

Permanent Identification

Accurate and permanent herd identification (ID) plays a critical role in successful herd management. The unique animal ID is used to properly record pedigrees, ensure animal health and productivity, and reach heard goals.

Animals can be identified by ear tags, tattooing, hot-iron and freeze branding, biometrics, and genomics. When determining the right method of ID for your herd, consider the costs, rules, requirements and convenience.

Plan Ahead

Preparing facilities and equipment before identifying animals will reduce stress to the animal, handler and equipment. Permanent ID requires prep-work and sound decision making.

Categorize and Organize Your Herd

A well-organized ID system helps you easily identify individuals and simplifies the record keeping process. Select a system that best fits your needs. Keep in mind the ID number is used for the individual's entire life span.

Numerical Code System

Select at least one digit, which reflects the animal's birth year. An additional four digits may be used to complete the animal's assigned herd ID.

- **Example:** 1001 represents the first calf born in 2010. 1002 represents the second calf born in 2010, etc.

International Letter Code System

Use a letter of the alphabet to identify the calf's birth year. The letter X would be included in the herd ID to designate a calf born in 2010.

- **Example:** X01 represents the first calf born in 2010. X02 represents the second calf born in 2010, etc.

X = 2010	C = 2015	H = 2020	N = 2025
Y = 2011	D = 2016	J = 2021	P = 2026
Z = 2012	E = 2017	K = 2022	R = 2027
A = 2013	F = 2018	L = 2023	S = 2028
B = 2014	G = 2019	M = 2024	T = 2029

Identify Your Calves at Birth

Using an ear tag to identify a newborn calf is effective form of ID until a more permanent method, such as tattooing or freeze-branding, can be administered.

Know The Rules

The American Angus Association requires the use of permanent identification marks for each animal registered with the Association.

All permanent ID marks must comply with the rules found in the *Breeders Reference Guide*, provided by the Association. For specific questions about the visibility of permanent IDs, contact the Association.

American Angus Association®

BREEDER'S REFERENCE GUIDE

Guidance for Angus Breeders

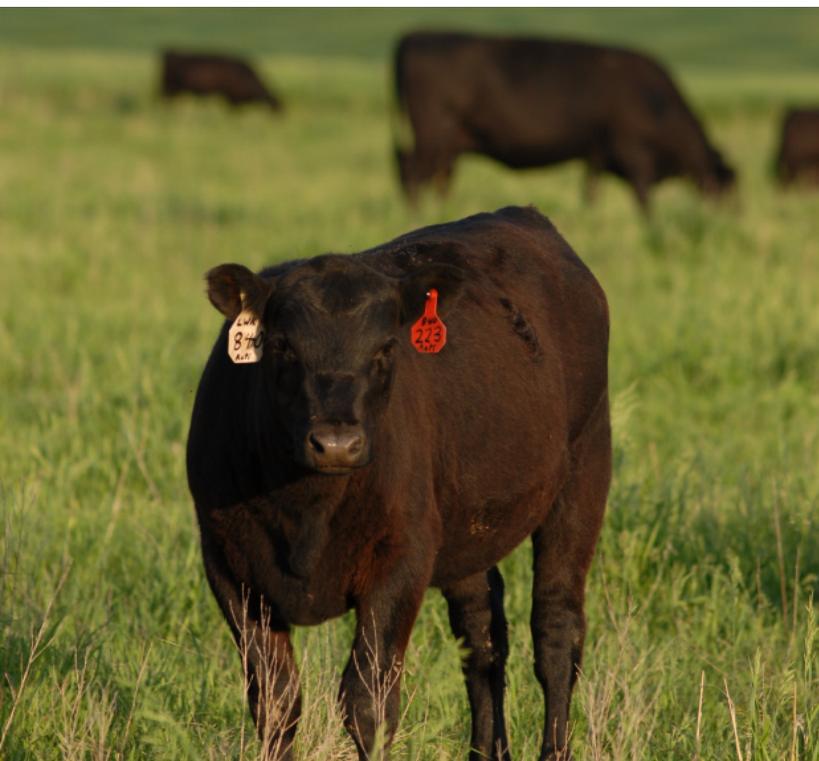
Transferring Ownership

To eliminate complications be sure to follow the Association's ID and transfer rules. Consult the Breeders Reference Guide or contact the member services department for more information.

Exhibiting Animals

Make sure the ID marks are readable and match the animal's registration certificate. Animals may be inspected for proper ID where the American Angus Association contributes premium money.

Utilize your resources if you have questions or concerns about permanent ID procedures. Visit the Association's online Angus Education Center; attend a short-course with live demonstrations, contact you local Cooperative Extension office, or speak with beef industry peers who are familiar with permanent ID techniques.



Tattooing

A tattoo is an effective way to permanently identify individuals in your herd. Before beginning, make sure the work area is clutter-free and clean.

- Cross-reference the animal's ear tag number with your records and its assigned ID number.
- Prepare the tattoo applicator and double-check the marks by stamping a piece of cardboard or scrap paper.
- Clean dirt and wax from the animal's ear using a rag with rubbing alcohol. Cleaning the ear helps to ensure legible markings and provides a clean area when piercing the animal's ear.
- Use a toothbrush to apply the ink to the cleaned ear between the cartilage ribs in the upper third portion of the ear.
- Clamp the tattoo applicator in place over the inked area. Apply steady pressure as the tattoo digits evenly puncture the skin and the dies meet the opposite face of the tattoo applicator.
- Reapply tattoo ink on the toothbrush and rub ink into the pierced areas. This will help ensure the tattoo marks are visible when the excess ink wears off.
- Sanitize the equipment with rubbing alcohol before tattooing the next animal.

Freeze Branding

A freeze brand creates a readable marking resulting in the growth of white hair where the irons were applied. The brand destroys the dark hair pigment. Freeze branding is more effective in spring and fall seasons when hair follicles are most active.

Depending on the geographic area, some freeze branding tactics are more effective than others. Consult producers in your area who use similar methods to learn ways to create readable brands.

When preparing the work area, take extra caution. Freeze branding requires the use of hazardous chemicals.

- Combine dry ice and desired solvent in an insulated container. A visible fog will form and the coolant will boil. Submerge the irons in to the coolant and allow them to chill for approximately 20 minutes.
- Cross-reference the animal's ear tag number with your records and its assigned ID number.
- Clean the animal's hair coat to remove dirt and debris.

Using clippers, shave against the hair to create a clean-shaven block large enough for the entire ID.

- Brush the shaved area to remove dirt and debris.
- Spray the branding site with rubbing alcohol. Use a brush to soak the area and clean the branding site.
- Touching the brands to the prepared branding site, apply steady pressure for 45 seconds. Contact with the brands destroys the pigment-producing cell in the hair follicles.
- A finished brand leaves visible markings where the freezing occurred. When the area heals, white or colorless hair will begin to grow.

