

WIND BRAND?



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Province of British Columbia
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
VETERINARY BRANCH

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WHY BRAND?

Ever since the white man first came to the North American continent, cattle have played a very important part in their development and livelihood.

The use of brands as a mark for identification dates back some 4,000 years. The Egyptians had branded their cattle as early as 2000 B.C. Their idea no doubt was to make sure that ownership of an animal could be established regardless of how far the animal might stray away from home.

The first history of the use of brands on the North American continent was by Hernando Cortez in 1521, when he branded a small bunch of longhorn Mediterranean cattle which he unloaded from a ship in what is now Old Mexico.

Later, huge herds of cattle were branded with the family coat of arms by the Mexican Dons. As the cattle industry grew and moved northward into Texas, this method of indicating ownership gradually became accepted by American ranchers.

The first system of the filing of brands for recording on the North American continent was in California where the Spaniards had located and were running thousands of cattle. Those who wished to record a brand were required to file a section of the hide carrying the owner's brand or the imprint of the branding-iron on a piece of leather.

There is also a record of George Washington, the first president of the United States, having branded his cattle using the brand  on either the shoulder or the hip of cattle.

All the western states and provincial governments have recognized the necessity of protecting live-stock producers and have provided for the recording of brands and brand inspection. The fees for the recording of brands and brand inspection no doubt vary in the states and provinces, but have the same purpose. This is to establish ownership of cattle and horses whether on the range, at loading points, or public markets.

Before any owner brands his cattle, the Brand Division of the British Columbia Department of Agriculture must approve any application for a brand and a certificate, and verify the brand requested has been approved.

When branding cattle, be sure that the owner's brand is placed in the proper position and location on the animal that the certificate sets forth. By misplacing a brand on an animal, it could become some other stockman's brand. It could happen that when these cattle are marketed the proceeds of sale would be held up because of a conflict due to the misbranding.

When buying cattle at a market, always secure a brand release from the Brand Inspector before leaving the market as proof of title. This is just as important when buying in the country or from a neighbour. The buyer should demand and receive absolute title of ownership.

When selling branded cattle which have been purchased, always present the bill of sale or market clearance to the Brand Inspector. Contact the Brand Inspector upon arrival at the market and go along with him while he inspects cattle for brands.

Check the Brand Inspector's tally sheet with the account of sale before leaving the market. It's much easier to straighten out any difficulties which may arise at this time.

Why Brand?

It is well-known that cattlemen depend entirely upon brands to determine ownership of cattle, whether they be found on the range or at the market.

What Is a Good Brand?

We suggest that when recording a live-stock brand, that an attempt be made to record a simple brand that can easily be applied to the animal with bars or straight irons, and that can easily be read on the animal after applying.

A running-iron, which consists of a bar or ring, can also be used to draw brands on the animal. This type of iron should be used only by an experienced person. Running-irons are illegal in some states.

How to Brand

Good brands can be achieved by properly heated irons, by clipping hair from the hide, and by keeping irons clean at all times. Irons are kept clean by use of a steel brush, a container of oil, or a pail of sand.

For best results in heating irons, use a wood fire or propane (bottled) gas. The modern method of the electric branding-iron has proved to be successful when used properly.

Type and Size of Brands

To simplify describing a branding-iron, refer to the following types and exhibits:

- (1) Size and dimensions (*see* Exhibit A for simple brand).
- (2) Combination of letters (*see* Exhibit B).
- (3) Brands that cross (*see* Exhibit C).
- (4) Sharp-cornered brand (*see* Exhibit D).
- (5) Closed or circular brands (*see* Exhibits E, F, G, and H).

Materials for Branding-irons

Among the most suitable materials in making branding-irons are iron, steel, and stainless steel. Stainless steel is noted for its ability to withstand extreme heat without burning up. Since copper is a very fast conductor of heat, copper irons are not recommended as they are often over-heated and, therefore, burn up in a much shorter period of time.

Freeze Branding

Freeze branding is not recommended for use as a permanent registered brand and practical means of live-stock identification. There may be a potential for this method of branding but it has not been proven.

Tips on Branding

1. The iron should be heated properly and would appear to be the colour of ashes. Acids and other branding fluids are not recommended. A branding-iron must burn sufficiently to remove the hair and outer layer of skin. The appearance of the brand should be the colour of saddle leather.

