

**Principle 7—Perturbations.**

If any dynamic system such as nature is perturbed, it will return to the beginning. In range the beginning is seeds, roots, and rhizomes. At the end of the drought of "34" and "36" in Miles City, 92% of the grass had died. It didn't matter if the use was light, moderate, or heavy. Because of seeds and roots remaining after the drought, plants were able to re-establish. Thus, sustainable cattle production demands old stands of grass for feed during drought and adequate seed production in good years to guarantee a quick comeback following drought or other disturbance.

**Principle 8—Animal Performance**

Peak individual performance is achieved by continually grazing cattle on pasture in a declining range condition. It is therefore a contradiction to have goals of top animal performance and excellent range condition. A goal that is

compatible with good range management is maximum sustainable beef production per acre.

**Summary**

The way I incorporate these 8 principles (which I borrowed from other people) in my range management plan is to rest the pasture until peak biomass is reached. The pasture is then severely grazed from the most efficient harvest. I use forage efficient cows (Herefords) that don't crash (fail to produce) when their diets are modified.

One may depart from these 8 principles into the fringe, which is good. It provides diversity. However, one must always return to these 8 principles because they rest on three Biblical truths:

1. The first will be last and the last will be first.
2. Him who has I will give more to. Him who has not I will take away what he thinks he has.
3. Exalt in tribulation for it gives perseverance.

**Change on the Range**

**Chuck Quimby**

I was out on the Range  
a while ago past,  
enjoying my ride  
and hopin' it'd last,

Checkin' the grass  
and the use on the shrubs,  
Monitorin' the cows  
and the state of their grub.

Things lookin' good,  
I was proud of my job.  
Rode back to the truck  
and unsaddled ol' Bob.

On the way back to town,  
I thought of my day,  
of the green grass a growin'  
and life's special way.

I was managin' the range  
the best that I could.  
Producin' grass and beef,  
wildlife, water, and wood.

I felt real professional,  
known' what was best,  
for the land and the ecology  
and all of the rest.

But back at the office  
was waitin' a shock—  
a group of environmentalists  
a wantin' to talk.

They weren't too happy  
with the state of the land:  
The range hadn't been managed  
with a lightness of hand.

It seemed that somehow  
the grass had been hurt.  
The riparians were dying,  
the soil erodin' to dirt.

Those damn bovine beasts  
were ruinin' the range.  
A plague on the land  
like a bad case of mange.

I stuttered and stammered  
and promised to check  
on the problems out there  
and correct them by heck.

As the environmentalists went out  
another group came in,  
wantin' the range  
for their recreatin' in.

Some wanted nature  
with no trace of man.  
Others wanted campin'  
just like Disneyland.

The County wanted income,  
the ranchers more grass.  
Hunters more wildlife,  
All wanted my . . . job!

Confused and dismayed,  
Upset, filled with fear,  
my mind wasn't comprehendin',  
Oh what did I hear?

My orderly world  
was fallen' apart—  
Everyone questionin'  
my science, my art.

I knew what was best  
and I managed right well.  
"Trust me," I pleaded.  
Oh damn it to hell!

Well, time has gone on.  
The changes have come.  
I've evolved to meet them,  
but not without painin' me some.

There's a new way of thinkin'  
and managin' the land  
that involves lots of partners  
all lendin' a hand.

The game's much more complex.  
The rules harder to play.  
Tryin' to balance people and resources  
in a caring professional way.

I know that these changes  
have come for the good,  
and I try hard to work with them  
'cause I know that I should

But sometimes when ends  
another long day  
of discussin' and listenin'  
in this new fangled way

My mind takes me out  
from this desk I now ride,  
to a range in the mountains  
with vistas so wide

And I find myself thinkin'  
of the changes in the job,  
and find myself wishin'  
for a day with ol' Bob.