

VIEWPOINTS

Don't Fence Us In

"Give me land lots of land 'neath the starry skies above, don't fence me in" are familiar words of a western song. The American Society of Range Management has land—lots of land—to be concerned about—providing it doesn't fence itself in too tightly.

Fences can be both physical and mental. Mental fences may be more difficult to properly relocate than physical ones. Some fencing is necessary—to give control, yet provide the needed flexibility to carry out management objectives.

Provincialism, overly precise definitions, and isolation of rangeland from interdependent kinds of lands are fences or barriers to the American Society of Range Management in fulfilling its destiny as a professional society.

Considerable progress has been made in gaining acceptance for groups with varying interests in rangeland and related lands as members of ASRM. Ranchers, technical rangemen, biologists, researchers, and educators all have a place. Some groups clamor more than others, but professional needs of all groups must be fulfilled by ASRM if the Society is to progress and grow.

In my opinion, understanding of what rangeland and related grazing lands are—their nature, location, extent, and interdependence—is much less than it should be. Such understanding of rangeland and related lands will determine whether ASRM is to be a regional, national, or international professional society. Rangeland, grazed woodland, and "native pastures" are important across the nation.

Lack of firm data on the importance of rangeland and pasture in the United States has long been recognized. The Census of Agriculture was modified to provide a somewhat sharper picture, but it has obvious limitations. One of the major limitations is the category "Other Pasture Not Woodland or Cropland" and the absence of "Rangeland" as a specific category.

Nevertheless, census figures give us the best information available on range and pasture "in farms." To these

Table 1. Range and pasture "in farms" (acres), 1964 Census of Agriculture—Preliminary.

No.	State	Cropland Used Only For Pasture	Improved Pasture	Woodland Pastured ¹	Other Pasture Not Woodland, or Cropland ²	Total
1	Alabama	1,243,080	1,215,076	2,897,065	2,554,979	7,910,200
2	Alaska	3,516	293	16,821	1,751,934	1,772,564
3	Arizona	162,802	668,767	5,293,343	31,913,767	38,038,679
4	Arkansas	1,840,161	813,009	2,922,158	2,373,002	7,948,330
5	California	2,052,678	933,291	2,803,967	20,446,945	26,236,881
6	Colorado	1,213,257	962,347	1,435,945	24,968,704	28,580,253
7	Connecticut	56,265	18,732	67,137	97,793	239,927
8	Delaware	32,220	3,407	8,537	12,403	56,567
9	Florida	741,139	1,686,327	4,976,675	4,305,874	11,710,015
10	Georgia	1,050,623	1,022,064	2,607,179	1,808,896	6,488,760
11	Hawaii	52,185	504,747	30,755	1,202,873	1,790,560
12	Idaho	708,870	565,050	1,137,719	7,420,860	9,832,499
13	Illinois	1,669,106	643,802	1,501,171	1,746,072	5,360,151
14	Indiana	1,334,520	264,472	1,018,493	1,101,690	3,719,175
15	Iowa	2,632,420	691,507	1,550,549	3,248,045	8,122,591
16	Kansas	1,345,652	1,370,124	469,608	18,524,169	21,709,553
17	Kentucky	4,571,854	453,899	1,433,320	1,824,178	8,283,251
18	Louisiana	1,739,197	781,135	1,719,026	2,003,709	6,243,067
19	Maine	142,560	14,866	118,722	98,124	384,292
20	Maryland	225,657	128,955	128,383	341,323	807,318
21	Massachusetts	79,943	11,618	86,373	73,025	250,959
22	Michigan	1,147,426	57,025	908,090	576,808	2,689,349
23	Minnesota	1,307,409	248,044	2,410,099	2,117,862	6,083,414
24	Mississippi	1,294,478	1,319,080	3,843,135	3,716,872	10,173,565
25	Missouri	4,426,830	1,293,954	5,213,606	5,834,825	16,769,215
26	Montana	1,159,134	1,040,901	1,867,261	47,251,211	51,318,507
27	Nebraska	1,031,016	1,114,597	356,693	23,727,895	26,230,201
28	Nevada	191,332	393,858	37,555	9,441,381	10,064,126
29	New Hampshire	62,235	6,782	109,672	46,928	225,617
30	New Jersey	88,260	17,927	19,126	83,718	209,031
31	New Mexico	384,529	393,611	3,231,740	41,188,571	45,198,451
32	New York	990,781	222,939	815,531	2,301,851	4,331,102
33	North Carolina	600,585	554,343	951,001	1,180,088	3,286,017
34	North Dakota	848,376	378,368	237,293	12,988,063	14,452,100
35	Ohio	1,164,147	383,939	929,648	2,177,032	4,654,766
36	Oklahoma	1,983,171	2,360,913	3,411,614	18,406,631	26,162,329
37	Oregon	976,116	593,630	2,631,614	11,527,556	15,728,916
38	Pennsylvania	685,936	281,269	572,749	1,519,255	3,059,209
39	Rhode Island	12,117	1,704	5,117	7,489	26,427
40	South Carolina	591,672	207,903	803,329	479,989	2,082,893
41	South Dakota	934,280	588,741	207,034	25,432,240	27,162,295
42	Tennessee	3,059,139	510,953	1,738,115	1,808,202	7,116,409
43	Texas	7,089,773	8,711,289	10,138,972	94,339,745	120,279,779
44	Utah	447,692	491,545	762,307	9,781,974	11,483,518
45	Vermont	183,188	50,724	406,614	405,703	1,046,229
46	Virginia	864,577	836,420	1,142,915	2,574,698	5,418,610
47	Washington	836,237	296,157	3,051,561	6,685,392	10,869,347
48	West Virginia	360,298	319,132	910,094	1,604,857	3,194,381
49	Wisconsin	1,765,320	246,601	2,802,455	1,845,103	6,659,479
50	Wyoming	567,223	642,091	581,108	32,703,231	34,493,673
TOTALS		57,951,052	36,117,948	82,311,994	489,573,533	665,954,527

