

Marilyn Samuel, Range Researcher

Richard H. Hart

"I'm Marilyn—talk to me about Range Management" reads the lapel tag worn by the stylish, dark-haired lady. That tag signals the enthusiasm and knowledge Marilyn Samuel brings to the range profession.

Like several of us, Marilyn did not originally plan a career in range. Born in California, she lived in the Bay Area until her junior year in high school. Then the family moved to Cheyenne (her father was a civilian missile contractor). In 1960 she entered the University of Wyoming, where, she says, "I took all the ecology that was available, before it was fashionable." She earned her B.S. in zoology in 1964 and her M.S. in botany in 1966. I tried to convince her to publish her Master's thesis, "The Genus *Potentilla* (Rosaceae) in Wyoming", but Robert Dorn beat her to it with his "Flora of Wyoming".

A job announcement letter on a UW bulletin board led Marilyn to apply for a job as research assistant (botanist) with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service at the Cheyenne Horticultural Field Station, Cheyenne, Wyo. She started work in August, 1966, with Pathologist Bill Thyr, on control of bacterial canker of tomatoes. Marilyn discovered that growth of the canker bacteria was inhibited by another previously undescribed bacteria, and this was the subject of her first paper, published in 1974. Beginning in 1968, she also assisted Horticulturist Gene Howard in breeding strawberries, raspberries, and tetraploid carnations. Several breeding lines of carnations and canker-resistant tomatoes were developed in these programs.

Marilyn's involvement with range began in 1974, when the Cheyenne station was renamed the High Plains Grasslands Research Station. She went back to school, taking several courses in range management at the University of Wyoming and Colorado State University. She also trained with USDA Range Scientists Don Hyder and Walt Houston at the Central Plains Experimental Range near Nunn, Colo.

Marilyn was promoted to botanist (support scientist) and joined the new Range and Livestock Management Research program at Cheyenne. Under this program, Marilyn has primary responsibility for research on range plants and plant communities. She determines environmental and management effects on species composition and productivity of range and cultivated pasture, and monitors the effects of stocking rate and grazing systems on range plant species and communities. She also studies differences among clones of blue grama in their potential for revegetation; frequency and intensity of grazing by cattle on standing milkvetch; and competitive relationships of range grasses. "Finally", she says, "I'm back in the kind of botany for which I got my degree." She has been author or co-author of nineteen range publications.

None of this rather dry history really tells you much about Marilyn Samuel as a person, particularly the energy and devotion she gives to the art and science of range management. Since joining SRM in 1974, she has attended every Annual Meeting of the Wyoming Section and every SRM Annual Meeting since 1976. She's not just "here for the beer," either. She has presented six papers and co-authored two others. She participates actively in all meeting activities, and



Marilyn Samuel (standing) with UW students and summer biological aids Pam Wiant left and Patty Smith right.

is ready to talk range anytime and with anyone. She was Publicity Chairman (she is not fond of the term "chairperson") of the 1979 SRM Annual Meeting in Casper, Wyo. Continuing her work in spreading the good word, she was appointed to the SRM Information and Education Committee in 1980, and became Chairman in 1981 and 1982. While on this committee, she was instrumental in helping to develop the information and membership brochures of SRM and received a letter of commendation from President Jack Bohning. She also chaired the Wyoming Section I and E Committee in 1980. She was commended by Gary Frasier, associate editor for *JRM*, for the quality of her manuscript reviews, and she is now on the Editorial Board of *Rangelands*. Marilyn modestly downplays her Society activities, saying "If you want a job in SRM, just open your mouth." The

members in the Wyoming Section know better; they gave Marilyn their "Trail Boss Award" in 1980 in recognition of her services and accomplishments.

Marilyn is an excellent role model for young people with an interest in range or any other science. She helps guide the 300 to 400 grade and junior high school students who visit the High Plains Grasslands Research Station each year. She has been called on to teach biology classes in the Cheyenne school system, and has judged both Laramie County and District Science Fairs.

How does Marilyn deal with being a "woman in range"? Maybe Patty Smith, UW range student and Marilyn's summer aid, summed it up best by saying, "As far as work is concerned, Marilyn sees herself as no different from her male counterparts. The same 'rules' apply for scientists whether they are male or female." Marilyn Samuel's achievements testify to how well she understands those "rules". Her family understands too; daughter Sheri, an eighth grade gifted student, is thinking of a career in science. ●

Overseas: Women Are at Home on the Range

Linda Howell Hardesty

In the past decade, professional women have become fairly common in universities, government agencies, the Society for Range Management, and other places where range managers congregate. The degree to which we have been accepted and encouraged by male colleagues speaks to their credit. However, in overseas work, range management remains a predominantly male field. This is true even though women can make a unique contribution because of the more defined gender roles which exist in many countries.

Among the reasons why more women are not involved overseas is our recent entry into the field. Team leaders want experienced personnel and few women have been around long enough to have this experience. But this is a temporary situation which is rapidly resolving itself.

Assuming qualified women are available, a more difficult problem is that many men feel ill at ease traveling and working with a woman. When conditions are difficult, men may feel an exaggerated sense of responsibility for a woman's safety or comfort, and at the same time resent this self-imposed obligation. Host country nationals can make erroneous assumptions about a woman's relationship with team members which embarrass everyone. Living quarters lacking privacy, common or nonexistent bathrooms, plans for a dubious evening's entertainment, all can cause discomfort if a woman is part of the group. Some fear that women will lack credibility in cultures which still exclude women from traditionally male disciplines.

In my experience these "disadvantages" have never been a real handicap though they sometimes give us all a great laugh. Considering the possible advantages of having a qualified woman on the team it may be worth the effort to seek one out.

Women have different experience, points of view, and sensitivities. This can be invaluable in forming an accurate picture of an unfamiliar culture or production system. On a recent assignment, our team was debating why cattle weren't pastured on the uncultivated commons above the villages. Cattle are stabled at the house and fed cut forages or led to graze nearby roadsides and fallow fields. This is the woman's

job, as the men are often away working. Fixing an evening meal with local ingredients such as dried beans is time-consuming. There is too little daylight for the woman to lead her cows any distance, give them enough grazing time, and return home to make dinner. Changing this grazing system



Linda doing field work in Brazil