

## Livestock identification – Branding and cross-branding in the Northern Territory

A. Kluth, Biosecurity and Animal Welfare, Darwin

In any proceedings, proof that an animal is branded in accordance with the provisions of the Livestock Act with a registered brand is *prima facie* proof that the animal is the property of the owner of the registered brand.

Cross-branding cattle/buffalo after purchase is not mandatory in the Northern Territory (NT); however, if livestock are not cross-branded, it provides no legal claim to purchased stock. Purchased cattle/buffalo need to be cross-branded correctly to provide evidence of ownership.

Refer to Livestock Regulations – Division 2 Brands.

### Positions of brands (Livestock Regulations (18))

1. The first brand applied to livestock must be in the position described on the Certificate of Registration for the brand.
2. Each subsequent brand applied to livestock may be in any other position, where there is sufficient space, specified in Schedule 2.
3. A person commits an offence if the person applies a registered brand to livestock in a position other than is required or permitted by sub-regulation (1) or (2).

It is an offence to place a brand on the cheek.

### Construction and size of a three-letter brand (Livestock Regulations (15))

1. All the three letters of a three-letter brand must be constructed on one handle.
2. Each letter of a three-letter brand must be between 4 cm and 8 cm in both height and width.

The imprint surface of the irons is to be no more than 4 mm wide and no less than 3 mm wide.

It is recommended that a 6 mm by 45 mm steel plate be used in the construction of the brand and that it is worked down to 3 mm on the working edge.

The letters must also be 'clean joined' print and not 'fancy' or 'broken' print.

For example, the letters should be: **TYS** and not *TYS* or *TYS* or *TYS*.

### Size of distinctive (symbol) brand (Livestock Regulations (16))

A distinctive (symbol) brand must be between 4 cm and 12 cm in both height and width.

The imprint surface of the branding iron should be no more than 4 mm thick and no less than 3 mm thick. It is recommended that any adjacent lines of a distinctive brand be at least 20 mm apart to avoid blotching.

## Livestock identification – Branding and cross-branding in the Northern Territory

### General

It is compulsory to brand cattle before they are moved off a property or are sold (unless they are less than eight months old). Brands can also be used on horses, buffalo and camels, but it is not compulsory.

A brand is registered to a person or company for use on a nominated NT property only.

**Under no circumstances are NT brands to be used in any other State or Territory. This means the branding iron can only be used by the registered owner (or their representative) on the registered NT property as stated on the NT Brand Certificate(s).**

It does not restrict branded cattle to be agisted on other properties.

To use a brand on an NT property not registered with the Registrar is an offence against the Livestock Act and Regulations and can incur a penalty.

Livestock on which the brand has been altered or blotched are deemed to be unbranded.

Brands and earmarks are not automatically transferred with a change of property ownership. Check with your Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officers to ensure that the brands are registered in the correct name.

Distinctive (symbol) brands are easier to apply as cross-brands but some are not always easily readable or understood. Three-piece brands are more easily readable than distinctive (symbol) brands but may be more difficult to apply correctly.

The brand must be readable to achieve identification.

### Branding tips

1. Replace worn, thin-edged branding irons. The worn edge can burn too deeply causing crusting or blotching and can make the brand too fine to be read easily.
2. Do not overheat the iron. Red-hot irons light up the hair, which causes a blemish on the brand.
3. Do not use an iron which is too cool either. Such irons are generally held on for too long and cook the total area leaving an unreadable brand.
4. Do not brand when the hide is wet. Wet-branding results in scalding.
5. Restrain stock securely for branding. A squeeze crush is ideal for hard-to-handle adult stock.

## Livestock identification – Branding and cross-branding in the Northern Territory

### Contacts and Further Information

**Darwin Region** Fax: 08 8999 2146

Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8999 2034 M: 0401 115 802

Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8999 2030 M: 0409 736 235

**Katherine Region** Fax: 08 8973 9759

Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8973 9767 M: 0467 740 233

Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8973 9765 M: 0427 604 002

---

**Tennant Creek Region** Fax: 08 8962 4480

Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8962 4458 M: 0401 113 445

Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8962 4492 M: 0457 517 347

**Alice Springs Region** Fax: 08 8951 8123


Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer  
Ph: 08 8951 8125 M: 0401 118 125

**Livestock Biosecurity Branch**  
**NT Property Identification Code Search Database**  
**NT Brands Register Search Database**


[www.nt.gov.au/industry/agriculture/livestock](http://www.nt.gov.au/industry/agriculture/livestock)  
<http://pic.primaryindustry.nt.gov.au/>  
<http://brand.primaryindustry.nt.gov.au/>

## Schedule 2 – Positions of brands

### Horses

		NEAR		OFF
Near Neck	= NN			
Near Shoulder	= NS	Neck		Neck
Near Quarter	= NQ	Shoulder		Shoulder
Off Neck	= ON			Quarter
Off Shoulder	= OS	Quarter		
Off Quarter	= OQ			

### Cattle

		NEAR		OFF
Off shoulder	= OS			
Off rump, hip or thigh	= ORHT			Shoulder
Near shoulder	= NS	Shoulder		
Near rump, hip or thigh	= NRHT	Rump/Hip/Thigh		Rump/Hip/Thigh

Please visit us at our website: [www.dpir.nt.gov.au](http://www.dpir.nt.gov.au)

© Northern Territory Government ISSN 0157-8243

Serial No. 855 Agdex No. 401/72

Disclaimer: While all care has been taken to ensure that information contained in this document is true and correct at the time of publication, the Northern Territory of Australia gives no warranty or assurance, and makes no representation as to the accuracy of any information or advice contained in this publication, or that it is suitable for your intended use. No serious, business or investment decisions should be made in reliance on this information without obtaining independent and/or professional advice in relation to your particular situation.