

Brands Division
Suggestions to the Long Range Planning Committee

Findings:

1. The livestock industry supports a strong, viable brand inspection program.
2. There are policies and procedures currently in place to address most issues in the department. The Executive Officer and the Board of Livestock are responsible for implementation and enforcement.
3. The current computer program used for brand inspectors is not functioning properly.
4. The current funding formula for the division is inadequate.
5. The current administration of the brands enforcement division is dysfunctional.

Recommendations:

1. There are policies and procedures currently in place to address most issues in the department. The Executive Officer and the Board of Livestock are responsible for implementation and enforcement.
2. Board should review the organizational chart annually and address efficiencies.
3. State employed inspectors need to make it a priority to inspect more livestock.
4. The annual brands division report to the BOL should be produced every year and reviewed by the Board of Livestock. (This report has not been prepared since 2013).
5. State inspectors should reside within their assigned markets and/or districts.
6. Investigate models for collections of fees and inspections used by other brand states.
7. Implement district meetings including the Division Administrator or Assistant Administrator, all state employed brand inspectors, and local inspectors.
 - a. Listening sessions should occur twice a year.
 - b. Open the lines of communication between the District Brand inspectors and market and local inspectors.
8. Investigate the viability of the current computer system from an economic, contractual and functional perspective, including but not limited to:
 - a. Tech support
 - b. Training
 - c. Ownership of data
 - d. Consistency
 - e. Timeliness of Information
 - f. Cost
 - g. Ability to audit the local inspection program
9. Alternative computer program options need to be considered.
 - a. Local inspection program
 - b. Market inspection program
10. Eventual compatibility of departmental software programs when appropriate.
11. Create a fee schedule for brand books so that local inspectors are charged a fee based on the volume of inspections they do each year.

12. Local Inspectors should be asked to pay for their brand books and pay an annual certification fee to the Department of Livestock.
 - a. District Inspectors should audit Deputy Inspectors Brand Books on a regular basis.
 - b. The LRP Committee believes this is a current job responsibility of District Inspectors and it has been neglected in recent years.
 - c. Implement annual training/certification meeting for local inspectors.
 - i. Could be done regionally, at markets, to cut costs and reach the most inspectors.
 - ii. State staff can provide updates on rule changes and animal health permits, new inspector orientation, etc.
 - iii. It would be at this time that inspectors are required to pay their annual certification and buy new books.
 - d. Investigate the use of seasonal help during busy season.
 - e. The Executive Officer should prepare a plan outlining a pay package for brand inspectors to address recruitment and retention of employees.