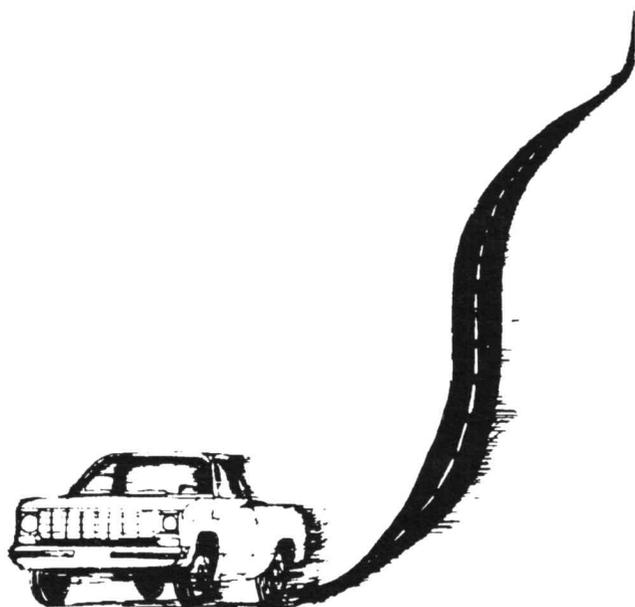


## The Truck

A friend drove up in a brand new rig  
 I'll tell, ya' boys, that truck was big  
 A stretched out diesel dually 4-by-4.  
 It had more chrome than a limosine  
 And the biggest gooseneck I'd ever seen  
 Why he could haul his whole herd and a couple more.  
 It had captains chairs that would tilt six ways  
 And lots of little fold out trays  
 For holding smokes, and drinks, and spare change too  
 It had more dials than a DC-8,  
 And the leather interior was sure first rate  
 And the plush-pile carpet on the floor was baby blue.  
 Now, I'm not envious, but I must confess,  
 That my old pickup's sure a mess  
 And I'd like to drive something that still had a floor board  
 But with a hundred cows in this economy,  
 And even used pickups sure aren't free  
 Don't guess you'll see me in a brand new Ford.  
 I got to thinkin' 'bout this friend of mine  
 And I'm happy for him, his new trucks fine  
 But I think it might be just a bid absurd.  
 That a feller can ride around all day  
 Doctorin' calves and haulin' hay  
 In a truck that's worth more than his whole herd.

**Steve Lucas**  
 Mountain View Farm  
 Louisa, Virginia



## BOOK REVIEW

by Larry D. Butler

Grazing Lands Technology Institute, Natural Resources  
 Conservation Service, Fort Worth, Texas

***The Prairie Keepers*** by Marcy Houle, 1995  
 Published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company

Several of us in the NRCS Grazing Lands Technology Institute have recently read ***The Prairie Keepers*** by Marcy Houle. It is outstanding! Marcy Houle has brought the story together concerning range management, wildlife management, private grazing lands values and interests, agency differences in philosophy, ecology, and peoples' biases.

I have seldom read a book from cover to cover in one day, in fact I can't ever remember doing so; however, this book won't let you put it down if you have a love for rangelands and an admiration for the people who own and manage them. The subtitle of this book is "Secrets of the Grasslands". Those of us who have worked areas like the Zumwalt Prairie, with ranchers like those who live and make their livelihood there, know many of these secrets but are not always able to express them to others in a way that transfers those secrets. Marcy Houle tells these "secrets" to the reader in an understandable and especially personal way that opens the secrets for all to understand.

Houle is a wildlife biologist and ecological consultant who, at the time of this book, was conducting research on the raptor population of the Zumwalt Prairie in northeastern Oregon. This area covers about 200 square miles and is mostly privately-owned. Her study documents the densest concentration of Swainson's hawks, red-tailed hawks, and ferruginous hawks in the lower forty-eight states and why this area supports it. As you can guess, the answer is good range management. However, as important as the answer is, the road to that answer is an enlightening tale in itself. It is filled with personal insights, personality conflicts, agency and personal biases, adversity and conflict surrounding an objective with near impossible odds of completing in the time allowed. Time constraints were dictated by the climate, the timing of plant growth, and behavior of the hawks and timing of nesting, along with the greatest challenge of bringing diverse opinions and biases together. A ***buteo*** ***rodeo*** becomes the rallying point for coordination of conflicting personalities, ideas, philosophies, and biases. What is a ***buteo*** ***rodeo***? You will have to read the book to find out.

*The Portland Oregonian*—"Houle's heart is not with just the wildlife, but also with the way of life - a big picture view that fits with a writer of such thoughtfulness and clarity."

Read it, you won't be disappointed!

