

Steps for successful freeze branding

Pre-preparation

1.1 What you will need at your workstation:

- Heavy duty clippers
- Small brush for cleaning the clippers
- Immobiliser
- Set of branding irons – recommended 3 x sets
- 3 x Containers, plastic or polystyrene – do not use metal
- Methylated spirits
- Electrical plug point (220V)
- Timer
- Dry ice
- 2 x Spray bottles
- Clipboard, paper and pen to record the animal's details
- Cloth for wiping
- Goggles for eye protection
- Gloves for handling the dry ice
- Staff to assist
- Extension cord, if needed
- Generator, if needed
- Gazebo – some form of protection and coverage from the elements

1.2 Setting up your workstation:

- If you have no protection or coverage from the elements you may need to set up a gazebo.
- Have your branding irons clearly marked, we suggest a tag at the top for easy reference.
- Place your containers neatly in a row.
- Place the methylated spirits in a designated area that is easy to access.
- Have your timer ready on a repeat setting of 45 seconds.
- Have your pen and paper ready, for recording purposes.
- Keep the dry ice in its original container, close to the point of use.
- Plug in the clipper - have a small brush handy to clean the clipper after and in-between use.
- Plug in the immobiliser.

1.3 Preparing the branding irons:

Step 1

- a) Cool down the branding irons for at least 30 minutes before using them on the first animal.
- b) Mark the containers A, B and C.
- c) Mark the branding irons - the marked branding irons will be allocated to the appropriate container.
- d) Pour 5 L of methylated spirits into each container.
- e) Place 1 x 2.5 kg dry ice block into each container - the mixture will bubble.
- f) The methylated spirits should cover the head of the branding iron by at least 100 mm.
- g) Place the clearly marked branding irons into the appropriate container, i.e. numbers into one container, alphabet letters into second container.
- h) The bubbling should be minimal prior to applying the irons.
Note: at least 3 sets of branding irons are recommended, alternating and re-cooling of irons will be needed in-between branding, allowing 3 minutes to re-cool.

Safety: do not put your hand into the dry ice/methylated spirit mixture!



2. Restraining the animal

Step 2

- 2.1 Clamp the head of the animal in the head clamp and secure the animal properly.
- 2.2 Connect the immobiliser and switch it on.
- 2.3 Push the animal to one side to make it accessible to do the branding.



Preparing for the branding

Step 3

- 3.1 Brush off the dust, moving against the hair grain, from the bottom to the top. If the area is not pre-cleaned, the clipper blades will become blunt faster.
- 3.2 Wipe the brushed area with a cloth.
- 3.3 Use heavy duty animal clippers, clip/shave the hair in an upward motion, from the bottom to the top.
- 3.4 Once shaved, clean and prepare the area by wiping the area again to remove any dirt and loose hair.
- 3.5 Spray the area with methylated spirits and wipe clean.



3 The branding process

Step 4

- 4.1 Set the timer for 45 seconds.
- 4.2 Identify the animal's numbers, record details.
- 4.3 Identify and have the correct numbers and letters at hand, do not remove from the container until you are ready to brand.
- 4.4 Before placing the branding iron onto the branding area, spray the branding area with methylated spirits. This is necessary to transfer the heat from the animal which improves the quality of the brand.



Step 5

- 5.1 Place the branding irons directly from the container onto the animal.
- 5.2 Start the timer.
- 5.3 Apply very firm pressure to the iron - hold the iron in place and don't let it slip.
- 5.4 Have an assistant keep track of time so the branding irons are in place for the desired length of time.
- 5.5 The application of only one iron at a time is recommended - however, 2 - 3 irons can be placed onto the area.



Step 6

- 6.1 Remove the iron from the animal and immediately place the iron in the coolant for re-cooling.
- 6.2 Remember, it takes about 3 minutes to re-cool the iron to the proper temperature before applying the same iron again.



A good brand will show up as an indented number on the animal immediately after branding. Within a few minutes, the area will swell creating a raised version of the brand.

The swelling will subside in a few hours. In two to four weeks the skin will begin to peel. This is normal and unpigmented hair will grow back in its place.



When branding is done correctly, freeze brands will last lifelong. Quality branding makes identification of animals quick, easy and accurate.