

Missouri's Brand Law Offers Guidelines For Using Deterrent To Cattle Thefts

MT. VERNON, MO. Cattle theft is an ongoing problem that is difficult to stop according to Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Mis-

sonouri Extension Centers have county recorder of deeds, every livestock market and slaughter house in the state. Law enforcement officials may request them and many



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Photo by Eldon Cole, livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension



The state of Missouri adopted the current brand law in 1971. The most recent brand book, published by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Division came out in 2010 and contained 4,687 registered brands.

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Although branding is not practiced by a very high percentage of Missouri livestock owners it can be a deterrent to theft for those who take the time to place a registered brand on their stock. Most thieves avoid stealing branded animals as they are more likely to be noticed by knowledgeable workers at livestock markets.

Photo by Eldon Cole, livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension

souri Extension. One method to deter theft is to brand with a unique, approved brand.

“I’ve heard authorities state that it’s a deterrent but that Missouri does not have a brand law. That is not accurate,” said Cole.

The state of Missouri adopted the current brand law in 1971. The most recent brand book, published by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Division came out in 2010 and contained 4,687 registered brands.

Key parts of the brand law include:

- No evidence of ownership by brand on cattle, sheep, horses or mules shall be permitted in any court in this state unless the brand is recorded.

- The recording must be done through the Missouri Department of Agriculture Animal Health Division. The recording fee is \$35 and is good for 5 years. A \$20 maintenance fee is due each 5 years.

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- Brands can be placed in six locations on the animal. They are the shoulder, rib or hip on each side of the animal.

- Within-herd identification brands must be at least 10 inches from the ownership brand.

- A bill of sale noting brands should be obtained when a branded animal is purchased.

- The Missouri brand book is sent to each

access to them.

- The brand application may be obtained online at mda.mo.gov or by contacting the department by phone at 573-751-5608. Extension livestock specialists also have them.

- No provisions for brand inspectors are provided in the 1971 Bill.

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“Most thieves avoid stealing branded animals as they are more likely to be noticed by knowledgeable workers at livestock markets,” said Cole.

The 1971 law does include statements that slaughtering plants and livestock markets shall keep a record of branded animals for at least two years. No liability will be imposed. The facsimiles of brands shall only be used as a record of identification.

“Branding cattle may be viewed as a problem by some but at this time no market discounts are made due to hide damage. In fact, the brand could even enhance the cattle’s value due to favorable performance in the feedlot, on-the-rail or in the breeding pasture,” said Cole. “Brands can help develop a reputation and easily identifiable mark on a herd of beef cattle.” Δ