

Marking your livestock – including your pigs

In the September 2006 edition of *Ubisi Mail*, we published an article on legal identification marks for livestock. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs recently changed the law on animal identification. From now on all owners of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs must mark their animals in the prescribed manner.

Size of identification marks

Large stock

- Tattoo mark, not more than 20 mm at the widest and the highest part
- Brand mark, between 40-100 mm at the widest and highest part.

Small stock: Tattoo mark, no more than 20 mm at the widest and highest part.

Shape, pattern and composition

Large stock

- Tattoo marks consisting of more than one character, must be tattooed from left to right, next to and 6 mm from each other
- Branding marks must consist of 1-3 characters and must be branded:
 - Next to and 20 mm from each other
 - Below and 20 mm from each other
 - Triangular marks where first character is at the top and the other two 20 mm below the top one, next to and 20 mm from each other
 - Triangular marks where first character forms the base and the other two characters are placed 20 mm above the bottom one, next to and 20 mm from each other.

Small stock: Identification mark with 1-3 characters tattooed from left to right, next to and 6 mm from each other.

Age of livestock at time of marking

Cattle

- Must be marked by age six months
- Can be tattooed from age one month or can be branded at age six months
- Must be branded by the two-tooth stage (first pair of permanent incisors).

Small stock: Must be tattooed at age one month.

Pigs: Must be tattooed at age one month.

Parts on which animals must be identified

Cattle

- Tattoo mark in the left or right ear and
- Brand mark on any clearly visible part, except the neck.

Small stock: Tattoo in the left or right ear.

Pigs: Tattoo in the left or right ear.

If you want to know more about identification of animals, you can ask at your nearest extension office, veterinarian or stock theft unit of the South African Police Services. You can also phone the Registrar of Livestock Identification in Pretoria at 012 319 6000, or write to The Registrar of Livestock Identification, Private Bag X138, Pretoria 0001. **UM**