

The Stock Brands Ordinance

No. 1 of the Series "Know Your Ordinance"

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Stock are branded for two main reasons—to assist in providing a legal identification of ownership, and to provide a rapid and readily available means of checking essential information such as age, herd number, etc. The branding of stock is not compulsory in Papua New Guinea. If a stock-owner wishes to brand his stock, however, he must by law register the brand.

The branding of stock in Papua New Guinea is covered by the Brands Ordinance of 1962. All branding of cattle and horses, as a means of identification of ownership, must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance. When a stock-owner wishes to register a brand, he must apply on a special form to the Registrar of Brands at D.A.S.F. Headquarters, Konedobu. The Ordinance states that a brand shall consist of three letters, or two letters and a number, or one letter and two numbers. It also states that the letters or numbers should be not less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high and not more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. Government-owned cattle have a broad arrow instead of of one letter.

An application to register a brand must be accompanied by a fee of \$4.00. On receipt of the application to register a brand, the Registrar will issue a Certificate of Registration if the brand application is in order and the brand is not the same or similar to any brand already issued. A brand which is very similar to one already registered will not be accepted; instead the Registrar will advise the applicant to select another brand. In deciding on similarity, the Registrar considers whether one brand mark could be easily changed into another. The Registrar keeps a list of all registered brands and from time to time he publishes a Brands Directory, illustrating all registered brands. (See Figure 1).

The Ordinance also specifies the positions where a brand can be impressed. These positions are the 'near (left side) neck, near shoulder, near thigh, near ribs and near rump in that order. It is illegal to brand an animal in any other position than that specified in the brand certificate.

If a branded animal is sold, the new owner can cross-brand the animal by putting his own brand either immediately below the existing brand or (if there is not sufficient space) on the next position specified in the Ordinance.

In addition to the registered brands, cattle may also carry "distinctive brands" to denote age, breeding, etc. These do not have to be registered but the position of the distinctive brand must be nominated on the Application to Register.

The Brands Ordinance also makes provision for the transfer or cancellation of brands, for inspectors to guard against the illegal branding of stock, and provides penalties for illegal branding.

The Ordinance makes provision for the registration of earmarks as well as brands. An earmark consists of one or more cuts made in the ear or ears of cattle. The earmark must be made with special pliers of an approved pattern and must always be placed in the position specified in the Registration Certificate. Once a beast has been earmarked (one or both ears) it cannot have any more such marks. It is illegal to cut a second earmark on a beast, even though one ear was previously unmarked.

While it is not a legal requirement that all cattle and horses should be branded, it is obviously to the owner's advantage to have his stock branded. In cases of disputed ownership, an ownership brand is the first evidence to be considered by a court.

Livestock owners wishing to register a stock brand may obtain application forms (and advice on filling them in) from any Livestock Officer or Rural Development Officer.





Design of Brand or Earmark	Type of Brand or Earmark	Position of Application of Brand or Earmark	Name of Owner and Location of Run
 Numerals 1 to 8 *  Pattern "Z"	Horse and Cattle Brand Distinctive Brand Cattle Earmark	Horse - Near side shoulder Cattle - Near side rump Cattle - Near side thigh Tip of near side ear (position 5)	Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, Moitaka, Central District As above As above
  Pattern "F"	Horse and Cattle Brand Horse and Cattle Brand Cattle Earmark	Near side rump Cattle - Near rump Horses - Near shoulder Lower nearside ear (position 6)	Andrew Wabiria Hare Village, Koroba, via Tari, Southern Highlands District Dumpu Pastoral Co. Dumpu, Madang, Madang District As above

Figure 1.—Some entries in the Brands Directory

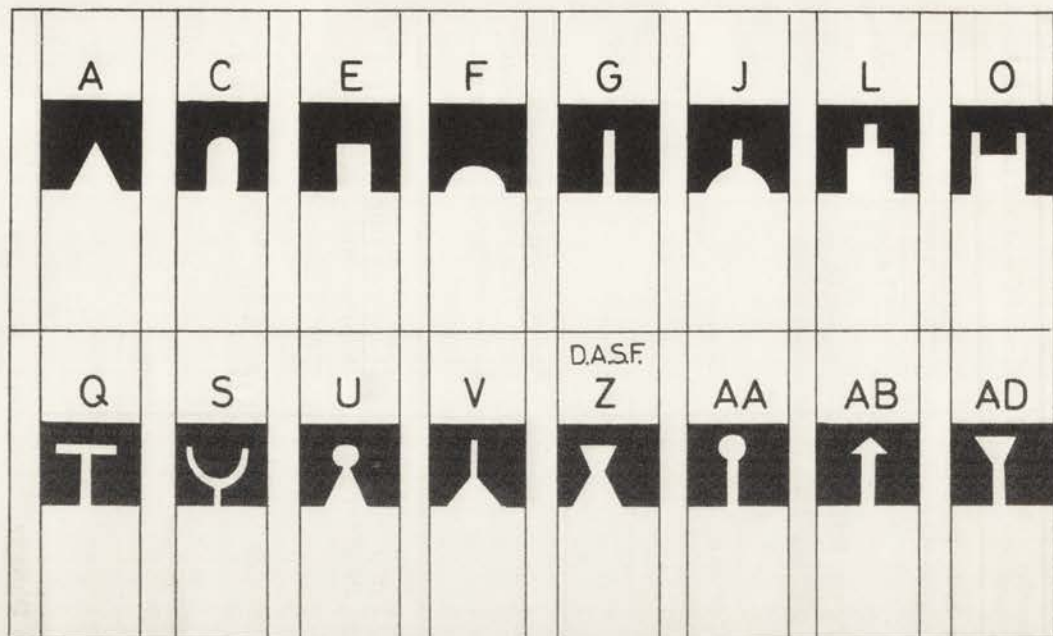


Figure 2.—Shape patterns of some cattle earmarks. Each shape has a letter code for easy reference