

Beef Briefs
by
John Comerford
Penn State Beef Specialist



a. Metal — metal ear tags are generally either round or rectangular. They may cause infection and often are more difficult to read than other types of ear tags. The loss rate is generally high after a period of a year.

b. Plastic — infection is less of a problem than with metal tags and they are usually easier to read.

c. Rubber — Soft rubber tags appear to be the best suited for beef cattle identification. Because of their flexibility, less replacement is required and larger tags may be used. They are the most popular form of identification because they come in a variety of sizes, can be

printed with many types of information, are cheap to use, and can easily be replaced if they are lost. Rubber tags are correctly placed in the center of the ear by piercing the ear between the ribs of cartilage. If they are placed too close to the head, they can be very hard to read; if they are placed too far out on the ear, they are lost more easily. Replacement can usually be made in the same hole in the ear from the previous tag site. Because many cattle are both tattooed and ear tagged, care must be taken to place the tag in the opposite ear from the tattoo.

• Freeze Branding — Freeze

branding is a relatively new method of identifying cattle. Freezing the hide with a super-cooled branding iron destroys the color-producing cells and results in a permanent growth of white hair in the shape of the iron used. Freeze branding is recommended for dark colored animals only.

Equipment needed:

a. A chute or some device to tightly restrain the animal.

b. Hair clippers with extra thin blades.

c. Copper or copper alloy branding irons. The irons should be at least four inches high and the

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BEEF CATTLE IDENTIFICATION

Proper identification is essential for keeping records which are necessary to operate a beef enterprise efficiently. Records are needed to determine animal performance, maintain health programs, and to schedule management activities. They are particularly important in providing genetic information for selection, breeding, and culling.

In the feedlot, identification helps the owner to recognize the sources of feeders, keep accurate performance and economic data, and maintain health programs.

Methods Of Identification

• Tattoo — Tattooing is a permanent method of identification that is required for registered cattle. The readability of a tattoo depends more on the skill of the producer doing the job than any

other factor. Before tattooing, both the ear and the instrument should be cleaned thoroughly. The tattooing is performed with a special instrument that places characters, letters, or numerals under the skin by a series of needlelike points. The tattoo should be between the ribs of the ear, and tattoo ink should be rubbed in well with the finger. The major disadvantage of tattooing is that the animal must be completely restrained before identification can be made.

• Ear Tags — Many kinds of ear tags are used extensively in beef cattle identification. Ear tags vary in the material from which they are made, size, and method of attachment. They will provide identification for a longer period if they are properly installed. Otherwise, ear tags are only semipermanent, and are best suited for calves and feedlot operations if they are improperly placed in the ear.

Types of ear tags:

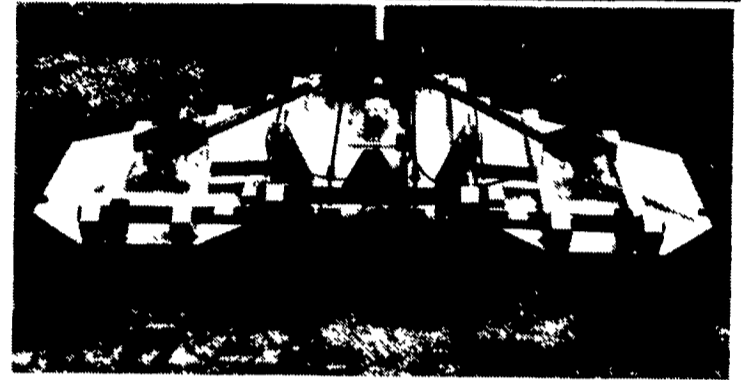


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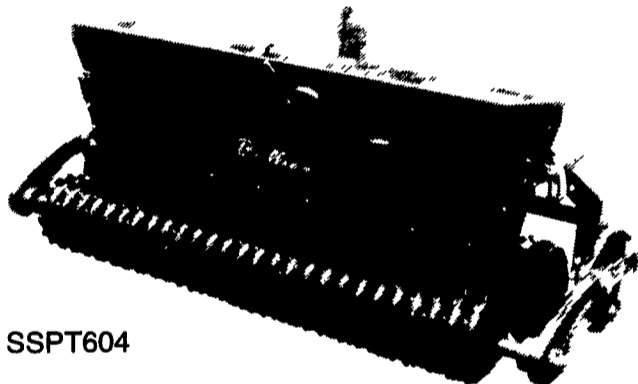
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