

Requirements for the identification of registered Boran cattle

By Yolanda Venter, Boran Cattle Breeders' Society

Branding has been practised by cattle owners for many years as a means to prove ownership of an animal. It is also an important aspect of breeding registered cattle.

The *Animal Identification Act, 2002* (Act 6 of 2002) stipulates that all cattle in South Africa must be branded. The aim of cattle branding is to assist with positive identification and proof of ownership, while also limiting livestock theft and supporting traceability.

The brand is the only mark that will permanently and uniquely identify an animal throughout its entire productive life.

The Act does provide for an exception in respect of stud animals registered with a registering authority (RA) such as SA Stud Book. This entails that the permanent identification as stipulated in the constitutions of the various breeders' societies, will be accepted while the animal is being registered. Stud animals must be branded with the owner's registered brand within 14 days of cancellation, the same as for the producer's commercial cattle.

Applications for the registration of a brand must be addressed to the registrar of animal identification at Private Bag X138, Pretoria, 0001. Do note that the herd designation mark (HDM) with which a breeder branded his stud animals, might not be available for registration under the *Livestock Brands Act*, in which case cancelled animals will have to be branded with the owner's registered brand as well.

All live animals of which the births are notified and all animals offered for registration, must bear permanent identification marks which must include an HDM, year number and a sequence number. Any animal that does not bear the approved identification marks, will not be accepted for birth recording or for subsequent registration by the RA.

Branding is a society's official marking system ensuring the uniform and permanent identification of all animals

submitted for registration in the herd book and in the RA's records. The brand (an HDM in the case of registered Boran cattle) must be registered with the society, which will notify the RA of the breeder's unique HDM to be recorded on the RA's recording system.

Permanent identification mark

The brand or permanent identification mark of a registered animal comprises of three lines:

- The herd designation mark (HDM).
- The year in which the animal was born, which must consist of two figures indicating the year of birth.
- The sequence number (usually supplied by the breeder). Birth sequence numbers in each unique year must not exceed four characters and must start at 1 every year and follow numerically, regardless of gender.

The following steps are suggested in the case of re-branding:

- The first owner can put the mark on the left hind leg.
- The second owner can put the mark on the left shoulder.
- The third owner can put the mark on the right hind leg.
- The fourth owner can put the mark on the right shoulder.

Branding of calves

All calves must be branded before the age of eight months with the HDM followed by the year number, to indicate the birth year and sequence number that corresponds with the ear tag number, if applied. In the event of a calf leaving the breeder's possession at an age too young for branding, such a calf must be ear tagged in accordance with the society's by-law.

Before branding, make sure the sequence of the registered mark corresponds with the certificate of registration. It is very important that animals



These three parts must appear adjacent to each other on the same body area, e.g. on the same hindquarter, shoulder, etc. as illustrated in the photograph. This applies especially to animals that are branded more than once. Even if only the HDM of an animal is changed, the entire brand, and not only the HDM, must be re-branded on the new body location.

are branded correctly before any inspection takes place. Inspectors sign a form in which they declare that they have inspected an animal bearing a specific brandmark that clearly identifies that animal.

Take care to brand animals properly, as they will have to be rebranded if the brand blotches or becomes illegible. A permanent legal mark is the first line of defence against livestock theft. Correct branding of animals is essential for ensuring correct animal and breeding stock identification. 

For enquiries, contact
Yolanda Venter at
yolandav@stemma.co.za
or 051 410 0961