

# Livestock Identification - Brands in the Northern Territory

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Branding cattle and horses is a clear way of identifying ownership of stock, and can also play an important role in disease control programs and chemical residue trace-back programs. This is important to both consumers and producers, in order to maintain confidence in the safety and integrity of livestock products.

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 owned by the owner of the registered brand.

The Northern Territory (NT) *Livestock Act* and Regulations use a three-letter brand system where one letter must be "T" and a distinctive (symbol) brand system. Earmarks are optional.

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 be used on horses, buffalo and camel but branding is not compulsory.

A brand is registered to a person or company for use on a nominated NT property only. **Under no circumstances are these 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 from being agisted on other properties. To brand on an NT property not registered with the Registrar is an infringement of the *Livestock Act* and Regulations and is an offence that incurs a penalty.

## BRANDS HISTORY

Brands which were registered prior to 1928 under the South Australian (SA) *Brands Act*, included a combination of letters and numerals, or may have been any free-form shape that does not conflict with, or is not similar to, any other registered brand.

These brands have either been transferred to SA or cancelled; however, a small number (eight in total) remain current and are still in use in the NT.

Brands containing an inverted 'T' (⊥) were registered for use in Central Australia up to 1932; however, a small number (five in total) remain current and are still in use in Central Australia.

## DISTINCTIVE NUMERALS HISTORY

Believed to be age, stud or herd book numerals used by the breeder in conjunction with a registered brand, are not required to be registered.

**Owners of brands must give notification** to the Registrar in the following events:

- Change of property (if the owner moves from the registered property or the property is sold).
- Change of branding position.
- Cancellation.
- Change of name by marriage.
- Notification of death.
- Transfer to a new owner.
- Change of contact address.

The NT *Livestock Act* and Regulations are on the Primary Industry website [www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth](http://www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth) Brands in the NT.

A copy of the *NT Brands Directory*, which is updated in early January and in early July, can be purchased from Technical Publications.

### **1. The three-letter brand**

A **three-letter brand** must consist of three letters, one of which must be 'T'.

Applicants must choose from the current list of *Three-letter Brands available for Registration in the NT*, which is available on our website, or contact your Livestock Biosecurity Officer for assistance.

If the three-letter brand you are looking for is not on the list, then unfortunately it is not available.

When a brand is cancelled, it cannot be re-registered for five years. Therefore, you will not find it on the above list or on the **NT Brands Register Search Database**, as it is not available.

### **2. Conditions for applying for registration with a three-letter brand**

- An applicant must be at least 18 years old.
- An applicant must specify the property on which the three-letter brand will be used.
- An applicant must specify the livestock to which the brand will be applied.
- An applicant must be the owner of the specified property, or must have permission of the owner of the specified property (Livestock Regulation 7).

### **3. Number of brands to be registered for use on an NT property**

A person may have only one three-letter brand registered to a person or company for use on a particular property (Livestock Act 10(1)).

### **4. Persons who are not owners of land / owner's permission**

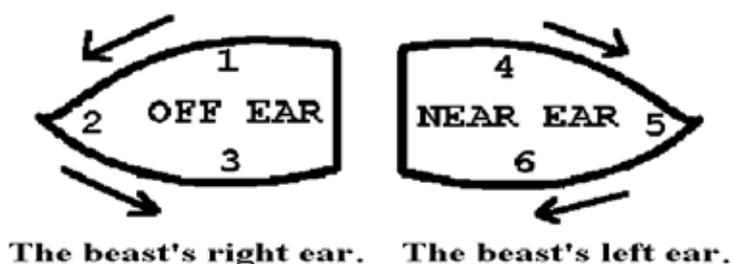
According to Livestock Regulation 7(3) an applicant for registration of a three-letter brand must be:

- The owner of the specified property; or
- a person who, with the permission of the owner of the specified property, intends to brand the livestock on the property.

Before registering a three-letter brand on the application of a person who is not the owner of the property on which the brand will be used, the Registrar must be satisfied that the owner of the property has given the person permission to brand on the property (Livestock Regulation 8(2)).

## 5. Earmarking cattle and buffalo with registered earmarks

- i. Earmarks are optional and are used for quick identification to the producer/owner only and is not proof of ownership.
- ii. If an animal has an earmark, then it must have a brand as well.
- iii. Earmarks are allowed to be used on one or both ears.
- iv. No earmarks shall be made on the ear of any stock if they are already earmarked (Livestock Regulations 27).
- v. All registered earmarks are, wherever possible, described by the code of letters as shown on the NT Code Index of Registered Earmarks for Use with Registered Brands in the NT.
- vi. All earmarks must be made by pliers and these marks are only for use in conjunction with the registered three-letter brand and locality for which they are registered.
- vii. To enable earmarks to be described, it has been found necessary to divide the two ears in six positions (two centre positions being withdrawn from further registration):
  - a) Front or top of off ear.
  - b) Point of off ear.
  - c) Back or bottom of off ear.
  - d) Front or top of near ear.
  - e) Point of near ear.
  - f) Back or bottom of near ear.



