

General Information Sheet

GRAYSON FREEZE BRANDING

Noble Ok

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Freeze Branding Theory: A technique in which a super cold branding iron, properly applied to the animals hide, kills the color pigment producing cells. The desired result from freeze branding is that white or colorless hair instead of colored hair grows at the brand site. Freeze branding is effective on both cattle and horses. One advantage of freeze branding is that it produces a readable brand at any time of the year. Please remember that while a freeze brand can enhance the appearance of a horse, *its primary purpose is to serve as legible and permanent identification.*

The skin of the animal contains millions of hairs, which make up the animals coat. Each hair shaft has both a color (pigment) producing follicle (CF) and its growth follicle (GF), below the skin. Under normal circumstances hair grows as a clear shaft (like a clear straw) from the GF. On colored animals, pigment (black, brown, red, yellow etc.) is added from the CF below the skin to the clear hair shaft, which gives the hair its color. When the intensely cold iron used in freeze branding is placed on the skin for the correct time and at the correct pressure, the cold temperatures destroys the CF's at the brand site so they no longer can produce pigment; however, the hair still continues to grow because of the GF's. The result is that hair at the brand site contains no pigment and appears white. This is the desired result - a uniform, white brand. If the iron is held on a longer period of time, the cold destroys the GF's as well, so that no hair grows at all. On light colored animals, the bald brand is desirable because the skin with no hair shows up better than a white brand.

Branding Site Selection: When deciding on a branding site, be sure the brand is small enough to allow placement on a 'flat' area of the animal. If the brand must be placed so that the head is partially on a thinner muscle mass with the remainder of the iron head on a heavier, deeper muscle mass, unequal head pressure can produce a non-uniform brand. This situation can also arise when branding on the butt, a portion of the branding iron head is partially on the rear of the pelvic bone and the remainder is on the muscle below. Consider carefully the size and location of your brand.

When designing your brand, keep in mind that the less detail it has the better the brand will come out. (Unlike hot irons, freeze branding irons will not burn in the 'corners' but will leave a clear, crisp design.) I would also like to recommend that brands not be extremely large, as a lot of animals do not have a large enough 'flat' area to brand. Plus, from a brander's view point, the larger the iron, the harder it is to brand with it, which could result in a less than desirable brand when finished. If you are not sure of the size you want, you can cut a square out of paper, etc. the size of the brand you are wanting and tape it to the animal itself. Now step back and look at the animal to see if this is what you want. Remember, brands are permanent!

Post Branding Results: Immediately after freeze branding you will see a frozen indentation in the animals skin. Within five minutes the indentation will disappear and swelling will begin. The brand will be readable but the swelling will cause the mark to have two or three times the thickness that the actual finished brand will have. The brand will be swollen for 48 to 72 hours. *After the swelling dissipates the brand may not be easily seen.* After approximately 20 to 30 days the brand will begin to get flaky and scaly. By the third or fourth week following the procedure the scab will begin to turn loose. Once the scab is gone, white, peach fuzz type hair should begin to appear. Full hair growth will depend upon the time of year the brand is applied but a brand should be fully grown back after 90 days as a general rule.

Other Notes: Please contact you local or state law enforcement or brand registry officials for information on Brand Laws and requirements for registering your brand in the state in which you reside. In Oklahoma, brands are registered through the Oklahoma Cattleman's Association. Although the goal is to achieve a white mark on each horse we brand (except for light colored horses where a bald brand is obtained), the hide of each horse varies greatly and therefore, each brand may vary from horse to horse. The purpose of a brand is to have an identifying mark, which serves as proof of ownership in the event of theft or loss. We guarantee our brands to be legible identification. In the event one of our brands is not legible, contact us and we can arrange to touch it up after 90 days at no charge.