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Regional Development

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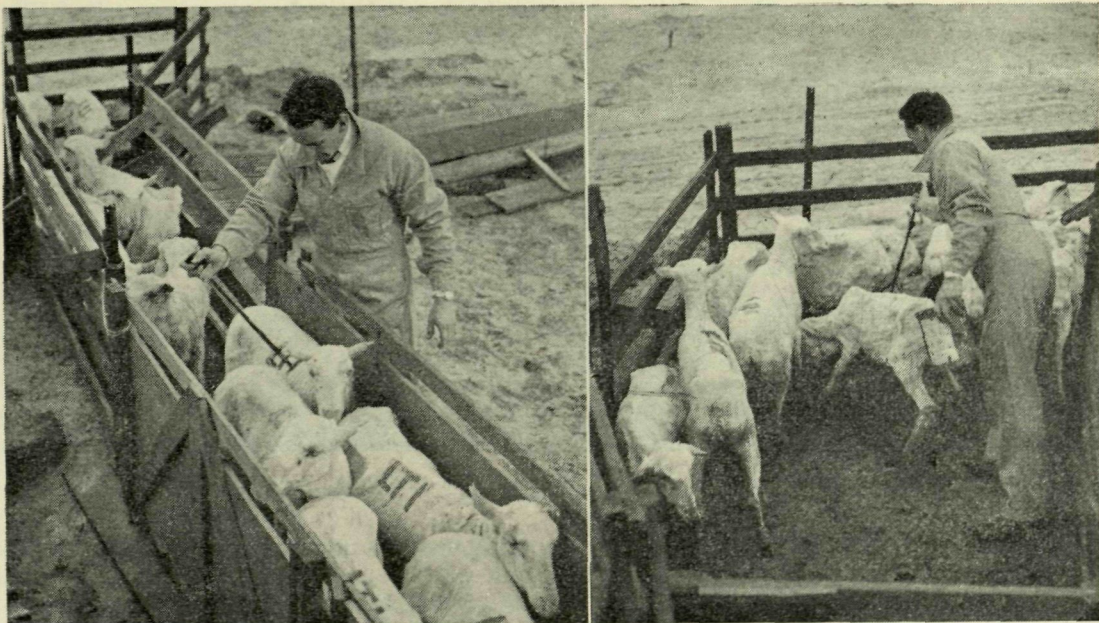


Fig. 1.—Sheep in a race can be branded cleanly (left). Chasing them round a yard (right) results in smudged misplaced brands.

## WOOLBRANDING OF SHEEP

### How to Obtain the Best Results

By Officers of the Sheep and Wool Section.

**L**EGISLATION to enforce the compulsory woolbranding of sheep in Western Australia was introduced at the request of farmers' organisations in 1952. It was felt that the woolbrands would serve as a means of readily establishing ownership of lost or strayed sheep and would act as a deterrent to sheep-stealers.

With the exception of registered stud animals and lambs under six months old, all sheep in the following areas must bear registered woolbrands—

- (a) The road districts of Dundas, Esperance, Westonia and Yilgarn.
- (b) The South-West Land Division of the State.
- (c) Such parts of the Lake Grace, Merredin, Naremben and Phillips River road districts that are outside the South-West Division.

Woolbranding of sheep outside the areas listed above is not compulsory except when the animals are moved off the run; for instance, if they are travelled, sold or offered for sale.

Observations made at a number of sale-yards indicate that many woolbrands are smudged and illegible so that much of the protection they should confer is being lost.

Sheep must be branded to conform with the regulations, and it costs just as much in time, labour and material to apply a smudgy, illegible brand as it does to do the job properly.

In this article we hope to indicate how woolbranding can be carried out so as to give the best results—clear, legible brands that are a definite advantage to the flock-owner.

### BRANDING FLUIDS

The first step is to use the correct branding fluids. Under the regulations gazetted on May 25, 1955, it is an offence to use



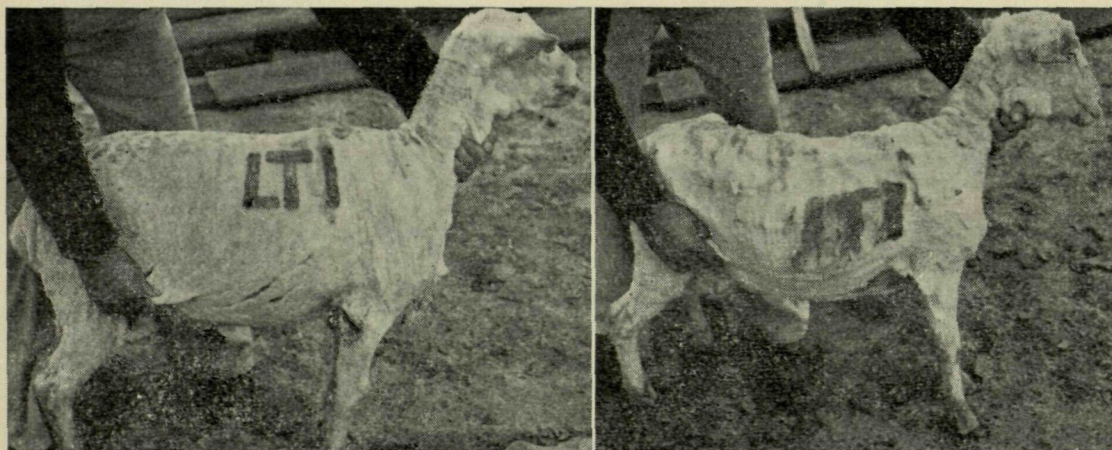


Fig. 2.—A well-branded sheep (left). The brand on the right is out of position and has smudged badly.

other than **SIROMARK** scourable branding fluids which are prepared according to C.S.I.R.O. formulas and approved by that body. The word **SIROMARK** on the container is an indication that the branding fluid measures up to these requirements.

