

2025 POLICY GUIDES

Brand Inspection

Issue

This guide is intended to help County Farm Bureau leaders and members evaluate and modernize current policy that impacts livestock owners under the Nebraska Livestock Brand Act.

Background

The Nebraska Livestock Brand Act was passed in 1941 with the purpose of ensuring identification and preventing theft of livestock in Nebraska. This same legislation created the Nebraska Brand Committee for the sole purpose of carrying out the act, recording brands, conducting inspections, and investigating theft.

The brand inspection area encompasses nearly 70% of the state with borders along the northern, western, and southern state lines and an eastern edge running northward near Grand Island.

As part of its responsibilities, the committee registers and monitors brands, inspects cattle sold and transported, and investigates reports of potential theft or fraudulent sales. Inspections are required at livestock markets, private sales, and slaughterhouses within the brand inspection area. All producers within the brand inspection area are subject to inspection. Registered feedlots are allowed to conduct inspections during reasonable times of the day, whereas other producers can only hold inspections during daylight hours.

Farm Bureau Policy

BRAND INSPECTION (2023). We support the work of the Brand Committee and believe the committee should have the fee authority necessary to adequately fund its programs. Nebraska's brand inspection law should be broadened to encompass the entire state.

We recognize the need for a registered feedlot inspection program and believe an equitable fee structure should be developed to continue the program. We do not support an exemption from fees for feedlots participating in the program.

All female dairy animals from all farms that hold an active permit to sell milk should be exempt from Nebraska brand laws unless they are being sold for meat production. All calves under the age of 30 days and born from female dairy animals on farms that hold an active permit to sell milk in the state of Nebraska should be exempt from state brand laws.

We support the state developing a policy for equitable and efficient transference of cattle across the brand inspection area line, providing no change of ownership exists.

Questions

What is an equitable fee schedule, and how is this fee schedule fair and appropriate for all producers in Nebraska?

The brand inspection area was created in 1941 and specifically incorporated Western Nebraska as an area that most benefited from the program. Does a statewide brand inspection area benefit feedlots and cow-calf producers equitably and in a way that benefits all universally across the state? Should Nebraska Farm Bureau continue to advocate for extending the brand inspection area statewide?

A coded agency or departmental program is one that receives budgetary funds from and has stringent reporting requirements through the state's Department of Administrative Services. Currently, the Brand Committee is a self-funded, independent entity that is not beholden to the state in any way. Should the Brand Committee be a coded agency under the administration?

Currently, Nebraska Farm Bureau policy supports exemption of inspection for female dairy animals as part of a permitted operation unless they are sold for meat production. Should the exemption from inspection extend to heifer development operations that may not be permitted for milk production?