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## LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

### *Preventing Livestock Thefts*

When most people hear of “cattle rustling,” they often think of the 1800s with cowboys riding in the Wild West. Unfortunately, livestock thefts are still common today and can take place anywhere, day or night. Like many thefts, it is often difficult to recover stolen property once the crime occurs; however, there are ways to prevent these losses from happening.

- Brand cattle and register your brand with the county clerk, brand inspector or other authorities.
- Complete a regular inventory and do cattle counts on a daily basis.
- Keep gates locked and thoroughly secured to fence posts.
- Regularly check fencing. Be aware of areas with abnormal tire tracks and foot or hoof prints.
- “Think like a thief,” be aware of “your weakest link” and where entry is most easily accessible.
- Be aware of strangers and unfamiliar vehicles. Notify your neighbors and/or local law enforcement if you witness unusual behavior or strangers in the area.
- Be visible. Keep your property in good condition and well-maintained. Livestock not checked on a regular basis are more likely to be stolen.
- Do not create a regular feeding time; vary the time when you feed your animals.
- Avoid building pens next to roads or highways, as this makes the animals easily accessible.
- Limit the number of access points/gates to the animals.
- Notify your neighbor if you will be out of the area for an extended period of time so they can monitor the animals.
- Take photographs of any valuable animals making sure their brands and/or identification tags are clearly visible.

If you do suffer a livestock theft, make sure you contact the local authorities immediately. In addition, contact your neighbors to see if they witnessed anything unusual. The sooner the loss is identified and reported, the more likely it is the animal(s) will be recovered.

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