



DARTMOOR COMMONERS' COUNCIL

CODE OF GUIDANCE FOR THE WELFARE OF HOT BRANDING SEMI-FERAL PONIES BY THE DARTMOOR COMMONERS' COUNCIL

1. The Dartmoor Commoners' Council regulations states that:

No person shall allow to be depastured on the commons any cattle or ponies exceeding the age of 12 months or sheep exceeding the age of 6 months, which are not permanently, marked in a form that is readily visible for the purpose of identifying their ownership. Sheep should have a permanent incised earmark readily discernible together with a paint mark. The Council may waive the requirement of such permanent marking on application of the person depasturing prior to the commencement of such depasturing where the duration of the depasturing is to be a single period of less than 3 months.

For the purpose of this Regulation the application either of paint or of an ear-tag to a sheep shall not be regarded as forms of permanent marking.

Every person so depasturing an animal shall one month prior to first depasturing any such animal send to the Secretary of the Council a diagram and a description of the mark adopted for this purpose.

The Council may require a person to alter or vary any mark, which it consider cannot adequately be distinguished from that employed by another person grazing animals on the commons, and thereafter such person shall ensure that all animals depastured by him are marked in accordance with such requirement.

2. Each year only replacement fillies and accredited stallions will be hot branded and returned to the Commons of Dartmoor.
3. Owners' pony marks are kept in the Dartmoor Commoners' Council office.
4. The minimum number of hot brands are to be used for identification purposes, and wherever possible a single branding iron should be used once e.g. AB on one iron for application.
5. Handling of ponies to be hot branded shall be carried out in a secure pen or crush (a model pony crush is available and held by the Dartmoor Commoners' Council).
6. Ponies will be branded on the fleshy part of the body i.e. saddle or thigh with a **cherry red hot** branding iron no larger than 5 inches in depth.
7. Hot branding to be carried out by experienced handlers only.

8. New pony keepers must attend the stallion inspection day where they will observe handling and branding and be overseen by experienced handlers. A vet will be in attendance.
9. Cold cream will be applied to the brand after completion.
10. Hot branding should not take place during May, June, July or August of any year.

John Jordan,
Chairman of the Pony Working Party

Mary Alford
Vice Chairman of the Dartmoor Commoners' Council

29 August 2013