

Conventional and Electric Hot Irons

A good source to consider when having your **conventional** iron built is either the local welding shop, blacksmith or inquires at your local feed store. You can provide the person making your iron with the drawing provided by WSDA showing the minimum size and shape requirements of your iron.

Electric irons are widely used and do an excellent job of identifying the animal. These are factory made and thermostatically controlled. The price of an electric branding iron will depend on how complicated the design is. A search for "branding irons" on the internet will return a list of companies who can make your new iron.

The average height of letters and/or characters is 3" inches tall. Letters less than that size are not to be used on full grown cattle. A smaller 2 1/2" inch iron may be used for calves or horses only. Smaller irons cannot be approved, as they will not burn a clear and definite mark that can be readily seen.

Be sure that when you accept your finished iron that it is accurate, and do not accept one unless it is correct.

Branding Tips for Hot Branding Irons

When the iron is applied it should burn deep enough to remove hair and the outer layer of skin. When lifted the iron should leave the brand the color of saddle leather.

Don't let the iron get "red" hot. This starts a hair fire and usually will result in a poor brand. At proper heat, the iron is the color of ashes. Wood is the best fuel for a branding fire.

Don't use a "thin" or burned up iron. It will cut too deeply or make a thin scar that the hair will cover up. Keep the face of the iron smooth and free from rust or scale.

Don't try to brand a wet or damp animal. The brand will scald, leave a blotch, a bad sore, or "no" brand at all. If possible, the best method is to "clip" the hair first, then brand. This provides a much clearer brand. The oil in the hair may catch on fire and the brand will blotch. The use of sponge and ice cold water helps cool after.

Don't be in a hurry! The stock will wear the brand all its life. The objective is for the brand you apply to be its return address home should it be lost or stolen.