LOGAN NESER: Hi! Today we’re here talking to Dr. Broadhurst about adoption policies for FeLV and FIV cats. Dr. Broadhurst served as the Director of Clay County Animal Services for several years and currently is the Medical Director of this shelter. Thank you so much for being here today to talk to us about this!

DR. BROADHURST: Thank you for having me!

LOGAN: Yeah, it’s our pleasure. So for our first question, what is your policy for testing healthy kittens and cats for FeLV and FIV at Clay County Animal Services?

BROADHURST: We do not test any healthy cats or kittens at Clay County. We only choose to test animals that are more at risk to be positive. So, your intact male cats with evidence of fighting, bite wounds, and cats with stomatitis. And then if we’re doing a full blood panel on a cat for some reason, we go ahead and combo test them at that time. We do have tests on hand just for those cases, but as a rule, we do not test them.

LOGAN: Has this testing policy impacted the number of cat adoptions or transfers to rescue groups?

BROADHURST: It has not impacted it at all. Most of our adopters don’t really seem to care whether they are tested or not, surprisingly. Most of our rescue groups that we work with have gone away from testing as well, so that’s not an issue for them. We do have a couple groups that want them tested. And if that’s a deal breaker for pulling cats, that’s fine, we’ll test them for them. And we do have the occasional adopter who asks for a test before they take it home. We’ll do that. But we do, for the most part, recommend they discuss testing with their veterinarian, and whether their vet recommends it, and moving forward with them.

LOGAN: That makes sense. And you kind of touched on this a little bit with certain rescue groups asking to have the cats tested, but have you experienced any pushback from staff, community vets, rescue groups, or adopters?

BROADHURST: Not really. So, to me, even though I know some shelters have experienced pushback from community vets because they feel like if they’re adopting out animals they need to have done everything that they can and that they should be combo testing them. To me, I would think that community vets would be happy that we are encouraging that they establish a relationship with a veterinarian and that they have their vet and them decide what’s best for their pet. So we’re doing the basic wellness and basic core vaccines, but it’s up to them and their veterinarian to decide on anything beyond that. As far as adopters, we have had a couple cases where cats were positive and then they were understandably upset about that, but we just explain to them why we chose to not test cats and how one positive or negative test is just a point in time and not a clear picture of whether that animal is actually positive or negative long-term.

LOGAN: That makes a lot of sense. I particularly love your point about establishing a relationship with the vets in the community once they adopt the pet. I think that’s really important. Thank you so much for answering our questions about this topic, and thank you so much for joining us today in general.

BROADHURST: Thank you!