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# Rangelands

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Range monitoring field tour. U.S. Forest Service Photo.

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The objectives for which the corporation is established are:

—to properly take care of the basic rangeland resources of soil, plants and water;

—to develop an understanding of range ecosystems and of the principles applicable to the management of range resources;

—to assist all who work with range resources to keep abreast of new findings and techniques in the science and art of range management;

—to improve the effectiveness of range management or obtain from range resources the products and values necessary for man's welfare;

—to create a public appreciation of the economic and social benefits to be obtained from the range environment;

—to promote professional development of its members.

Membership in the Society for Range Management is open to anyone engaged in or interested in any aspect of the study, management, or use of rangelands. Please contact the Executive Vice-President for details.

## Rangelands

*Rangelands* serves as a forum for the presentation and discussion of facts, ideas, and philosophies pertaining to the study, management, and use of rangelands and their several resources. Accordingly, all material published herein is signed and reflects the individual views of the authors and is not necessarily an official position of the Society. Manuscripts from any source—nonmembers as well as members—are welcome and will be given every consideration by the editors.

*Rangelands* is the nontechnical counterpart of the *Journal of Range Management*; therefore, manuscripts and news items submitted for publication in *Rangelands* should be in nontechnical nature and germane to the broad field of range management. Editorial comment by an individual is also welcome and, subject to acceptance by the editor, will be published as a "Viewpoint."

## Contribution Policy:

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## Executive Vice-President's Comments

Of the many topics we like to discuss, survey, evaluate, criticize, and make recommendations on, this magazine is right near the top. Over the history of *Rangelands*, it has been the subject of numerous reviews by special task groups, the Board of Directors, and the membership at large. While the results and recommendations from all this oversight is surprisingly similar each time, the quest goes on. The problems we address fall in two areas; the cost of producing the magazine and how to provide content that is of interest and value to our members.

*Rangelands* has been around for 25 plus years (I'm sure I will get corrected on that). It was established to meet a need to provide a forum for communicating information on rangeland subjects, as well as SRM activities and business. Much of this had previously been included in *JRM*, but it was felt that printing the less technical information in another publication would help *JRM* maintain its scientific status, while providing another good communication source for the membership.

From the very beginning the cost of producing the magazine has been a subject of debate and discussion within SRM. We have rotated through periods of trying to break even, to minimizing costs, to living with an "absolute maximum", while seeking ways to offset costs through income producing activities. Finally, it's been decided that the publication is a major member service funded by dues, and it's probably better to work on content for awhile.

What to print in *Rangelands* is a subject every bit as difficult as how to fund it. Our membership is diverse in terms of interest and there will be those satisfied and some dissatisfied with any given issue. The current Board of Directors feels that there are enough members with concerns that it is a good time to review where we want to go as we start a new century. In the past this discussion has covered such areas as what topics were appropriate and desired by the membership, as well as in what style should they be presented. This latter is an interesting challenge. Some folks argue that an article written in scientific style, complete with supporting graphs, charts, and citations is inappropriate and will not be read. Others go the opposite direction and "nit-pick" the citations and style and argue that it is not scientific enough. Questions on the citability of a *Rangelands* article come up regularly.

A task group studied *Rangelands* and reported to the Board of Directors in 1994. Part of their report included recommended topics for articles that they felt would broaden the appeal of the magazine. The following is a listing of some of these topics that appear appropriate now as well as 1994. Excellence in range management stories, viewpoint papers from environmental groups, viewpoint papers from commodity groups, increase in wildlife habitat articles, biology of rangeland species, success stories relating to

habitat management of threatened species, range management techniques, papers from partners and affiliates, and last was exploring the area of ecosystem management. I am giving you these suggestions from five years ago to stimulate your own recommendations on what you would like to see printed.

When considering the subject of topics of interest you also need to consider who should be writing the articles and what financial arrangement should be made. Some discussion has taken place concerning the possibility of paying stipends for some papers which may be of high interest to members. Also we could consider different alternatives with page charges. Currently, page charges are collected on some papers, while some are waived. The policy has been to charge those authors who have funds available, but to waive charges for authors without resources in order to benefit from their information.

Another topic that has been recommended is the consideration of "focused" issues. This is where all or a significant number of the articles in an issue would pertain to a subject theme such as water, or sustainability. Many publications from other organizations do this and it can be a good source of information on the selected theme.

The final area is the layout and design of the magazine. Some members think it's great the way it is others think we could do better. We have been making subtle changes in design this past year and have had some positive feedback.

So, this is where I am going. The Board of Directors has voted to make some changes in *Rangelands*. Some of them can be made in my office, budget items and such. However, membership input is needed to assist our Editor and Editorial Board concerning the type of articles you would like to see, how to get those articles, and any recommendations you might have on layout and design.

