



# Corral Notes

2009

By Greg Lawley, Bureau Chief



*Corral Notes* provides you with updates from the Bureau of Livestock Identification each time you renew your brand. In this Vol. IV issue, we'll provide information on having your brand transfers notarized, pertinent enforcement activities for the past year, give you an opportunity to order the *2007 California Brand Book* and to register your premises for animal health purposes.

If you have difficulty contacting a brand inspector in your area, please call (916) 654-0889. We will gladly assist you or put you in contact with the appropriate regional brand supervisor. You can also contact me at the above phone number or at [glawley@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:glawley@cdfa.ca.gov)

The Bureau's home page is: [www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Livestock ID](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Livestock_ID)

**Notarized Brand Transfers** – Brand transfers are a separate transaction from the brand renewal process and require a separate \$60.00 fee. If you are interested in transferring your brand to another entity, you must contact the Brand Registrar's office to request a transfer form. All signatures for the transfer of a brand must be notarized to protect the interests of the registered brand owner. If a brand is recorded to John **and** Mary Smith, both individuals must sign the transfer form in the presence of a notary. If it is registered to John **or** Mary Smith, either individual may sign the transfer form in the presences of a notary.

**Change of Address** – Many times the renewal notice will be forwarded to you at your new address. In those instances, please return your renewal notice with the completed change of address form we have enclosed. This will ensure we update our records accurately.

**2007 California Brand Book** – There are approximately seventy-five 2007 Brand Books still available for \$50.00 (hard copy) including shipping and handling. If interested, contact us at the phone number listed above. The 2007 Brand Book is also still available as a CD for \$30.00.

**Substantiation for Enforcement** – When you pay your brand inspection fee, you are paying for much more than just an inspection. You're paying for the time the inspector, supervisor and/or investigator spend identifying lost, stolen or strayed cattle. Your fee also pays for time spent assisting local law enforcement with the investigation and prosecution of individuals suspected of cattle theft.

In 2008, the Bureau assisted local law enforcement in the arrest of eight individuals for cattle theft. Through our investigations, we returned 274 head of cattle to their rightful owners. Most of the cattle that could not be returned did not have a brand. Personnel from the Bureau also provide another vital service by offering document, brand, and animal identification training to local law enforcement. Last year, we provided on-going training to 153 law enforcement personnel. Listed below are some of the enforcement cases that local authorities and the Bureau worked to resolve in 2008:

**San Bernardino County** – An internal Bureau investigation led to the discovery of a producer that shipped 814 head of cattle to Texas without a brand inspection. Rangers from the Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers Association verified that the cattle were in Texas and the Bureau collected inspection fees and penalties from the producer.

**San Joaquin County** – Mike Carr was arrested for embezzling \$1.5 million from several cattle producers. Bail was set at \$100,000 and he is current waiting to be arraigned.

**Tulare County** – Jose Silva and Julio Valencia were arrested for the theft of 20 Holstein heifers valued at approximately \$9,000. Silva was sentenced to 180 in county jail and Valencia failed to appear in court.

**Theft Prevention** – As the result of a significant spike in the number of missing or stolen cattle in 2007, Bureau personnel met with approximately 25 deputies representing nine California counties, representatives from the California Cattlemen's Association, California Farm Bureau and members of the cattle industry. As a result, an enforcement task force was established to conduct random road enforcement activities. Last year, the task force conducted five separate enforcement activities inspecting 90 vehicles and issuing six Notices of Violation for improper documents.

