

VS Guidance 13414.2

Branding Requirements for Imported Mexican Bovines (Cattle/Bison)

1. Purpose and Background

This document provides guidance on the branding of Mexican bovines (bison and cattle, including steers, spayed heifers, and breeding animals) imported to the United States. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) has prepared this guidance for APHIS veterinary inspection personnel at the Mexican border, Mexican exporters, and U.S. importers of cattle and bison from Mexico.

Appropriate identification of animals presented for import into the United States is crucial to USDA's animal disease traceability. The ability to identify animals and trace diseased animals back to the country of origin has greatly aided USDA's eradication of tuberculosis, brucellosis, and other diseases of concern. This document clarifies the application of branding requirements for bovines imported into the United States.

This guidance document represents the Agency's position on this topic and is intended solely as guidance. It does not have the force and effect of law, does not create or confer any rights for or on any person, and does not bind the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the public. Language suggesting that this guidance is mandatory (e.g., "shall," "must," "required", or "requirement") should not be construed as binding unless the terms quote from a statutory or regulatory requirement. The information this document contains may be made available to the public. While this document provides guidance for users outside VS, VS employees may not deviate from the directions provided herein without appropriate justification and supervisory concurrence.

2. Document Status

- A. Review date: 02/15/2025.
- B. This document replaces Veterinary Services Guidance 13414.1.

3. Reason for Reissuance

This document updates the previous guidance and reflects updated branding requirements for Mexican-origin cattle in effect since January 2019.

4. Authority and References

- A. Authorities (*Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR)):

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Veterinary Services

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[7 CFR 371.4](#)

[9 CFR 93.427](#)

5. Audience

VS employees, other State and Federal agencies, and members of the public.

6. Guidance

A. Visible Brands

VS requires a visible brand denoting the country of origin on cattle and bison imported from Mexico, and these requirements are listed below. Addendum #1 depicts acceptable brand size and placement.

1) For feeder bovines from Mexico (steers and spayed heifers):

- a. "M" brands must be between 3 inches and 5 inches tall and wide (7.5 and 12.5 cm).
- b. The brands must be placed on the right side of the animal within 4 inches (10 cm) of the midline of the tail head (this should be interpreted as the top of the brand being within 4 inches of and placed above the hook and pin bones). The brand should be within 18 inches (45.7 cm) of the anus.

2) For breeding bovines (i.e., intact animals):

- a. "M" brands must be between 3 inches and 5 inches (7.5 and 12.5 cm) tall and wide.
- b. The brands must be placed on the upper right front shoulder of the animal.

B. Required Brands

Required brands on bovines presented for import must be distinct, of the proper size, and at the required location as listed above. Brands should remain recognizable for the entire feeding/residence period in the United States until slaughter, and therefore, the following are unacceptable:

- 1) Hair brands.
- 2) Blotched brands.
- 3) "M" brands placed on locations other than those specified in this document or on top of or near existing brands.

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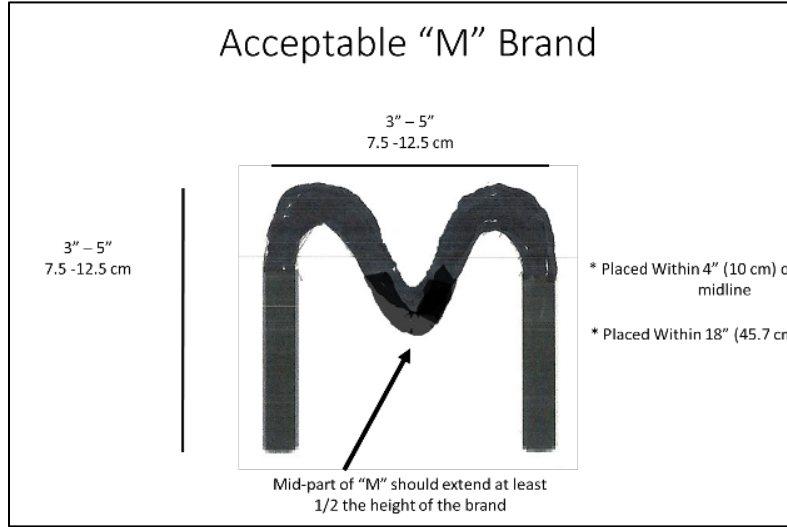
7. Inquiries

Please contact the Southern Border Veterinarian in Charge at (505) 313-8062 or (505) 377-4399, or the Live Animal Imports Staff at (301) 851- 3300, menu option 2, or VS.Live.Animal.Import.Export@usda.gov if you have any questions concerning the guidance presented in this document.

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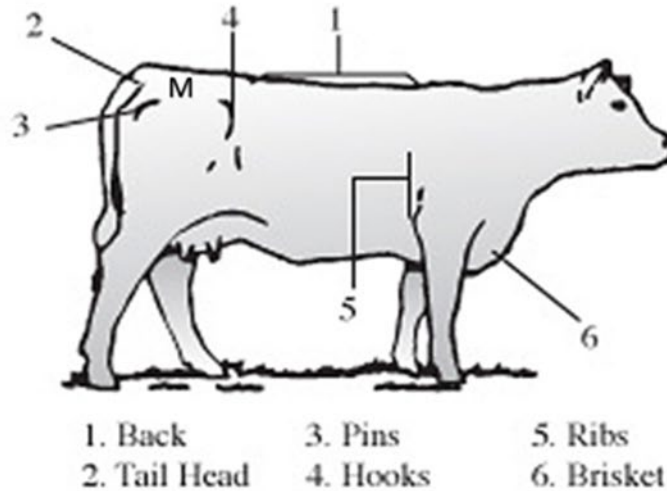
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Addendum #1



A. Placement of brand on Mexican cattle and bison (steers and spayed heifers)

Feeder Steer or Spayed Heifer



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B. Placement of brand on Mexican breeding cattle and bison

Breeding Cattle and Bison

Breeding Cattle

