

Joanne Mann and Angelo Pienaar – Animal Science

Figure 1: Branding irons heating in a branding box.

4. The aim is to burn the skin of the animal; the burnt area of the letters/symbols appears to be a golden brown colour if done correctly (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: An example of a hot iron brand on an animal (correct procedure). The letters on the skin have a golden brown appearance.

Apply the branding iron to the skin of the animal for approximately three seconds (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: An example of a person carrying out the procedure of hot iron branding on an animal (correct procedure).

The length of time that a branding iron is applied to an animal's skin depends on the heat of the branding iron. If the branding iron is too cool, or not held against the animal for sufficient time, then only a temporary hair brand will result (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: An example of when the branding irons are too cool (incorrect procedure). Only the hair has been burnt and the brand will fade in time.

If the branding iron is too hot, or held against the skin for too long, then the area around the intended letter or symbol will be burnt as well, resulting in an unclear brand (see the last letter in Figure 5).



Figure 5: An example of when the branding irons are too hot – especially the last letter (incorrect procedure). The area around the intended letter has been burnt as well. The “K” is an example of uneven pressure when branding.

Avoid allowing the branding iron to slip as it breaks the skin around the intended letter/symbol, resulting in a smudged brand. Ideally, dead skin and hair should be cleaned off the branding irons, between animals.

5. Cold water should be applied to the branded area on the animal to cool it down.
6. A few weeks after an animal has been branded (as in Figure 2), a scab of the burnt area forms and then falls off. After that the brand appears pink (see Figure 6). The identification mark is now permanent. Sometimes the hair will grow out through the branded area, but it will still be visible (permanent).



Figure 6: A few weeks later the brand on the animal appears pink (correct procedure).

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