



Beef cattle: legal identification marks

All owners of livestock have the chance to get a registered identification mark.

The identification mark shows to whom the animal belongs.

A legal identification mark is very useful: if lost or stolen animals are found, it will be possible to find the owner.

How to register an identification mark

- You must fill in an application form.
- Get the form from extension officers, magistrates' offices, stock-theft units of the South African Police Services or from the Registrar of Livestock Identification in Pretoria.
- There is an application fee to be paid. You only have to pay once.
- Get a postal order at the post office for the correct amount and mail it together with the application form.
- Address the envelope to: The Registrar of Livestock Identification, Private Bag X138, Pretoria 0001, or take the form to the Delpen Building, on the corner of Annie Botha Avenue and Union Street, Riviera, Pretoria.

Rules for registering an identification mark

- All identification marks must be registered. This means that your mark is put on an official list and no one else may use it.
- You may not put an identification mark on your animals if you have not registered the identification mark.
- You may use the same mark for your small and large stock.
- No one may brand your animals without your permission.
- If you buy animals or get them as a gift you must put an identification mark on them within 2 weeks.
- Animals which you sell should have your identification mark.

Ways to identify your animals

Permanent identification marks can be put on animals by means of hot iron branding, freeze branding or tattooing.

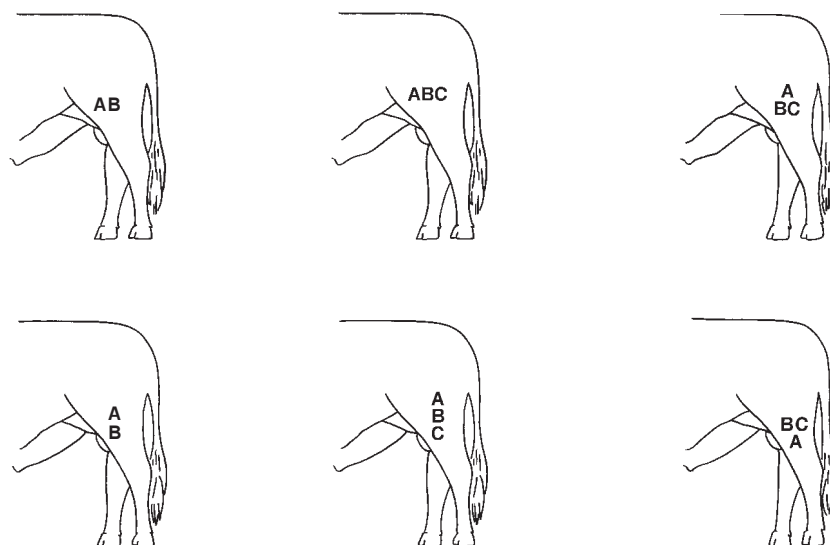
Hot iron branding: The stock owner burns a mark on the skin of his animals with a hot iron. You should not brand calves under 6 months of age.

Freeze branding: A brand mark can also be put on the animals by way of freeze branding. Freeze branding is done by means of dry ice and alcohol.

Tattoo mark: Tattoo tongs and ink are used to mark the animals. Calves can be tattooed from 1 week of age.

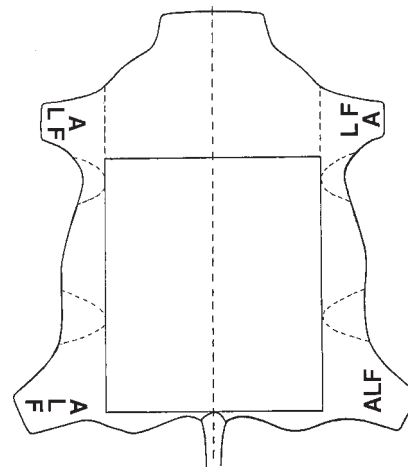
How does an identification mark look?

- An identification mark consists of not more than 3 letters of the alphabet or symbols (characters).
- A three-letter mark can be used in 4 different ways (look at the picture).
- Two-letter marks can be used in 2 different ways (look at the picture).
- The characters may not touch one another.
- The same mark may be used on cattle or small stock.
- Mark your cattle with a hot iron or by freeze branding.
- A character of an identification mark on cattle may not be smaller than 40 mm or bigger than 100 mm (high or wide).
- The mark may have 1, 2 or 3 characters.
- The characters may not be closer than 12,5 or further apart than 19 mm from each other.
- You may put the characters next to each other, below each other or in the form of a triangle, or an up side down triangle.



Where to put the identification mark

- Put the identification mark as low as possible on the body but where it can be seen easily.
- Do not put the mark on the feet.
- *Look at the picture.* Put the brand any place outside the square.
- You can put the mark on the left hind leg, the left shoulder, the right hind leg and on the right shoulder.
- Remember, you can lose money on hides if you mark in the valuable areas.



Marking with a hot iron

- Step 1:* Use a separate iron for each character of the mark. It is easier.
- Step 2:* Get everything ready before you start marking.
- Step 3:* Get someone to help you. The helper must bring the animal closer and hold it firmly. If you have a crush-pen, branding will be easier.
- Step 4:* Heat the iron well. When the iron becomes whitish it is hot enough. You may test the iron on a piece of wood to see if it is hot enough.
- Step 5:* Knee-halter the animals so that they do not kick you.
- Step 6:* Take the first iron and put it against the animal's skin for 3 counts. **Do not press.** Count 1, 2, 3 slowly. Take off the iron. Take the second iron and do the same. The same with the third. Now the mark is complete.
- Step 7:* Spray some cold water onto the brand so that the animal's skin can cool down. You can also spray wound oil on the mark. Do not wipe it with a cloth and never rub manure on the mark.

Marking with a freeze branding iron

Equipment needed

- Coolant – dry ice in ethyl, methyl or isopropyl alcohol and liquid nitrogen.
- Isolated container for the coolant.
- Set of copper or high-quality bronze alloy branding irons.
- Set of clippers.
- 95 % ethyl or methyl alcohol.
- Gloves.

- Step 1:* Get everything ready before you start branding.
- Step 2:* Get someone to help you. The helper must bring the animal closer and hold it firmly. If you have a crush-pen, branding will be easier.
- Step 3:* Knee-halter the animals so that they do not kick you.
- Step 4:* Shave off the hair on the spot to be branded.
- Step 5:* Freeze the irons by putting them in liquid nitrogen or in spirits which has been chilled to -40°C by means of dry ice.
- Step 6:* When the irons stop giving off bubbles they are cold enough to brand letters onto the skin. Shake off the nitrogen or spirits, otherwise the flow-off will also leave a mark on the skin.
- Step 7:* Press hard for the following exposure times:
- Animals of 6 to 8 months – 20 to 25 seconds.
 - Animals of 9 to 18 months – 25 to 30 seconds.
 - Animals over 18 months – 30 to 35 seconds.

Marking by means of tattooing

A third method of identification is the tattooing of animals using tattoo tongs and ink.

Step 1: Get everything ready before you start tattooing.

Step 2: Get someone to help you. The helper must put the animal down and hold it firmly.

Step 3: Put the characters in the right order and position in the tattoo tongs.

Step 4: Apply the tattoo ink on the area to be branded (ears or oxters).

Step 5: Press the tongs until little holes on the skin appear.

Step 6: Rub the ink into the holes.

The tattooing process is complete.

If you want to know more about the identification of animals, you can ask at the nearest extension office, veterinarian or stock-theft unit of the South African Police Services.

You can also phone the Registrar of Livestock Identification in Pretoria at telephone number (012) 319 6000, or you can write to:

The Registrar of Livestock Identification, Private Bag X138, Pretoria 0001

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