

Branding Best Practices

The normal protocols for branding, and many of the suggested safe work practices intended to assist with the current virus situation, will be a significant challenge or simply impossible and are not going to work or be applied as suggested.....

The recommended spacing and distancing as directed by various health agencies and government sources will not be possible much of the time.

Surgical style masks were never intended for this environment or to maintain their fit tested position with the movement involved in branding or other close in cattle handling work. The masks clog up with dirt and dust and don't stay in place, they often end up out of position while manipulating calves and performing the required tasks associated with branding, spaying, and other work requiring close quarter proximity of workers. Fabric masks and wild rags or bandannas have less particle blocking capacity but offer better position retention and should be available or encouraged for use.

The government health agencies identified practices for this time are the most desirable response for work in close proximity and should be adhered to when, where and as able.

Every effort should be made to adhere to these professional recommendations. Additional considerations and practical best practices that could be of value and should be considered and when and where practicable implemented are provided.

Suggested practices for consideration by concerned employers during this time can include, but are not to be limited to:

- Temperatures of the crew should be taken prior to starting, they do this at home prior to arriving and/or upon arrival, anything unusual gets sent home
- Evaluation for possible symptoms should be conducted by workers prior to arriving for work. If there are any symptoms the worker is directed to not attend. If symptoms appear, arise, present or are noticed when at work, the worker is to depart immediately.
- Remain as isolated and as distant as realistic, viable or possible at the site,
- Maintain distances at every opportunity while at site
- Prior to the brandingthe best practice would be to self isolate/quarantine for recommended time prior to the date of the branding.
- Isolate in a manner that would enable a team, family, crew or pod of workers who have been self isolating for the time leading up to the branding. They can then come together with the greatest possible confidence that no one is infected/carrying or will transmit.
- While at site and while working, remain apart as much as possible. Minimize time inside the 6-foot bubble to only as much time as needed, do not linger, do your task then step back maintaining the recommended distance at every opportunity.
- Wear a bandanna, scarf or wild rag as much as possible or viable.
- Work the calf in sequence. While it will be a much slower process, best practice would be to have vaccinations, tagging, dehorning, castrations, shots/meds and branding all done in sequence rather than at same time. This will reduce occupation of same bubble or the limited space around the calf.
- Do not share food or beverage or containers
- Do not share gloves or any other item of personal clothing.
- Leather gloves will provide hand protection for the task but WILL NOT help with the virus.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash hands as often as possible.
- Use hand sanitizer as much as available and as much as realistic/possible
- Try to restrict use of required tools or implements to a single person. Have one person handle each item as much as realistic or possible to avoid transmission. Items such as the tagger, vaccines, needles, tags, branding irons, dehorner, castration tools etc., should be restricted to the assigned worker use and handling. Wipe the instrument, tool with wipes as much as able or possible.
- Assign one task and limit it to that person for the day as much as possible.
- Minimize the number of people at the branding, restrict the work to the fewest number of essential persons possible.
- Work in pods, teams, crews of the fewest number of persons whenever possible.
- Keep the pods, teams, crews the same to minimize transmission between persons at the site and working.
- No spectators.
- Do not hold the historical and traditional post branding gatherings.