The diagram above shows the positions in the ears and as denoted by arrows, must be read around each ear from the head, commencing at the top of the ear.

## 6. Construction and size of three-letter brands

- i. All the three letters of a three-letter brand must be constructed on one handle.
- ii. Each letter must be between 4 cm and 8 cm in both height and width.
- iii. The imprint surface of the irons is to be no more than 4 mm wide and no less than 3 mm wide. The letters must also be 'clean joined' print and not 'fancy' or 'broken' print.

(Livestock Regulation 15).

## 7. Distinctive (symbol) brand

Generally speaking, a symbol brand may be any free-form shape that does not conflict with, or is not similar to, any registered brand.

A symbol brand may only be registered in conjunction with a three-letter brand. The owner of a three-letter brand may hold up to three distinctive (symbol) brands (Livestock Act 10(2)).

When registered, it may be used in addition to, or instead of, a three-letter brand.

Traditionally, a symbol brand was a sale brand to indicate sale; in recent years, there has been a trend to use only a symbol brand like a logo.

On application by the registered owner of a three-letter brand, the Registrar may register a symbol brand or earmark (or both) in connection with the three-letter brand (Livestock Act 9(2)).

- i. If letters – then a distinctive (symbol) brand must have two letters with a symbol - over, under or vertical. Single letters are no longer accepted.
- ii. A distinctive (symbol) brand cannot be three equal-sized letters or characters and cannot be a three character brand registered in another State.
- iii. A distinctive (symbol) brand must be unique to the NT and, if in the opinion of the Registrar or Delegate of the Registrar, a distinctive (symbol) brand produced from the chosen design is not clearly legible, then it will not be registered

(Livestock Regulation 16).

#### **8. Construction and size of a distinctive (symbol) brand**

- i. A distinctive (symbol) brand shall not be less than 4 cm high and wide or no more than 12 cm high or wide. It must be between 4 cm and 12 cm in both height and width.
- ii. The imprint surface of the irons is to be no more than 4 mm wide and no less than 3 mm wide.
- iii. It is recommended that any adjacent lines of a distinctive (symbol) brand be at least 20 mm apart to avoid blotching.
- iv. A full scale drawing of the required distinctive (symbol) brand is to be submitted at the time of application.
- v. If, in the opinion of the Registrar or Delegate of the Registrar, a distinctive (symbol) brand produced from the chosen design is not clearly legible, it will not be registered

(Livestock Regulation 16).

#### **9. An NT brand must be used on a registered NT property only**

An NT brand may only be used on a nominated NT property. This means the branding iron can only be used by the registered owner (or their representative) on the registered NT property or run as stated on NT Brand Certificate(s).

Under no circumstances are NT brands to be used in any other State or Territory.

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 Regulation 21).

#### **10. Use of a brand on a different property/run**

Should the registered owner of a brand wish to use their brand at a different property or run, then the options are as follows:

- Request to change the run – should you sell a property or purchase a new property and wish to keep a registered three-letter brand (including any symbol brands and/or earmark), then you would need to change the run for which your brand is registered for use.

Note: This is not an automatic change for a brand to be approved at the new location, as surrounding properties need to be checked to make sure your brand(s) and/or earmark(s) are not similar to those on surrounding properties.

- Special Permission – The Registrar may grant Special Permission to brand cattle (off a registered run).

Refer to our website [www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth](http://www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth) and click on Brands in the NT or contact your Livestock Biosecurity Officer for assistance.

## 11. Sale of a property

While the sale of a property may include the livestock, the brand cannot be sold to the new owners.

- i. If an agreement is made in the sale contract to transfer the brand to the new owners, an application to *Transfer Brand* must be lodged with the Registrar.  
or
- ii. If the owner no longer wishes to use the brand, it may be cancelled. An Application for *Cancellation of Brand* must be lodged with the Registrar.  
or
- iii. If the registered owner of the brand wishes to keep the brand, but move it to a new property, a *Request to Change of Run* must be lodged with the Registrar, together with original certificate(s) for amending.

## 12. Transfer of brands

When it is intended that the ownership of a brand should change, an *Application for Transfer of Brand* must be lodged with the Registrar (Livestock Act 11 and Livestock Regulation 9). Applicants must be 18 years or older.

**Brands are not transferable automatically by a property sale or a will.**

## 13. Branding positions

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

(Livestock Regulation 18).