In past years, serious losses to the wool industry have resulted from the presence, in Australian clips, of wool branded with substances which could not be removed by the normal wool-scouring processes.

C.S.I.R.O. research workers recently evolved a branding fluid which, while long-lasting and weather-resistant, can be completely removed in the scouring process. This is only marketed under the name **SIROMARK**.

It is available in blue, red and green colours and is the only woolbranding fluid which may now be used. The colour which a flockowner may use is decided by the Registrar of Brands when the brand is registered.

**No black woolbrands are permitted under the Brands Act regulations.**

#### TYPE OF BRAND

Registered brands consist of two letters and a numeral placed in line and not joined together. The arrangement of the letters and numerals, the position of the brand and its colour are all determined by the Registrar of Brands in allotting the brand to the flockowner.

The branding tool should preferably be made from  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. round iron with the letters

well spaced—at least  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. apart—to prevent blotching. Letters not less than 3 in. high have been shown to give clear distinct brands.

Brands that are bevelled or made from thin wire are less satisfactory than those made from  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. round iron.

Automatic stencil brands are more economical in the use of fluid, and tests have shown that about 2,000 sheep can be branded with one gallon of fluid as against about 600 sheep when the orthodox branding iron is used.

#### APPLYING THE BRAND

Sheep can be branded with much greater ease and efficiency if they are held firmly in a narrow race.

The ideal is a race 2 ft. 6 in. wide situated near the counting-out pens but a drafting-race, if long enough, is fairly satisfactory and is certainly preferable to chasing sheep round a yard.

Apart from branding, a narrow race is always useful on a farm for mouthing, culling and general inspection work.

To make the best use of the branding fluid, the maker's directions should be closely followed.

For branding Merinos, it is usually satisfactory to keep a piece of felt or sheepskin pelt in the branding bucket. If kept well covered with branding fluid this enables the iron to be thoroughly coated with fluid before it is applied.



With the more open-woolled breeds, the iron can be dipped directly into the fluid.

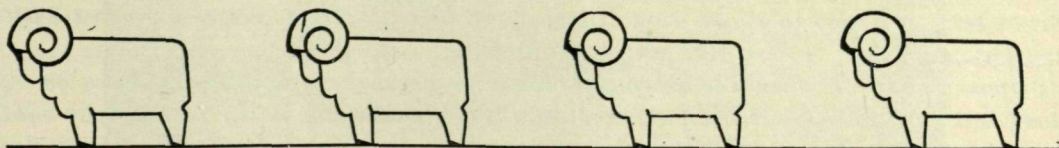
Watch the brands carefully and check any faults as they occur. Pack the sheep well into the race so that they cannot move far; make sure that the branding tool carries plenty of fluid; apply it with a quick, firm pressure and remove cleanly without smudging.

For convenience in branding, start at the top end of the race and work down to the other end. As soon as the sheep in the race are all branded, release them immediately so that they do not smudge one another's brands.

After each day's branding is completed, clean the branding tools thoroughly, pour any surplus fluid back into the container and replace the lid firmly.

## SUMMARY

- 1.—Woolbranding is compulsory, and aids in identifying sheep.
- 2.—It is a simple operation but slipshod methods result in smudged brands which are useless.
- 3.—**SIROMARK** is the only branding fluid that may be used. Black woolbrands are illegal.
- 4.—Use a branding tool made from  $\frac{3}{4}$ in. round iron with letters at least 3in. high or alternatively use an automatic stencil.
- 5.—Sheep should be branded in a race, preferably 2ft. 6in. wide.
- 6.—Apply the brand with a clean, firm pressure.
- 7.—Open-woolled breeds need more fluid than close-woolled animals.
- 8.—Clean up tools and pour off surplus fluid at the conclusion of each day's branding.

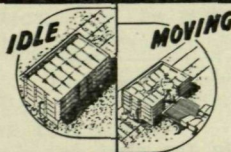


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			lb. per Acre Extra Seed	lb. per Acre of Nitrogen Fixed	lb. Weight	Value in Shillings
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Red Clover . . .	4 lb.	1/2d.	1/5th lb.	2/3rd lb. "	114 lb.	190/-
Lucerne . . . . .	15 lb.	4/4d.	1/2 lb.	2½ lb. "	194 lb	323/-
Field Peas . . . .	4 lb	1/2d.	1/4 lb	2/3rd lb. "	50 lb	83/-
Vetch . . . . .	60 lb.	8/9d.	8 lb	5 lb. "	80 lb.	133/-
Sub. Clover . . .	60 lb.	8/9d.	11 lb.	5 lb. "	50 lb.	83/-
Lupins . . . . .	60 lb.	8/9d.	10 lb	5 lb "	151 lb.	251/-

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