2. Don't use a small horse-iron on cattle, as it will seldom give a legible brand. A 4-inch iron is recommended for use on calves, and an iron 5 inches or larger for use on yearlings or mature cattle. All irons should have a thickness or face of three-eighths to one half inch. Sharp edges on all branding iron faces should be ground or filed off. A thin or burned-up iron shouldn't be used, as it will cut deep into the hide and leave a narrow scar that will cover easily with hair. It is not advisable to combine two or more letters or characters on one handle. In some instances two can be combined, depending on the brand, but never three.

3. Branding irons should not be used by inexperienced persons. Adequate time must be spent when applying brands, and various other conditions must also be considered such as cattle conditions. Wet or damp cattle should not be branded, as the brand will scald the hide and cause a scar or blotch. Since live stock will carry their brands for their entire life, much care must be taken when applying the brand.

4. W. H. T. Mead (Director, Animal Industry Division) Alberta Department of Agriculture of Edmonton, made the following recommendations on branding cattle. The Committee for Better Branding of the International Live-stock Brand Conference also concurred with Mr. Mead on these recommendations.

1. Do not apply a light "hair brand." They can disappear and create serious complications at a later date.

2. The animal must be restrained in such a manner that it cannot move.

Recommended means:

Calves—

Branding table.

Suitable size of squeeze.

Manual wrestling; have sufficient help.

Older Cattle—

Squeeze with adequate opening in the area where the brand is applied to avoid "crowding of irons" on the animals.

3. Animals must be dry. Branding wet animals causes steam scald, unnecessary burning, and brand blotching.

4. Clipping the brand area when animals are real woolly may not be necessary but does improve uniformity of brands.

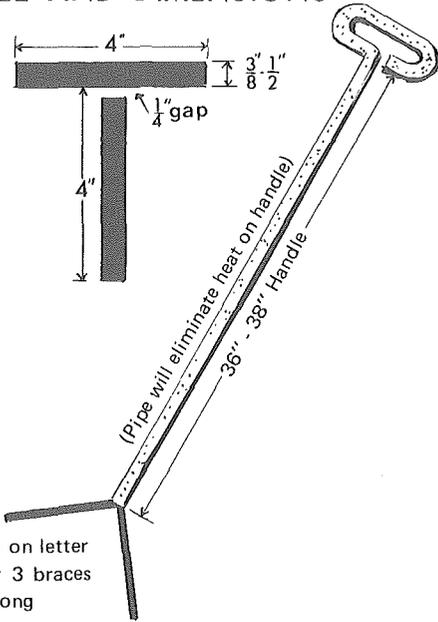
5. *Do not* brand on top of any part of a previous brand.

6. *Apply irons at the right heat.* It may be necessary to experiment a bit to find the *right heat*. Start by applying the iron when it is the colour of *wood-ash grey*. If too hot, the iron will start a hair fire. If too cold, it won't burn a permanent brand.

7. There should be *one* application of the iron only. If it is necessary to retouch, do so with extreme care to avoid blotching.

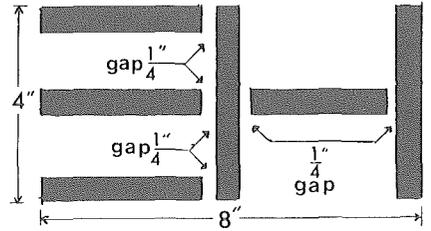
(Exhibit A)

SIZE AND DIMENSIONS



(Exhibit B)

COMBINATION OF LETTERS



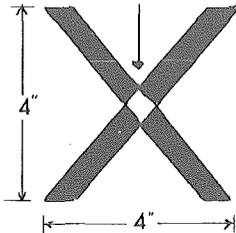
It is not recommended that brand of this type be combined in one iron. This type iron is hard to handle, it's hard to apply on the animal evenly because of the large area it covers.

Separate irons for the E, and a bar or running iron for the H. This may take a little longer, but the results will be well worth the time.

(Exhibit C)

BRANDS THAT CROSS

Gap this type of letter where they cross over each other.

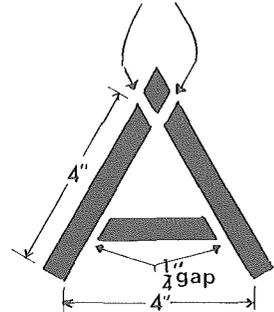


This type of Brand can easily be put on an animal with just a bar iron.

