

Branding Iron

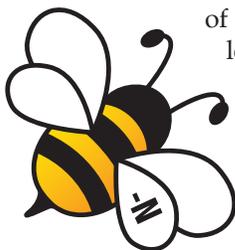


Corby Ward,
Chief Brand Inspector
Bismarck



The heart of bull sale season is pretty much wrapped up and I'm sure a lot of you are right in the thick of calving. We had a pretty nice winter overall and, hopefully, we can get through spring with some normal weather and have a good start to the year.

Each year in early March, the NDSA deputies and I attend the Western States Livestock Rural Enforcement Association Conference in Reno, Nev. It's a great conference, and we always come back with some new knowledge to help us perform our jobs.



The speakers who come are different each year, and they cover a wide range of topics. We've heard from federal drug task force members discussing how the cartels are using livestock to move drugs or as a front to prosecutors who specialize in ag-related crimes.

One interesting topic that has been covered is how large-scale the theft of beehives is. It is a large problem in California each year, and there is some serious money involved in it. In fact, some of the companies that bring bees to the northern states have been victims in these cases. Fun fact: bees are considered agricultural animals or livestock in California.

Every year, there is a different topic that is presented that has ties to North Dakota. It is just another example showing how small and connected the livestock industry really is. But, I will say, I'm glad we don't have to inspect bees here in North Dakota. I'm guessing it's pretty hard to see a brand on a bee!



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