

# Cattle Branding

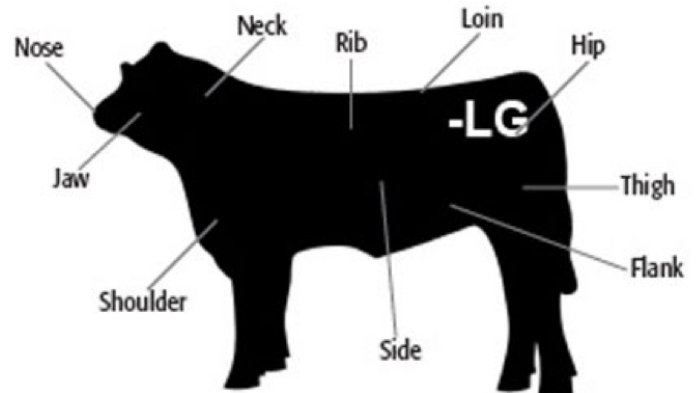
## History

Brands are most famously associated with the cowboys and cattle drives of the Old West, when brands were used to identify a cow's owner, protect cattle from rustlers (cattle thieves), and to separate them when it came time to drive to market (or rail yards or stock yards). But the practice is much older.

**The origin of branding** livestock dates from 2700 B.C. Paintings in Egyptian tombs document branding oxen with hieroglyphics. Ancient Greeks and Romans marked livestock and slaves with a hot iron. Hernando Cortez introduced branding from Spain to the New World in 1541. He brought cattle stamped with his mark of three crosses. There has never been anything to take the place of a visible brand as a permanent definitive mark of ownership and deterrent to theft.

## Brand Registration

Brands, **are recorded by state livestock agencies.** The agencies also record the location you place the brand on the animal. You may not register a particular brand if the same symbols and location have already been registered by someone else in your area. It is important, not only to register a brand correctly, but to keep it active. Like most registrations, brand registrations do expire.



## Reading Brands

For many new livestock owners, the art of reading a brand is a mystery. Brands, to the inexperienced, resemble hieroglyphics; to the experienced livestock person, however, they become a readable language. With practice and an understanding of some important brand terms, the average person can easily acquire basic skills in reading brands.

**There are three accepted rules for reading brands.**

1. Left to right.
2. Top to bottom.
3. Outside to inside.



**Brands have a language all their own.** That language, like any other, follows certain rules. The ability to read these symbols is referred to as "**callin' the brand.**"

Brands are composed of capital letters of the alphabet, numerals, pictures, and characters such as slash /, circle **O**, half-circle, cross +, \_bar, etc., with many combinations and adaptations.

- Letters can be used singly, joined, or in combinations.
- They can be **upright**, XIT;
- lying down or "**lazy**,"
- **connected** (V B connected)
- **combined**, (V B combined);
- **reversed**, (reverse B);
- **hanging** (V hanging S).

Figures or numbers are used in the same way as the letters.

Picture brands are usually used alone, for example (ladder) or (pitch fork).



The reading of a brand, especially the more complicated ones, in one locality or state may not correspond to the way it is read elsewhere.

Sources:

<http://www.cowboyshowcase.com/brands>.

<http://www.tscrabrands.com/how-to-read.html>

<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/design/files/2013/04/cow-brand.jpg>