

2009 Is 'W'

International Coding Improves Livestock Number System

SPRINGFIELD, MO.

There is growing interest in cattle identification systems for herd selection and culling, according to Eldon Cole, University of Missouri Extension livestock specialist.

"One item producers like to build into a numbered identification system is the year of birth," said Cole. "This is important for in-herd identification and some might find the international letters coding system helpful in their records system."

Cole says the international system uses all but four letters of the alphabet to indicate the animal's year of birth.

"Back in 1969 when this system went into popular use among cattlemen, especially among some purebred breeders, the letter A was designated as the letter code for that year," said Cole.

Since that time, producers have gone through the alphabet nearly twice. The letters I, O, Q and V are not used because they are easily confused with numerals.

The year 2008 was a "U," 2009 is a W and 2010 will be a X.

The use of the alphabet helps prevent repeating the same number each 10 years when the year number is incorporated into the herd identification. Avoiding duplication of identification numbers also reduces confusion when the data is computerized.

For more help on devising a simple, yet understandable within herd identification system, contact one of the University of Missouri Extension livestock specialists in southwest Missouri: Eldon Cole, (417) 466-3102, Gary Naylor, (417) 345-7551, and Dona Funk, (417) 276-3313. Δ



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