

Permanent Identification for Black Herefords

The American Black Hereford Association Rules and Regulations require registered animals be ear tattooed for permanent identification.

Tattooing:

If done correctly, an ear tattoo is the most effective and best method for a permanent animal identification. For Black Herefords the tattoo should be a legible mark in one or both ears that matches the animal's herd ID and its ABHA Registration Certificate.

When to Tattoo:

Tattooing can be done at any time, but should be done before the animals are registered. When younger animals are tattooed correctly the tattoos will grow as the animal gets older and will be easily read. Some breeders prefer to tattoo their calves at weaning which is entirely acceptable as long as they are correctly applied.

Steps to Making a Legible Tattoo

1. Prepare your work area with the necessary materials such as a tattoo kit, set of tattoo characters (one of each number (0 - 9) and each letter (A - Z), green tattoo ink, rubbing alcohol, a clean cloth, a rubbing pad or old toothbrush, halter and a squeeze chute for restraining the animal. Green ink is suggested because many Black Herefords have black hair and darker pigment in their ears and green ink stands out better with the darker ears than black ink.

2. Clean the dirt and wax from the animal's ear(s) where the tattoo(s) will be placed with a cloth and rubbing alcohol.

3. Check your records and determine the tattoo that will be used to identify the calf. Properly place the correct tattoo number in the tattoo plier. It is a good idea to check the number by using the pliers and tattoo on a piece of card board or paper to insure its accuracy.

4. Apply the green ink over the area where the tattoo will be placed (parallel between the ear ribs). Clamp the pliers shut applying steady pressure so the tattoo dyes meet the opposite face of the pliers, and then release the pliers.

5. After tattooing the animal's ear(s), reapply green tattoo ink to the pierced area with a toothbrush or rubbing pad. If the ear is bleeding, continue rubbing the tattoo with green ink until the bleeding stops.

6. Always use rubbing alcohol to sanitize your tattooing equipment between each animal tattoo.