

# DISPUTES

*By the ACFA Executive Director*

On occasion, ACFA is requested to intervene in personal disputes between members, breeders and/or owners. Although we are saddened to hear and read of such disputes, in most cases there is little ACFA can do to alleviate the problems and issues unless they pertain to a direct violation of ACFA Bylaws or Show Rules.

ACFA has a Disciplinary Committee, comprised of a member from each Region and a Chair, which handles complaints a member may have with another member, the Board of Directors, a Regional Director, an ACFA Judge or an ACFA Club for misconduct or violation of the rules and regulations of ACFA.

ACFA Bylaws outline the procedures to be taken for filing a protest, processing the complaint, compiling the evidence, reaching a decision, and taking any necessary disciplinary action.

However, matters of a personal nature, such as complaints between breeders and owners, are private transactions, which should be referred to the appropriate intermediary or small claims court. Most disputes could be resolved by a proper contractual agreement between parties. Such contracts should contain Breeder and Owner responsibilities spelled out in simple, easy to read and understand language, and should be signed by both parties. Breeders and buyers who do not conduct their business in such a manner do so at their own peril. There is little to be done, even by the courts, without a valid contract.

In matters where the abuse and/or neglect of animals occurs, whether in an ACFA registered cattery or in a private home, the only recourse ACFA has is to refer the complainant to the proper authority, such as the local Humane Society. We do keep a file of complaints against breeders and owners, but until the complaints have been proven (through proper documentation and evidence - such as photos, signed affidavits, court decisions, etc.), ACFA cannot withhold services and rights.

Please remember that ACFA is a registration body (cats, litters, catteries, Judges, etc.), and not a policing agency, nor attorneys, nor veterinarians. We do not have the personnel to inspect catteries or homes, nor the expertise to evaluate contracts, nor the ability to determine whether a cat is ill. As such, we respectfully request that such questions and complaints be referred to the proper authority.