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"Tara" - British Shorthair with Persistent Pupillary Membrane



Tara

We can't all be born perfect – particularly if “we” refers to a pedigree cat or dog! It is relatively common for us to find congenital abnormalities (ie: defects that an animal was born with) when we examine young pedigree animals.

All too often, the proud new owner of a puppy or kitten rapidly deflates in the consulting room when we inform them that their new acquisition should have had an “imperfect” label on it.

When you buy a pedigree animal, you have the same statutory rights that you have when you buy a washing machine! In other words, your purchase should be “fit for the purpose for which it was bought”. So whilst a washer should be able to wash your clothes, your pet should be fit and healthy to be a pet!

If the pet has a defect, it is more than reasonable to expect some sort of financial recompense from the breeder – particularly in some cases where an operation may be needed to correct the defect. Prime examples of this are 2 puppies I recently examined, who needed surgery to correct entropion – a congenital condition where the eyelid has folded under so that the hairs from the skin rub on the eye. Both pups had cost over £500, and at least this amount again was required to correct the problem.

If animals have major congenital problems, we sometimes go as far as recommending that the animal is returned to the breeder and a full refund sought. Unfortunately, owners have often already bonded with their new pet, and are loathe to do this, but it is reasonable to expect the breeder to pay for the corrective surgery, or refund part or all of the purchase price of the pet.

I recently saw “Tara”, a 1 year old British Shorthair cat. Her owners had traveled all the way to Scotland to get her. My first comment was how pretty she was, but on closer inspection I saw she had a congenital condition called persistent pupillary membrane – this is where some little blood vessels, which should have disappeared before birth, are left attaching the pupil of the eye to the lens.

It looked rather like Tara had cobwebs in her eyes! Fortunately for Tara, this particular defect is of no significance whatsoever. It requires no intervention and doesn't give her any problems. If Tara had been bought to be a show cat, I would have suggested asking for a refund, but in this case, she was perfectly fit to be a much loved family pet!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care