

RANGE MANAGEMENT

Annual Report of Retiring President for 1963

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Before I attempt an appraisal of my stewardship of the past year, I want you to know how much I appreciate the honor of being your elected President and my gratitude for the rich associations this has given me.

By and large, 1963 has been a good year with commendable progress in most lines of endeavor, a year of steady advancement toward our Society's overall goals. This would not have been possible without your cooperation and efforts. Only a few examples of progress can be noted here, but they will serve to illustrate how our dynamic outfit is moving.

Areas of noteworthy advancement include: membership, public and international relations, professional recognition, youth projects, progress on the range glossary, coverage and quality of chapter and section meetings, publication of "Selected Bibliography on Southern Range Management," and of the first Spanish summary of selected articles from the Journal of Range Management, and numerous other committee activities.

Membership continued to grow steadily and more soundly. The "drop-out" percentage last year was the lowest in ASRM history.

The stepped-up emphasis on public relations—by committees and many individuals—paid off noticeably in relation to the membership picture and in various other ways, nationally and

internationally. Dividends will be higher in 1964.

The expanding recognition of the professional stature of the American Society of Range Management is reflected by its official classification as a scientific organization, and by invitations

during 1963 for official representation at numerous events of distinction, including: the Centennial Celebration of the National Academy of Sciences, the Ninth International Grassland Congress, and the Fifth American Forest Congress; as well as national meetings of the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Conserva-



tion Districts Association; and livestock associations. The ASRM was especially honored by President Kennedy's invitation to your President to attend the dedication of Grey Towers, Gifford Pinchot's ancestral home at Milford, Pennsylvania, as a national conservation center.

I have been impressed by the improvement in quality of most section and chapter meetings and tours. More and more attention is being devoted to magnetic programs tailored to the varied interests of practical growers, technicians, educators and business men. Some of these local presentations would do justice to the program of any national meeting. Several newsletters are taking on a professional look and thereby setting a pattern for all. We may feel real pride in these signs of a healthy and vigorously developing organization; for, as the sections and chapters go, so goes the Society.

Progress made during the past year was the result of an enormous amount of time and talent contributed by dedicated members of all committees, the Board of Directors, and our efficient Executive Secretary. I should like to commend all committees for cooperation that would warm the heart of any organizational officer, as it has mine. For the success of our climax event of the year, the annual Convention at Wichita, Kansas, a rather special salute is due the Program Committee and the Local Arrangements Committee, for extraordinarily smooth and effective performance and completion of assignments well ahead of deadlines.

Several new activities were just getting under way toward the end of the year. In mid-summer a temporary committee was named to deal with the educational requirements of employers of range-management graduates. The purpose of this committee was to coordinate the

viewpoints of major hiring agencies, with reference to the kind of scholastic training best suited to their needs. It is hoped that this information will supplement the work of the Range Management Educational Council in its parallel efforts to unify the position of the schools, on range-management curricula, and thus speed up completion of the final ASRM policy statement on professional standards.

Clarification and formal statement of numerous points of ASRM policy, a need apparent since last year, required revision of the by-laws. This was authorized by results of the election, and a Policy Committee was established with the concurrence of the incoming President. The recommendations of this committee to the Board of Directors will fill urgent and exceedingly important needs of our growing Society. Among other uses the findings will be helpful in revision of the Society handbooks, a going project under the direction of the Executive Secretary.

Also started late in the year was an examination of the feasibility of a drive for an ASRM endowment fund, by a special Finance Committee. Such a fund would make possible several activities and projects that would enhance our professional stature but which are too costly to finance from regular operating income. It is my considered opinion that the ASRM has attained a prominence and a size that make it timely to consider supplemental financing that would sharply accelerate progress toward our over-all objectives.

The foregoing glance at 1963 advancement, praiseworthy as it certainly is, should not blind us to the recognition of weak spots—activities or areas where further improvement or faster progress is needed. For example, the membership picture, while gratifying, is also challenging. The loss of members each year

is still too high. East of the Mississippi River and north of Washington, D.C., lies a big "blank area" without sections or chapters; in fact we find whole States without a single member. To aid the sections in making the most of these and other recruitment opportunities, the groundwork has been laid for a more unified membership program, through the formation of a small special-purpose committee proposed by the national membership chairman and endorsed by the incoming President.

The potency of exhibits, for disseminating range information and attracting attention to the ASRM, merits stepped-up emphasis on the place and time of showing, as well as choice and display of the material itself. For the big-league occasions there is of course no substitute for the professional touch, but for many occasions let's not under-rate the value of simple, even improvised, setups.

Then, too, improvement in communication between national committees, between chapters and sections, and between them and the Board of Directors, and between agencies would intensify interest in and the usefulness of the Society as a whole.

In ending this sketchy appraisal of the year just past, I wish again to thank you all for the privilege of serving you. Looking ahead I see a rapidly expanding horizon for the American Society of Range Management, already an outstanding organization and one destined to grow steadily in professional stature and in usefulness. How far it will grow will be determined by how well we can forget *who* we are working for and concentrate on *what* we are working for. With the continued enthusiastic backing of every one of you, 1964 should be the best year of achievement in the Society's history.