(Exhibit D)

SHARP CORNERED BRANDS

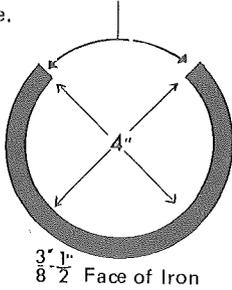
Can be gapped in this area to prevent corner from burning out.



(Exhibit E)

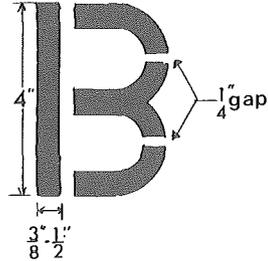
CLOSED OR CIRCULAR BRANDS

About 1/4 of iron cut out so heat can escape.



In using this method of making the letter O about one fourth of the circle is completely cut out. This is very effective in eliminating a blotched brand. To complete the entire letter just rotate the iron, and it will brand the un-branded area and the air gap will move also, to a new area.

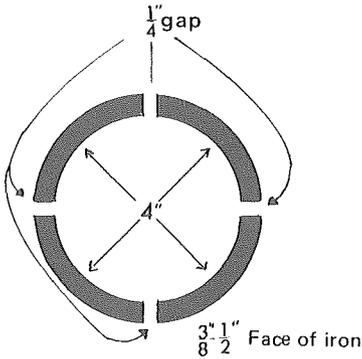
(Exhibit F)



This B iron is made up in one piece, but has 5 gaps cut into the face of it to allow extra heat to escape, and therefore eliminate blotching.

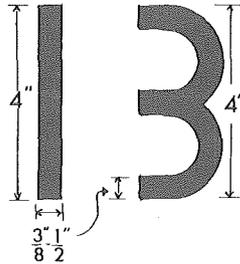
(Exhibit G)

CLOSED OR CIRCULAR BRANDS



The letter O has had gaps cut into it to allow heat to escape. It is recommended that branding irons of this nature be made larger than irons consisting of straight lines, because it will help to eliminate blotching and poor branding.

(Exhibit H)



This is one method of making the letter B without having the brand blotch out so it can't be identified. This is a combination of a bar iron and 3.

8. A proper brand should be the colour of *saddle leather* when the iron is removed. Rocking the iron should assure that this is uniform on all lines of the scar.

9. Depending on age, hair cover, etc., a rough guide to *time application* of an iron of the *right heat* should be 3 to 5 seconds.

10. Other factors being equal, a copper iron will require slightly shorter time of application than a mild-steel iron.

11. Keep the irons free of scale, burnt hair, etc. Do not bang them on a post to do this. A wire brush is ideal for this purpose.

12. Burning deeper than necessary to obtain the impressions above will result in blotched sores that take far too long to heal and will result in bad brands.

13. *Remember, it is only necessary to burn the outer layer of the skin, and the burn should be no deeper.*

How to Read a Brand on a Critter

It's easy and interesting once these simple rules are learned.

Here are a few brand symbols used in combination, and straight brands that will give the idea:

— Bar, a short, horizontal line.

— Rail, a longer horizontal line.

== Two rails or two bars.

\ Slash, a line slanting right or left.

□ Box.

□ □ These all read "half box."

□ But this may read "bench."

○ Circle, usually larger and rounder than a zero.

◡ Half circle, may open up or down.

⊙ Quarter circle, may be in any position.

○ Mashed O or goose egg.

+ Cross, not plus.

May be X or roman numeral 10 as in XII, "Ten in Texas."

◇ Diamond.

∧ Half diamond.

Ⓔ But placed over a letter or number, it's a "rafter."

T Reads plain T as do other letters and numbers.

∧ But tipped, it becomes a "toppling T" or "Tumbling T" or "Tilting T."

-  Add legs and it becomes "Walking T."
-  Add wings and it's a "Flying T."
-  Or if tip drags it's a "Drag T."
-  Lying down it's a "Lazy T."
-  Again, any letter hanging by its top "Swings." This is a swinging M.
-  Placed on part of a circle it becomes a "Rocking M."
-  Or if the letter is extended, leaning or in a hurry, it "runs."
-  This is the "Running M." Straighter lines might mean a "Flying M."
-  Often letters or letters and numerals are "connected." This is a "J. H. D. Connected."

-  Camp kettle.
-  Broken arrow.
-  Tree.
-  House.
-  Hat.
-  Broken heart.
-  Stirrup.
-  Dollbaby.
-  Fiddleback.
-  Duckbar.
-  Pitchfork.
-  Umbrella.
-  Pigpen.

