

# BRANDING TIPS FOR STAINLESS STEEL FIRE BRANDS

A properly applied, legally recorded brand is proof of ownership. It will increase the chance of your recovering stray, missing, or stolen livestock manifold and will serve as a great deterrent to theft as well. A good brand eliminates many markets and outlets where a rustler may dispose of an animal.

- Heating the Iron

Using either a bed of coals or bottled gas, the iron should be heated until it is gray in color. If it is black, it will be too cold and won't burn deep enough. If it is bright cherry red it will burn too deep, possibly leaving a hard sore and a blotched brand. The iron must be hot enough to remove hair and the outer layer of skin.

- Applying the brand

1. Normally, applying the iron 3-5 seconds will be sufficient to obtain a permanent brand. If the cattle to be branded are carrying extremely long hair, they should be clipped.
2. Be sure to press firmly and rock the iron slightly to get a uniform brand.
3. Do not brand animals that are damp or wet as it will result in scalding rather than burning and in most cases a blotched, slow-healing sore.
4. Restrain the animal to be branded as securely as possible to prevent their moving and causing a blotched brand.
5. Do not brand over an existing brand. If necessary, place your brand in front, behind, above or below an existing brand but as close as possible to your registered location as possible.
6. There should be only one application of the iron. If it is necessary to retouch the brand, do so with extreme care to avoid blotching.
7. A properly applied brand should be the color of saddle leather when the iron is removed.

- Care of the Irons

1. Keep your irons free of carbon buildup caused by scale and burnt hair. A bucket of sand or a wire brush at the branding table will aid you in this chore.
2. When you are through branding, the irons should be cleaned and reshaped by using a file or rasp and then be stored in a container of oil.

- Brand Design

1. Your brand should be as simple as possible. Avoid intricate patterns which produce sharp corners, as a concentration of heat will cause the brand to burn out and blotch.
2. Sharp edges should be avoided or filed off.
3. Do not use thin or burned-up irons as they will cut deep into the hide and leave a thin scar which will cover with hair.