

BRANDING PROCEDURES CHECKLIST

Prior to Cattlework

- Check gas bottle for leaks & gas levels. Ensure all fittings on gas equipment are tight & in good working order
- Ensure dehorning, ear marking pliers and other cutting instruments are sharp and clean
- Check appropriate stock of NLIS tags are on hand
- Ensure enough vaccine is on hand for expected calf numbers
- Check AvGas levels on hand are sufficient if using helicopters
- Check unleaded petrol on hand is sufficient for motorbikes
- Ensure fences are in good order and stock proof
- Check cattle yard condition and action any necessary repairs. Check there are no protruding bolts, wire or other objects that may injure stock or people
- Service motorbikes where applicable
- Calibrate equipment for operational efficiency

Mustering

- Muster and yard cows calmly and allow them to settle down before the start of drafting

Cattle Handling

- At all times the objective is to reduce the flight zone without frightening the cattle
- Refer to the low stress stock handling guide sheet for cattle handling techniques
- Identify the lead animal

Branding Process

- Bleeding from both castration and dehorning is greatly reduced by calm handling before & after the procedure
- Draft calves off cows as soon as possible and begin branding to minimise the time cattle spend in the yards
- Do not overcrowd stock in pens and handle cattle quietly and calmly
- All calves must be vaccinated with 7in1, dehorned (where relevant), ear marked, NLIS tagged, fire branded with a symbol and year identifier brand
 - Press the branding iron firmly against the hide for 2-3 seconds, rocking the handle slightly if necessary to distribute the pressure uniformly
 - Change needles at regular intervals as appropriate
 - Male calves not kept for breeding must be castrated
 - Clean branding iron regularly to stop burnt hair and skin debris accumulating and reducing heat conductivity
 - Count calves prior to branding
 - Drink plenty of water while working in yards, especially in hot conditions
 - Allow calves to return to cows during branding to minimise stress
 - Release cattle from yards as soon as possible

Castrating Process

- Ensure calves are effectively restrained in calf cradle
- When castrating with a blade, make the cut away from the hand holding the testicle, not towards it

General Hygiene

- Always wash hands before handling food to minimise the risk of ingesting infectious agents.