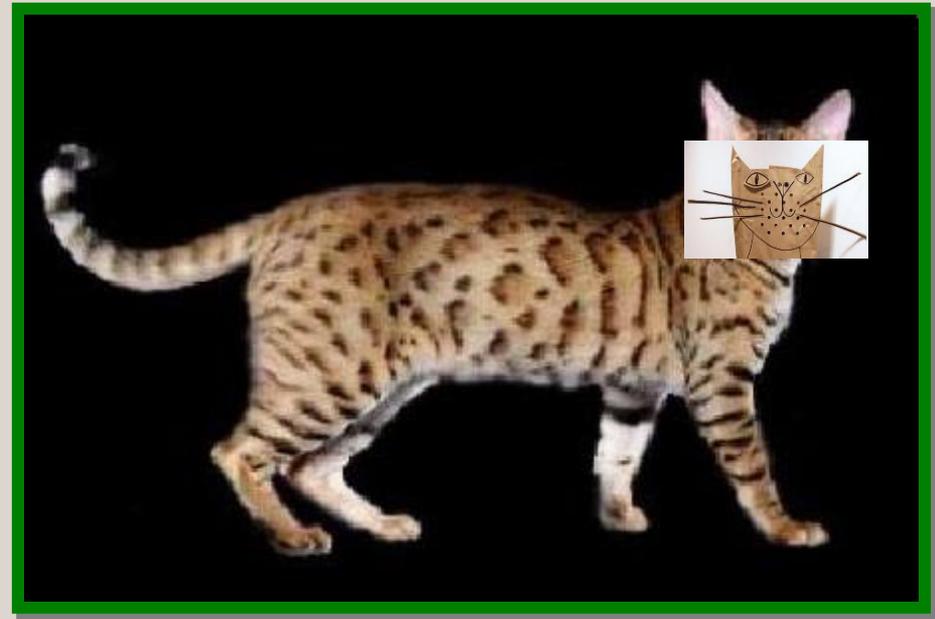
Correct!

Question 15

Which cat has better balance and structure?

A

B



Question 15

Which cat has better balance and structure?

A

B



Correct!

Question 16

Which cat has excellent balance and structure?

A

B



Question 16

Which cat has excellent balance and structure?

A

B



Correct!

Question 17

Referring to the Bengal breed standard, which Bengal has the best tail?

A

B



Question 17

Referring to the Bengal breed standard, which Bengal has the best tail?

A

B



Question 18

Which cat has better leg structure?

A

B

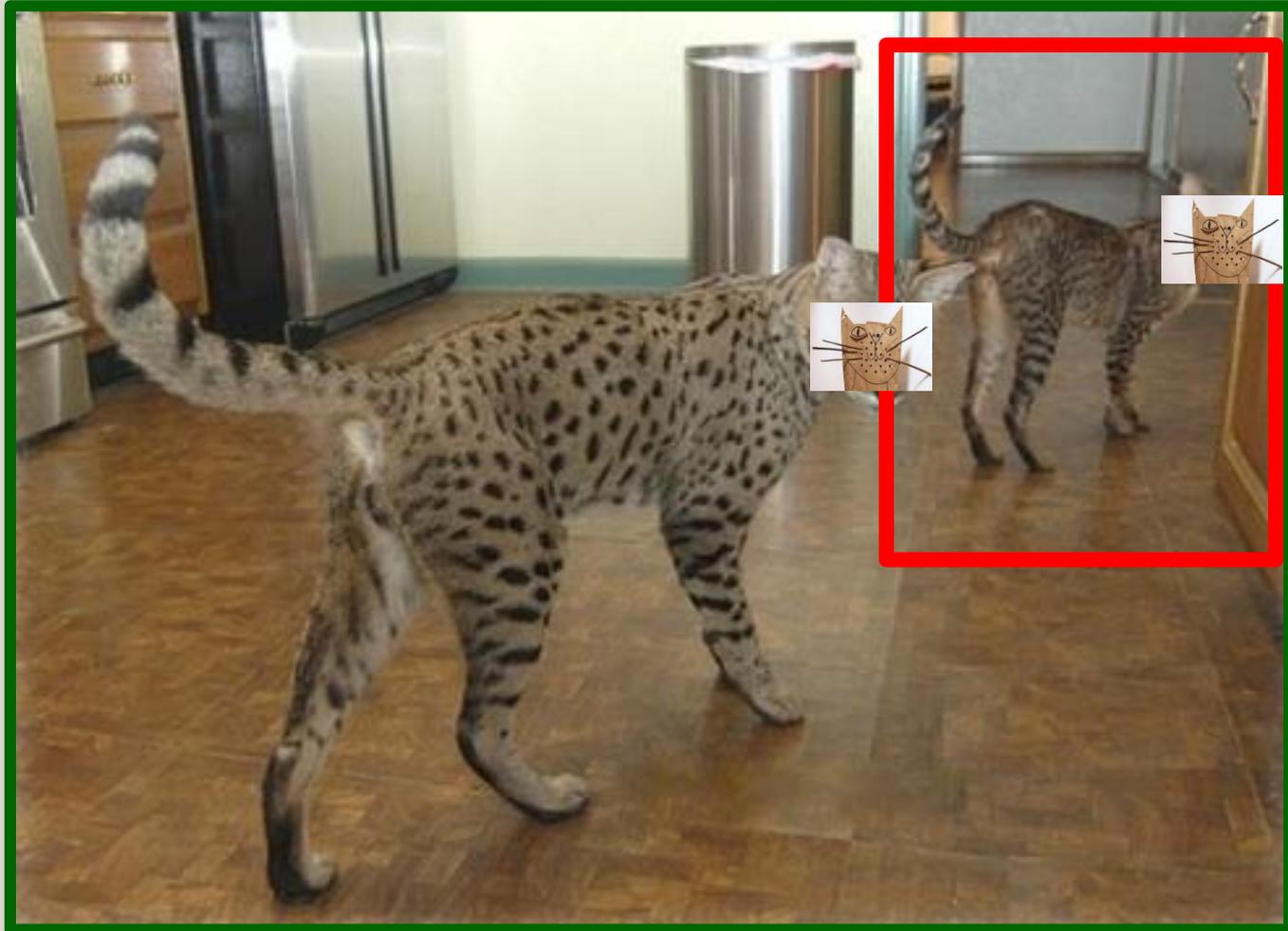


Question 18

Which cat has better leg structure?

A

B



Congratulations! You have completed "Capable Cats - An Introduction to Cow Hocks and Structure"



For comments, questions, or to contribute photos, please email
Vickie_Shields_vshields@ix.netcom.com

Questions?



The End

(Notice the excellent structure of the back legs!)