On another topic, we are making more changes with our staff at the Denver office. Matt Wirt, who has been our membership manager since last fall has resigned to move to another area. We have promoted Helen Hall, who you were introduced to in a recent issue of *TBN* as our office services manager, to the membership manager position. In doing so we are beginning the task of building this position into a full multi-dimension membership position. In the future Helen will not only be responsible for our member database and subscription programs, but will also deal in the area of recruitment and retention of members. This will be consistent with our needs as well as the way other professional societies are staffed. I feel Helen is up to the task and look forward to her help in providing expanded service in this area.—**Craig Whittekiend**, Executive Vice President













couple clipping studies (Cook 1971, Trlica et al. 1977). These studies indicate that one or two years of heavy use might have long lasting adverse impacts on vigor and productivity of some forage plants in arid and semi-arid areas. However other range professionals have questioned whether a year or two of heavy use has any lasting impact on plant productivity assuming it is not repeated year after year. We recognize this probably depends on the type of plant and environmental conditions under which it is found, but believe it needs better resolution.

### Soil Erosion

Soil erosion is still a problem on U.S. rangelands, but it has been substantially reduced in most regions over the last 15 years (USDA 1997). Throughout Latin America, soil erosion remains a serious threat to rangeland health. During the mid 1990s drought in northern Mexico, large areas of rangeland soils were exposed to wind and water erosion. However, the magnitude of the problem was not quantified and government programs were not put in place to remedy it. Very little information is available on how herbaceous material affects erosion rates and productivity of soils in Latin American countries. The authors believe this problem should receive much more emphasis in Mexico and other Latin American countries.

### Grazing Management Research

#### Stocking Rates

Rangeland damage from heavy grazing still remains a serious problem in most parts of the world, particularly Latin American and African countries. Although some excellent stocking rate studies are available from the grassland and forest rangelands in the United States, information is quite limited for desert areas. Stocking rate studies are virtually non-existent for Latin American countries. This lack of information makes it difficult to implement extension programs that help Latin American ranchers properly stock their rangelands. We believe that long term stocking rate studies such as those from the Great Plains in the USA (Klippel and Costello 1960, Sims et al. 1976) should receive high priority in Latin American range research programs. We consider their demonstration benefits to be as great as their scientific values. Many of the grazing studies in the U.S. reviewed by Holechek et al. (1999) are transferable to portions of Mexico and other Latin American countries. These studies should receive greater application in development of range management programs in Latin America.

su capacidad para tratar con los riesgos climáticos. Un mejor manejo de la sequía a través del ajuste de la carga animal en potreros, la composición del hato, los usos estratégicos del mejoramiento de pastizales, los sistemas de rotación de ganado y programas de implementación de seguros contra riesgos, tienen la capacidad de mejorar el bienestar tanto del ganadero como de los pastizales o terrenos de agostadero.

Durante la reciente sequía en el norte de México (1993–1996), los autores fueron contactados por ganaderos e inversionistas interesados en información acerca de cómo uno o dos años de pastoreo severo podrían impactar la producción de forraje y las condiciones generales de los pastizales. Nuestro análisis de literatura muestra que existe poca información sobre el tema. Solo se encontraron un par de estudios (Cook 1971, Trlica et al. 1977). Los resultados indican que uno o dos años de pastoreo severo podrían tener efectos adversos a largo plazo. Efectos que reducen el vigor y la productividad de plantas forrajeras en zonas áridas y semiáridas. Sin embargo, otros profesionales en el área de pastizales, cuestionan los efectos negativos del pastoreo severo durante uno o dos años, asumiendo que esta aseveración no es general, ya que períodos continuos de baja precipitación no se repiten año con año. Reconocemos que esto probablemente dependa del tipo de planta y las condiciones ambientales que la rodean, pero creemos a la vez que se necesitan más estudios para obtener resoluciones más acertadas.

### Erosión de Suelos

La erosión de suelos sigue siendo un problema grave en los Estados Unidos, sin embargo, ésta ha sido reducida en la mayoría de las regiones en los últimos 15 años (USDA 1997). En diversas partes de América Latina, la erosión de suelos continúa siendo un serio problema para la estabilidad de los pastizales. Durante la sequía de mediados de los 90's en el norte de México, extensas áreas fueron expuestas a la erosión por el sobrepastoreo y factores tales como el viento y el agua. Sin embargo, la magnitud del problema no fue cuantificada y los programas de gobierno nunca fueron llevados a cabo para remediar el problema. Poca información existe sobre cómo la cobertura de plantas herbáceas afecta las tasas de erosión y productividad de los suelos en países de América Latina con extensas zonas de pastizales y cuyas economías dependen en



















































































