

Tech's Best Young Entrepreneurs



Cow 54, Where are You?

Ramos M. Mays and Mark C. Pydynowski

Ages: 25, 23

Idea: RFID for livestock

Prize: Olin Cup at Washington University in St. Louis (\$50,000)

Mark Pydynowski and Ramos Mays are a little reticent to talk about their company, Somark Innovations. "I don't want to put the cart before the bull," Pydynowski says. It's an apt metaphor. Mays, born to a Missouri cattle-ranching family, knows first-hand the difficulty of tracking and tagging cows, which the USDA now requires. With a graduate degree in physics, Mays developed a technology that works much like a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip, but without needing the chip or an antenna.

Using an ink-like material already approved for use by the FDA, Mays developed a sort of smart tattoo. What's the material? That's part of the secret. "I'll tell you after 25 years and \$6 billion in revenue," Pydynowski says. The pair is close to landing a deal for some seed funding, and opening an office in the St. Louis Center for Emerging Technologies.

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