

# Branding Cattle

The branding of livestock dates to 2,700 B.C. The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans used branding as a permanent way to show ownership of livestock. Hernando Cortez brought branding to North America in 1541. Present day ranchers continue to use branding (both hot iron and freeze brands) as a means of identifying their livestock. Branding is usually done on calves during spring and fall round-ups. Branding irons are heated in a fire and then used to permanently mark the hide of the animal. The most popular locations for branding cattle are on the hip or shoulder. Brands are composed of capital letters of the alphabet, numbers, pictures and characters such as the slash /, circle O, half circle U, cross + or bar \_ with many combinations and adaptations.

## "Calling the Brand"

Reading a brand is easy if you remember three rules:

- 1) Read from left to right
- 2) Read from top to bottom
- 3) Read from outside to inside

## Vocabulary

Brand - A permanent identification mark usually burned into the hide of an animal which is used to show ownership.

Branding Iron - Long metal rods with identification figures on the end.

Mavericks - Unbranded animals are called mavericks, after Sam Maverick, a Texas lawyer and politician.

Rustler - Someone who steals cattle or other livestock.

Rustlers may brand unmarked cattle with their own brand or alter the existing brand.

## Branding Cattle Project

Supplies Needed:

Black Acrylic paint or Ink

Newspaper

Plastic plates

Potato or Sponge

Plastic knife or Scissors

Print on paper cut in the shape of cows or brown rumped paper.

## Directions

Cover table with newspapers.

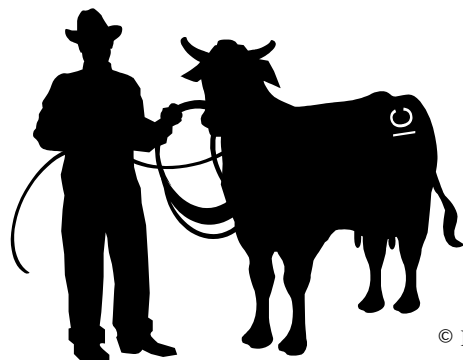
Pour black paint in plastic plate.

Have students design their own brand.

Cut the design out of a potato with a plastic knife or out of the sponge with scissors.

Dip design in paint or ink and print on cut out of cow.

Clean up supplies and display their branded cattle.



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Here are some inventive brands

Lazy R  On side

Crazy R  Upside down and backwards

Walking H  Add feet

Flying W  Add wings

Running M  Handwriting


Bar B Q  Short line

Circle K  Circle around letter

Swinging S  Curve on top of letter


Rocking A  Curve on bottom of letter


Box D  Box around letter

Y Four Connected  Connected Letters

Pot of Gold 

Too Hot 

Buzzard on a Rail 

Rising Sun 

Design Your Own