Department of
**Primary Industries and
Regional Development**

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Livestock Biosecurity Factsheet
Current at Sep 2019
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Identification of horses and donkeys in Western Australia

Summary

Identification of livestock is required under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013 [BAM (IMSA) Regulations].

It allows stock to be traced for disease, helps to recover stolen animals and deters stock theft. The outbreak of equine influenza in 2007 demonstrated the importance of being able to identify owners and the location of their stock.

Owners must register

All horse and donkey owners in WA must be registered as owners of livestock with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) Brands Office.

On registration, owners will be issued with their registered identifiers such as stock brand and earmark as required, and a property identification code (PIC) which indicates the properties on which their horses and donkeys or other stock are normally kept.

A PIC card is issued that lists their registered identifiers and properties that the owner has nominated to run stock on.

For more information, see:

- **Livestock ownership, identification and movement in Western Australia**
- **Registering as an owner of stock**
- **Application for registration as an owner of stock**

Property Identification Code (PIC)

The PIC is used to identify the property on which the animals are normally kept, whether you own the land or not. This may be your property, an agistment centre or a friend's property. In these cases, the owner of that property must sign the registration form to confirm their consent for the animal(s) to be kept on their property.

Having your own PIC on a shared property will allow you to be notified should anything occur on that property that could affect your horse or donkey.

Short-term movements to other properties — such as to a veterinarian, an event, for breaking in or to a breeding centre — do not constitute where the animal is normally kept and so do not have to be listed on your registration form (these locations will need their own non-farming PIC to indicate that stock are present but do not belong to them).

Identification requirements

Horses and donkeys must be identified with the registered stock brand as listed on your PIC card or with an approved identifier.

Your registered brand consists of two letters and a number. One of the letters may be 'lazy', that is, lying on its side to the left.

Registered identification for horses and donkeys is a freeze or a fire brand.

- A brand must measure at least 100mm long and 30mm high
- Animals should only be branded by an experienced operator

- In the South West land division horses and donkeys must be identified before six months of age or before they are moved from the property, whichever occurs first.
- Outside the South West land division horses and donkeys must be identified before 18 months of age or before they are moved from the property, whichever occurs first.

If you purchase a horse or donkey that is already branded, you do not have to re-brand it unless you wish to. You will need to have documents to show that you own the animal.

If you wish to brand newly acquired stock, your registered brand must be applied immediately below the existing brand on the left shoulder. When an age mark is present, the registered brand must be applied immediately below it. If there is insufficient room, the brand must be applied to the right shoulder.

Approved identification

Approved identification is an alternative identification system approved by the Registrar of Stock and Apiaries. This can include breed society identification systems and may include a microchip, an alternative brand or a tattoo. Owners are still required to be registered with the DPIRD.

Once approved by the Registrar, members of breed societies can use their society's approved identifier instead of their registered brand if they wish. They are required to keep the ownership records current for each animal.

For the approval process and groups with existing approved identification, see Approved identifiers for livestock.

Horses and donkeys other than registered breeds

Animals that are not registered with any breed society or equine association have the option to be identified with a microchip as an approved identifier instead of a registered stock brand. In Western Australia, the animals can only be microchipped by a veterinarian.

Register the details of the animal, microchip and owner with one of the five approved national pet/animal microchip databases.

These details should be updated as ownership changes.

Exemptions

Unweaned horses and donkeys that are moved between properties with the same PIC while accompanied by their correctly identified mother do not require identification.

Moving horses and donkeys

A waybill is not required when moving horses or donkeys, unless they are being moved to an abattoir for slaughter for human consumption. Waybills can be used to keep a record of where their animals have been and when.

For more information, see:

- Moving livestock in Western Australia
- Importing equines into Western Australia

Shows and other equestrian meetings

There are currently no legal requirements for organisers of shows and other meetings specifically for horses and donkeys. The event location should have a PIC. It is expected that event managers will keep comprehensive details of all attendees and their animals, and exercise good biosecurity practices to prevent disease spread and assist with traceability.

Offences under the BAM (IMSA) Regulations

The following are offences:
- possessing a horse or donkey that is not legally identified
- using another person's registered brand
- applying your brand to a horse or donkey on a different property to those registered to your PIC
- trading/moving animals that are not correctly identified.

The penalty for a breach of the legislation may be up to $20 000.

More information

Contact - Registrar of Stock and Apiaries
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