¹ Does not include acreage of large private company lands that are grazed.

² Estimated to be Rangeland and "Native Pasture" acreage.

figures must be added the acreage of public lands properly called rangeland or related lands and the woodland or forest areas owned by large timber companies and that are grazed. Only then do we have a complete picture of land grazed by livestock.

Table 1 shows the acreage of the different census categories of grazing land "in farms" in the United States by States. If we add all public lands used by livestock and big game range in Alaska and elsewhere, the acreage is much larger. It is safe to say that

over 50% of all land is used by livestock and big game animals.

The American Society of Range Management considers rangeland to be "all land producing native forage for animal consumption, and lands that are revegetated naturally or artificially to provide a forage cover that is managed like native vegetation. Generally considered as land that is not cultivated."

Thus rangeland includes natural grasslands, natural savannas, and wetlands suitable for grazing use by virtue

of the natural plant communities they support.

Grazable woodland can be considered as that forested land on which the understory vegetation includes, as an integral part of the forest plant community, plants which can be grazed without significantly impairing other forest values. On grazable woodland, judicious grazing is compatible with timber management. Some examples of grazable woodland include the ponderosa pine and certain aspen forests of the West, and the longleaf and slash pine forests of the South.

The concept of native pasture embraces those lands which support a climax or natural potential plant community which is forest but which are managed to produce native or naturalized plants for forage. Such land includes cutover forest land, abandoned cropland originally cleared from forest, or improved pastures which have reverted to communities of native grasses in the early stages of secondary succession back to forest. Examples of native pasture are some hill pastures

and stump pastures of the West, cutover pastures of the Northern Great Lakes area, and some of the rougher hill pastures and mountain grazing boundaries of Appalachia.

For the sake of this discussion total acreage of "Other Pasture Not Woodland or Cropland" in Table I can best be considered as "rangeland" with an inclusion of roughly 5% "native pasture." In some States, as in the Northeast, this acreage is probably predominantly "native pasture."

Each broad kind of land used for grazing has from one to several alternate systems of management and treatment that are best suited to each unique environment and the plant communities involved. These alternate systems of management and treatment are independent of any "land use name" that might be used. A particular kind of grazing management best suited to land supporting an open stand of ponderosa pine with an herbaceous ground cover is the same—whether we call it grazable woodland, forest range, pine-grassland, range, or

what have you. The kind of management best suited to accomplish the management objectives in terms of use and treatment is more important than the name.

Perhaps the greatest difference between managing native grazing land such as range, grazable woodland, and native pasture and "sown improved pastures" is that range techniques are geared to manage plant communities as compared to a population of a single species.

The significant thing about the figures in Table I is that *there is land in every category in each of the 50 states*. Lands supporting native vegetation—rangeland, grazed woodland, "native pasture"—outrank other categories manifold in total and at least 2 to 1 in practically every state. The place of the rangeman is indicated by the occurrence and abundance of the kinds and combinations of land with which he is competent to deal. **Don't fence us in!**—R. E. Williams, Soil Conservation Service, USDA, Washington, D.C.