Do you think buying a kitten from a breeder is expensive? Do you believe that breeders make a lot of money from their kittens?

Have a read of the below and you may change your mind.....

Just to become a registered breeder costs a considerable amount of money in set up and registration fees with the relevant cat clubs and the local area council.

If done correctly it will take months of research and hunting to purchase a suitable breeding female cat from a registered breeder in order to get started. This is a really tough and time consuming thing. For starters many breeders won't sell to other/new breeders due to the fact they are under restrictions or just choose not to sell breeding cats. Once a potential breeder manages to establish a relationship and build up the trust of a breeder willing to sell them a breeding cat, (which has usually taken months of phone calls to various breeders, driving out meeting them and determining if their kittens meet the desired traits of what the new breeder is looking for) the new breeder is then looking at a MINIMUM of $1000 just to purchase the breeding girl. Some burmese breeders pay up to $2,500 for breeding stock. Obviously some breeds of cat can cost even more than this.
Assume for a moment the breeder doesn't own their own stud (If they do they most likely have paid $1500+ for the privilege and need to offer suitable housing for an entire male that is likely to mark his territory) or that in order to develop their lines and not inbreed their cats they have used a mating to a stud boy owned by another breeder - this mating will cost about the cost of a kitten (Approx $800 -$1400+). Many breeders would require the queen to be test prior to a mating with their stud to ensure she is disease free (Feline Aids/Leukemia free. Add on to that the cost petrol, tolls and time dropping of and picking up the queen from the Stud boy - Consequently a mating alone can set a breeder back an easy $1000 dollars before the mating is even confirmed successful and the kittens have arrived. During pregnancy Queens need extra TLC including special food and often vet care. At times they may need Ultrasounds which cost hundreds of dollars, medications to ensure healthy kittens etc etc

Once the mother goes into labour the breeder will have to stay with the Queen to ensure there are no dramas. This may involve sitting up with her through the night, canceling a night out with friends or taking the day off work to be with the expectant mum. If anything goes wrong it could mean a trip to a very expensive but necessary 24 hour vet or at best the normal vet that the breeder is using. The cost of an emergency Cesarian would be at least $750+. Also consider the medication needed and extra vet bills if there are any complications with the mother or the kittens or if the mother needs additional vet checks or antibiotics before or after giving birth.

Once the kittens have arrived there is endless amounts of work that increase as the kittens age: washing the towels and pet bedding at least every second day (factor in water, detergent, electricity, ware and tare on a washing machine and dryer that are overused), 24 hour a day running costs of Heat mats needed for the first 6 weeks after the kittens are born, petrol to and from the vets, consult vet fees of about $80 per consult (1 litter may need 2 vet checks minimum) + Microchipping, Vaccinations, Flea and worming treatments
(See breakdown of MINIMUM vet costs below)

, disinfectants for litter trays and cages. Litter trays are usually cleaned at least twice a day.

Most breeders with about 5-8 adult cats and 1 litter of kittens that clean their litter trays at least once a day will fill about 3 or 4 big green garbage bags a week of dirty cat litter so consequently will pay for an extra big general waste bin from council or trips to the dump.

I spend about 3 hours a day looking after all the cats and kittens here so factor in the time, litter and food costs involved in this - keeping in mind that pregnant queens have special dietary needs throughout their pregnancy, vacuum cleaner bags that breeders go through cleaning up spilt litter and picking up cat hair. If there are any issues with the kittens at anytime this to could also mean more trips to the vet, endless nights sitting up looking after them, medications and so the list goes on....

To own this many cats chances are the breeder will own at least some form of cat cage and/or cattery. Even a basic cat cage would cost in excess of $500. If there is a cattery and/or cat runs this would set the breeder back thousands even for reasonably basic setups. An average well made cattery with shelves, hammocks and scratching poles will be at least $3000 and for something custom made with say four compartments would be more like $6000-$8000. A reasonable netted cat run $2000+

Then the purchase price of the necessary bedding and blankets, litter trays, bowls, cat carry boxes and storage facilities for the products...well you start to get the idea....

By the time the kittens are basically ready to go the breeder has probably spent at least two hours of time with each potential new owner answering questions over the phone, email and face to face from the customers initial enquiry with that breeder right through to birth of the litter and then pick up. A litter of 5 kittens takes up a full weekend day just in them going home. Add onto that other families visiting the breeder for the first time, and other people buying products and dropping off/ picking up boarding cats and a weekend is gone. This is a big sacrifice for a breeder but they (usually) do it because they love it and like to go the extra mile for their customers.

If the breeder supplies a folder of information then they are also paying for folders, printer cartridges, ink and time and effort putting the folders together often custom editing them for each litter.

For a breeder to go away on holidays is an absolute mission. Trying to find a Friend stupid enough to house sit or another breeder both game enough and with enough spare room and time to look after their cats plus additional cats is nothing short of a miracle. Either way the carer will need some amount of payment which can cost hundreds for even just a short break away. Alternatively we can board our cats in a cattery but that is usually so expensive to board 4, 5, 6 or maybe more cats that it is just not viable. Most catteries will not board entire cats either.
Finally breeders will spend many days a year attending courses which obviously cost money to learn more about cats, their health and becoming a better breeder. This knowledge will often assist my customers when they have any issues or questions.

Please don't think that all breeders do this for money because most of them truly and honestly don't! In fact if you really consider the above it is actually questionable that they really make anything at all.....

VET COSTS:

As of April 2010 - St Ives vet charges the following:

Vaccination (including consultation): $85 (The breeder must do at least 1 vaccination and then 2 more boosters needed a month

apart and then yearly)
Microchipping: $50
Desexing kitten: $160- Male or $280 - Female
Flea Treatment ($10 per dose) - aprox $50 to breeder per kitten
Worming treatment: ($13 aprox per dose) - cost $50+ per kitten - (done fortnightly till 12 weeks, then monthly till 6 months then every 3 months

TOTAL: $395.00 (Male) or $515.00(Fem) - Just in the vet costs.

A responsible breeder will spend good money on their cats and kittens and ensure they are fed the best of everything and that the cats are well cared for in every aspect.

I hope this gives you a bit more of an understanding of where breeders are coming from and why they charge what they do.