## 14. Cancellation of brands

- i. The Registrar may decide to cancel the registration of a three-letter brand in any of the following circumstances (Livestock Regulation 14):
  - a) If the registered owner of the brand is also the owner of the registered property for the brand – the registered owner:
    - o has sold or rented out the registered property; and
    - o has not applied to the Registrar to register the transfer of the brand to the purchaser or tenant of the property.
  - b) If the registered owner of the brand is not also the owner of the registered property for the brand, the registered owner no longer has the permission of the registered property owner to use the brand on the property.
  - c) If the registered owner of the brand is deceased and the administrator or executor of the owner's estate has not, within 12 months after the date of death, applied for the registration of the brand to continue.
  - d) If the registered owner of the brand is found guilty of an offence against a provision of this Division or Division 2.
  - e) If to the best of the Registrar's knowledge and belief, the brand has not been used for at least three years.

- f) If a notice under this part is sent by post to the registered owner of the brand at the owner's last known address is undeliverable.
  - g) If the registered owner of the brand fails or refuses to comply with a notice that
    - o is sent under this part to the owner's last known address and
    - o requires the owner to reply within 60 days of the date of the notice.
  - h) If there is any other reasonable ground for the cancellation.
- ii. If the registration of a three-letter brand is cancelled, then it includes any earmarks, distinctive (symbol) brands, or distinctive numerals, registered for use in connection with that brand (Livestock Act 12(3)).
  - iii. Once cancelled, a three-letter brand may not be re-registered again for five years or more, from date of cancellation (Livestock Act 12(4)).

## **15. Certificate(s) of registration – brands, earmarks, transfers**

In accordance with Livestock Act 9 and 11 and Livestock Regulation 11, as soon as practicable after registering a brand or earmark, the Registrar must issue to the registered owner the following:

- A certificate of registration of a three-letter brand.
- A certificate of registration of an earmark.
- A certificate of registration of a distinctive brand for horses and cattle.
- A certificate of transfer of a brand.

These certificates are official documents and it is the registered owner's responsibility to ensure all information written on the above certificates is accurate and are abided by and ensure their safekeeping.

Should the registered owner wish to make any future changes regarding the three-letter brand, distinctive (symbol) brand or earmark registration, then the original certificate(s) will need to be amended by the Registrar or his/her Delegate.

## **16. Certificate(s) lost or misplaced**

If original certificates are lost or misplaced, then a replacement certificate can be issued at a cost (see last page). The replacement certificate replaces all other certificates.

## **17. Unbranded cattle means cattle of at least eight months of age that have not been branded.**

### **The owner must not hand over unbranded cattle for travel**

A person in charge of travelling cattle shall ensure that all animals over the age of eight months in the mob are branded (Livestock Regulations 58(1) a & b).

### **The person in charge must not move unbranded cattle**

The person in charge of travelling livestock commits an offence if any of the cattle are unbranded (Livestock Regulations 59(1)).

### **No transaction related to unbranded cattle**

A person must not sell, give away, exchange or receive travelling cattle that are unbranded (Livestock Regulations 60(1)).

Branding of other travelling stock, such as buffalo, camels and horses, is optional.

## **18. Brands to be permanent**

Brands shall be made and impressed in a manner which so far as is practicable is clear, legible and permanent (Livestock Regulation 22(1)).

## 19. Branding buffalo, horses and camels

Brands can be used on horses, buffalo and camels but this is not compulsory.

## 20. Requirement to notify change of address

- i. If the residential or contact address of a registered owner of a brand or earmark changes.
- ii. The registered owner must notify the Registrar of the change and the owner's new address within 28 days after the date of change.

(Livestock Regulation 13).

## 21. Fees payable

Refer to individual applications to see current fee for that service. Fees are subject to change on 1 July each year.

## CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### Adele Kluth - Livestock Identification Systems Administrator/Brands

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Fax: 08 8999 2146

E-mail: [adele.kluth@nt.gov.au](mailto:adele.kluth@nt.gov.au)

Website: [www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth](http://www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth)

### Registrar

Animal Biosecurity, DPIF, GPO Box 3000, Darwin NT 0801

For further assistance please contact the Livestock Biosecurity Officer in your Region:

<b>Darwin Region</b>	Fax: 08 8999 2146	<b>Katherine Region</b>	Fax: 08 8973 9759
Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer		Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer	
Ph: 08 8999 2030	M: 0439 270 039	Ph: 08 8973 9767	M: 0467 740 233
Livestock Biosecurity Officer		Livestock Biosecurity Officer	
Ph: 08 8999 2034	M: 0401 115 802	Ph: 08 8973 9765	M: 0427 604 002
<b>Tennant Creek Region</b>	Fax: 08 8962 4480	<b>Alice Springs Region</b>	Fax: 08 8951 8123
Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer		Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer	
Ph: 08 8962 4458	M: 0401 113 445	Ph: 08 8951 8125	M: 0401 118 125
Livestock Biosecurity Officer			
Ph: 08 8962 4492	M: 0457 517 347		

### Animal Biosecurity Branch

### NT Property Identification Code Search Database

### NT Brands Register Search Database

[www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth](http://www.dpif.nt.gov.au/animalhealth)

<http://pic.primaryindustry.nt.gov.au/>

<http://brand.primaryindustry.nt.gov.au/>