## Statistics July 2007 – June 2008

Cattle Inspected – 3,472,000 head
Recorded Brands – 23,190
Brand Inspectors – 49
Missing and Stolen Cattle Reported – 1,202 head
Value – \$1,042,307
Stray Cattle Returned – 2,146 head
Value \$1,519,655

While the task force has been effective, in many instances it is someone familiar with the operation that steals your cattle. Many thefts are committed by employees, employee's relatives or friends or by neighbors. So, it is important to use the following tips to help prevent cattle thefts:

- Brand all cattle
- Report missing cattle immediately, even if you are not certain, contact your local brand inspector to alert him or her
- The sooner the information is reported, the more likely the cattle can be found or recovered
- Keep accurate inventories, count and record the number of cattle in and out of each pasture or corral
- Record date, time, vehicle color and make of any suspicious activities in your area and report this information to local law enforcement
- Dairy producers should house calves away from public roadways in a secure area on the dairy
- Become acquainted with local authorities and get to know your brand inspectors and local deputy sheriffs.

### **California Cattlemen's Association Reward Program**

As a service to all cattle producers, the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) continues to cooperate closely with the Bureau to offer a reward for substantial and accurate information on persons stealing, maiming or slaughtering beef or dairy cattle in California. Reports may be made anonymously by calling **(800) 671-4327**. Rewards paid by CCA provide incentive for individuals to report suspicious behavior and help reduce the incidence of rustling. You can support the reward program as well as CCA's other efforts to protect the state's cattle herd by joining as members of the statewide association. Interested individuals should contact the CCA office at (916) 444-0845 or visit the CCA web site at [www.calcattlemen.org](http://www.calcattlemen.org).

### **Meet John Suther, Sr. Special Investigator**



John has been employed with the Bureau of Livestock Identification since July 1996, most recently as a Senior Special Investigator. John graduated from the Peace Officer Standardized Training (POST) in 1999 and the Executive Program in Leadership Excellence in 2006. Also in 2006, he was awarded a Certificate of Accomplishment by the California Department of Food and Agriculture for outstanding investigative work. John has worked with the Animal Health Branch as the Bureau's liaison on the National Animal Identification Program. Prior to coming to work at the Bureau, he worked for 17 years at Shasta Livestock Auction. John runs a small herd of commercial cattle with his wife Trish and son Colton.

**Help Protect California's Livestock and Support Animal Health Traceability** – You can take the first step to improve the accuracy and strength of our national traceability system by obtaining a premises identification number for your ranch at no cost. An effective national traceability system is only possible with cooperation between the livestock industry and animal health agencies, such as CDFA, to maintain the health of animal agriculture, to protect our livelihood and the public health, and to reduce the hardships to animal agriculture caused by catastrophic animal disease events.

The threat of a disease outbreak is a serious concern in the United States. For several decades, animal health officials have battled Brucellosis and Tuberculosis with existing paper-based systems. These are diseases that the livestock industry faces on a frequent basis; however, there are many other catastrophic diseases including, but not limited to Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). It is critical that the livestock industry and animal health agencies are prepared with the best tools available to minimize the impact of a disease event.

*Why is premises identification important to you?* Obtaining a premises identification number (PIN) is an easy way for you as a rancher to contribute to a national traceability system. During a disease or disaster event, animal health officials can use premises identification information to determine the most efficient means to assign resources and provide assistance to livestock owners.

*What are the benefits to Animal Health Officials?* The biggest benefit to animal health officials is the availability of timely and accurate information. Having premises information in an easy to search system provides animal health officials with the tools to determine the scope of a disease event. Historically, animal health officials spend tremendous resources going door-to-door and searching paper-based records to determine the extent of a disease event. In a fast moving disease outbreak, response time is critical and delays only increase the time to return your ranch to normal business practices and minimize the economic impact to the industry.

*How will you use premises identification in the near future?* Premises identification numbers can already be supplied to your brand inspector during a regular inspection. Animal health certificates are also being modified to accept a PIN and your veterinarian may request this information to complete health certificate paperwork. If you order official USDA National Animal Identification System (NAIS) tags, you need to provide a premises identification number. We would encourage you to keep your premises identification number ready when your brand inspector, veterinarian, or local animal health official requests it for official paperwork. Please visit [www.californiaid.org](http://www.californiaid.org) or call 866-325-5681 to get your premises number and to learn more about NAIS.