VIEWPOINTS

What Are the Real Problems in Resource Management Education?

The first and last articles in the September issue of the *Journal of Range Management* have particular significance to this question if we are to meet the critical needs in resource management education. Dr. Thomas' expose on rangeland environments and man presents three challenges for members of the Range profession that, of course, must be dealt with and translated into action, both as educational and operational programs in resources management.

Dr. Knight, on the other hand, put his finger on what he believes to be the Number 1 problem of land managers, the social problem of human overpopulation. Indirect reference to this question has undoubtedly been made in the third challenge of Dr. Thomas, namely the need for looking internally and asking ourselves the right questions as we face the future. I am a bit perplexed though, whether Dr. Thomas thinks we should blindly expect to provide the consumer goods and living environment for six billion people or that we should try to educate our resource managers of the dire need for reducing this expected population if we are to deal with our problems in an effective fashion.

Four points that we must emphasize in the area of resource management education if we are going to fulfill our obligations in dealing with the environmental problems of the future are: (1) the basic question of population and what we as resource managers can do to help convince our constituents of the necessity to limit population growth; (2) providing resource managers with a greater understanding and appreciation of how social attitudes and behavior patterns are formed; (3) marshalling all the aid technology can provide in solving resource problems on a sound ecological basis; and finally, (4) how to effectively provide educational experiences in resource management to a larger cross section of our population.

If we begin to lend our support to the importance of quality vs. quantity in all aspects of life we should be more convincing in our arguments to limit population growth. Economists have begun to recognize that quality measures have been neglected and should be subjected to the same scrutiny now given to numbers and pounds. In the Society for Range Management we could be leaders in espousing resource economics that includes more attention to the so-called intangible values; i.e., esthetics, natural areas, etc.

Who better than members of our Society can champion technology to be used as a tool in solving resource man-

agement problems? Enough has been said about the undesirable aspects of technology. We now need to concentrate on the positive ways in which our knowledge can be put to effective use so that we can avoid past mistakes, solve existing problems, and reassure a troubled citizenry that our objectives are in their best interests.

This latter reference to a credibility gap emphasizes the need for better communications with our liberal arts colleagues and others in non-technical positions. We have neglected this audience and as a result are facing both their active criticism and suspicious nature whenever we propose even reasonable solutions to resource management problems. We can only overcome such antagonistic and unfriendly attitudes by effective reciprocal educational opportunities for a large cross-section of our population. The elementary, secondary and prep schools along with liberal arts colleges offer the most fruitful opportunities for success. We have spent too much time in Land Grant and technical institutions talking to ourselves and righteously renouncing our liberal arts counterparts. It is about time to provide them a glimpse into our backyard so that we can work together rather than at cross purposes on the resource related environmental problems we all face.—*D. W. Hedrick*, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California.