

THE BALINESE IS A LONGHAIRED CAT

BY NELLIE SPARROW

Recently, I heard that a prominent CFA judge has suggested that the Balinese cat does not belong in the longhair classification, and that we breeders and exhibitors of the Balinese should consider changing them over to the shorthair classification! In my opinion, this suggestion is ridiculous: If we should change the Balinese over to the shorthair class, then eventually we would end up with nothing but Siamese.

There seems to be a difference of opinion among the judges concerning the type coat a Balinese should have. Some judges seem to prefer a Balinese with a shorter coat, while others seem to prefer the longer coat. My guess is that judges who object to the longer coat do so on the grounds that it hides the body lines, especially in the head and neck regions. I realize that a longer, heavier coat tends to hide the structure that is underneath, but I think judges who object to the longer coat should learn to feel the body in addition to looking at it. It isn't hard to smooth the coat back from the face and neck in order to check the body structure. If the cat is slim and firm, with a fine, silky, flowing coat, it couldn't possibly look like the heavy bodied Persian or Himalayan! The Balinese IS a longhaired cat, and I don't believe that we breeders should change these longhaired beauties over to the shorthair classification just to satisfy a few judges.

This does make me wonder, however, whether we Balinese breeders should concentrate more on showing only those Balinese with the longer coats, keeping our Balinese with the shorter coats at home for breeding improvement. If we should all agree to exhibit only our cats with the longer coats, then perhaps the judges would evaluate the Balinese more consistently.

We are all working very hard to improve type and eye color in the breed, and--please--let's continue to do so. Some of you may think that I am against the practice of breeding back to Siamese because of my feelings regarding the longer coats, but this is not so. I feel very strongly that we must breed back to top quality Siamese now and then in order to improve type, but we could do too much of this. If we go overboard, we may lose coat completely, and the Balinese might eventually become extinct. God gave us this beautiful, heavenly creature, and we must not destroy it. We don't want to put the Balinese in the shorthair class, and we don't want to breed the long coats out with too much Siamese crossing.