

# THE STANDARDS AND TECHNIQUE OF TATTOOING

## Changes to Tattooing

Tattooing is optional. All animals must be double ear tagged (tagged with an EID tag and a visual tag) with the year of birth and the private animal number. This must be present on the front face (female tag) in both ears.

**In the case of breeders wishing to tattoo:** in order for the unique and correct identification of cattle. The operation must be carried out within 150 days of birth. The calf must have the unique NZHA herd number in the left ear and the year of birth letter and number in herd in the right ear.

The Council have established a tattooing standard which is effective with all calves born on or after 1 January 1987.

The herd number is the stud trademark and is registered with the Society. Each calf must carry a letter denoting the year of birth, and its number of birth.

*i.e.*

Year Letter

K	= 1990 born	L	= 1991 born
M	= 1992 born	N	= 1993 born
P	= 1994 born	Q	= 1995 born
R	= 1996 born	S	= 1997 born
T	= 1998 born	U	= 1999 born
00	= 2000 born	01	= 2001 born
02	= 2002 born	03	= 2003 born
04	= 2004 born	05	= 2005 born
06	= 2006 born	07	= 2007 born
08	= 2008 born	09	= 2009 born
10	= 2010 born	11	= 2011 born
12	= 2012 born	13	= 2013 born
14	= 2014 born	15	= 2015 born
16	= 2016 born	17	= 2017 born

The letters "I" and "O" are not used.

Calves are to be numbered in order of date of birth and no two calves may be given the same number.

**Example:**      Right Ear      Left Ear  
                    0113            1535

This calf is from herd 1535, is born in 2000 (00) and is number 113 born in that year.

You may purchase a tattoo outfit through your local veterinary supplier or upon application to the Association. Tattoo paste can also be obtained from the Association.

### How to Tattoo:-

A tattoo, to be of value, must be distinct and lasting and in order to obtain a clear, well defined mark, care must be exercised when puncturing the ear. Only the best quality inks or dyes should be used and the ink supplied by the Society is recommended.

### Technique

Equipment required for the job:

1. Tattooing pliers, and three sets of numbers 0 to 9
2. Insignia of herd number
3. Tube of paste - the preferred paste is Ketchum brand from Canada, available at the NZHA office.
4. Methylated spirits and piece of cloth
5. A piece of white cardboard

### Steps:

- a. Clean thoroughly with cloth and meths the part of each ear to be tattooed. This removes the natural grease from the ear's surface.
- b. Lightly smear a thick layer of paste on the flat part of the ear that is free of hair and between the cartilaginous ridges.
- c. Insert herd number insignia into the pliers.
- d. Hold the piece of white cardboard in approximately the same position and facing the same way as the left ear of the calf, and holding the tattooing pliers on the same angle as for tattooing the left ear, tattoo the card to check that the insignia have been entered correctly.
- e. Apply paste to the points of the tattoo.
- f. Now tattoo the ear. Insert the pliers with the points which form the insignia facing the inside of the ear.
- g. The action required for puncturing is a quick, hard, sharp squeeze, then allow the pliers to open as quickly as possible. Go with the opening action to avoid any tendency to tear the ear.
- h. The immediately rub in hard the paste, using the thumb while supporting the back of the ear with the fingers.
- i. After the herd designation has been put into the left ear of each calf, the calf's stud number and year letter is put in the right ear in the same way. It is wise to check the number each time by tattooing the card before placing the tattoo permanently in the calf's ear.

**NOTE:** If an error is made do not over-tattoo. Apply the correct tattoo in a different position in the ear and **advise the Society.** Remember all tattoo marks put in the ear must be reported to the Association on the Application for Registration form. If the Registration Certificate returned to you from the Association's office does not show the number which the animal actually bears, report the fact to the office at once by returning the Certificate for correction.

The tattoo area should not be disturbed until it is completely healed. The period varies from as much as 5 to 21 days. Three or four days after tattooing small blisters may appear on the skin. These should be left alone, as they will disappear, leaving a legible tattoo.

If there happens to be any failures they can usually be traced to one or more of the following causes:

1. Incomplete removal of grease from the ear.
2. Puncturing the large veins or ribs of the ear, causing unnecessary bleeding.
3. Applying the tattoo to an area of the ear where there is too much hair.
4. Not thoroughly rubbing in paste after ear has been punctured.
5. Use of poor quality ink.
6. Tearing the skin due to slow release of the instrument after puncturing the ear.
7. Failure to puncture the ear correctly owing to the chisel or needle points of the insignia having become worn or damaged. Chisel points give a better result than needle points.
8. Carelessness in inserting the numbers or letters in the instrument. The brand is read from the front (not from above or behind the ear), which is the position of the operator when puncturing the ear.

Check the tattoos of calves just before weaning so that you can still identify the calf by its mother in case of error or a poor tattoo and whenever you buy stud Herefords check the tattoos carefully against the tattoos listed on the Association's certificate. Be especially careful to check the tattoos of all cattle going to auction sales before they leave your property.

**NOTE:** Maximum of four digits for the private number and two digits for the year code.

Cannot have calves with the same number, i.e. each calf number must be unique within the one calendar year.

May number from 1 each year or continue the sequence, year after year to 9999.

The above are the minimum requirements. Additional information may be tattooed at the breeders discretion.

Dispensation may be granted by Council to tattoo all numbers in the one ear providing a set of pliers which tattoos all the information in one action is used. Tattoo paste is available from the Association.