

Range, Range Men, Range Management, and ASRM

President Dyksterhuis' letter in the May issue (JRM 21(3):191-192, 1968), did a good job of identifying some concerns of the ASRM. Certainly he touched on many points that should be discussed by the membership. However, there are points in his letter that either I fail to understand or with which I must take issue. It may be that my apparent disagreements are a matter of semantics. If so, we should do a better job of communicating and get on with our business. However, as I interpret President Dyksterhuis, it seems not a matter of semantics but a difference of opinions or philosophies as to what constitutes range, range men, range management, and the ASRM.

President Dyksterhuis indicates that advances in rangelands have resulted from advances in ranching and then mentions "a category of professionals known as range men" who are concerned with range science. It seems to me that one of the problems plaguing the ASRM is the lack of a clear definition of a professional. What level of training and/or ex-

perience does it take to qualify as a professional? Is a college graduate whose education stopped the moment he donned the mortarboard a professional? Is a rancher without a degree who digs out, reads, assembles, and digests available information and knowledge concerning rangelands a professional? Is the "cowboy-rancher" who runs his ranch, with all its resources, by the seat of his pants and who continues to hang on using the same management techniques that grandpa used a professional? All may belong to the ASRM. Certainly membership in the ASRM does not make a man a professional. Does it?

Dyke states that "acquainting the general public with these (5) facts"—regarding rangelands is a duty of each member. I agree. However, it seems to me that much more than an acquaintance is necessary to get action or support from the general public. If problems concerning management and use of rangelands are to receive support from the general public, that public must be made to feel it has a vested interest in the lands and that they are somehow meaningful to their well-being. Maybe the 15 scientific committees will be a step in this direction,

though I doubt it. Important as they may be, they will result primarily in a group of "scientists" talking to one another. The general public, with whom we must relate, will remain virtually ignored, uninformed, and unconcerned about rangelands, about the 15 scientific committees, or about the Society made up of 4,000 people dedicated to the vast rangelands (whatever they are) of the world.

Dr. Dyksterhuis referred to "delegates" to other groups of scientists or societies. A responsibility of the delegate is to be alert and that "Any matters coming to his attention that may affect ASRM policy, tend to confound rangelands, timberlands, croplands, or barren deserts or tend to confound volunteer native pastures with cultivated pastures of arable lands shall promptly be brought to the attention of the ASRM." This statement is a bit frustrating to me as I feel that the ASRM has yet to clearly define the various categories of land to which Dyke refers. What will or should the ASRM do if such matters are brought to their attention?

The viewpoint of President Dyksterhuis seems to imply that we are able to draw neat and precise lines

around portions of the landscape and label these delineations rangelands. Lands falling outside these lines must be considered secondary by the range man and primary responsibility for their management relegated to others such as foresters and agronomists.

Certainly the "professional" range man cannot and should not attempt to be all things to all people. However, the "professional range man" by experience and training should have some attributes that qualify him to make land use and management decisions on broader segments of the landscape than are apparently allocated to him under Dr. Dyksterhuis' philosophy. It seems to me that among other things (watershed, wildlife, recreation, etc.) the range man must be concerned with management that will provide a year around forage supply for grazing animals, domestic or wild. If this is true, the range man must use his talents to manipulate factors at his disposal to integrate land resources, or products of land resources, to provide this year around forage supply. Failure to be concerned with the year around forage supply greatly restricts the scope for the real range manager.

Are rangelands merely a station on an assembly line occupied by a "range man" who fits one piece onto the product, as it moves by, and who never sees or is not concerned with that which comes off the end of the line as a finished product? To be effective, the range man must have the expertise to provide superior service at his station on the assembly line. In addition, the "professional" range man must have the training and vision to see how all parts of the

landscape fit together and function as a whole.

Far be it for me to detract from the importance of the agronomist or the forester. They have expertise in areas which certainly are not the primary concern of the range man. I for one am pleased that there are many foresters and agronomists in the ASRM and hope the association is mutually beneficial. My point, however, is that President Dyksterhuis seems to be greatly restricting the value of the range man in land management and relegating some of his just responsibility to others no more or maybe less qualified. In my opinion, the one thing that may tend to set the "range man" apart is his orientation or tendency to concern himself with the whole "system."

The "professional" range manager must have a degree of competence that uniquely qualifies him in matters concerning rangeland. However, it must be recognized that all members of the ASRM are not, and according to the founding fathers, need not be range men. Membership in the ASRM (despite feelings to the contrary) does not necessarily carry a connotation of professionalism.

I just don't know what amount of cultural practices or the size of unit that changes the range to a cultivated or some other kind of pasture. I don't know the number of trees per acre it takes to make a forest. The extreme ends of the scales are easy to identify and thus categorize responsibility. The wide gray area in the middle is not so easily categorized. Contrary to President Dyksterhuis' statement, I believe there are large segments of the landscape with trees on the horizon or lands seeded to forage grasses that are

not best "specified" by foresters or agronomists. Professional range men must include the management of these lands in their repertoire. Of course, a mark of any professional is to be discriminating and to know the limits of his competency. On the other hand, it seems to me there is a point beyond which one cannot pull back or restrict himself and still be considered a professional.

Toward the end of his letter, Dyke states: "Our goals are," Are these really "our goals?" If so, they appear to severely restrict the scope and effectiveness of the professional range manager. If followed closely, the range man will soon be restricted to that part of the landscape that in fact "has little or no use for other primary purposes."

It would appear that the philosophy expressed by President Dyksterhuis is not consistent with that of long standing objectives of the ASRM. Dyke's apparent position seems to severely restrict the scope of the range manager. However, the ASRM is open to all "who are interested in grazing land management or grazing livestock problems."

The ASRM cannot be all things to all people, but it does tend (right or wrong) to be an "umbrella" society that accommodates a wide divergence of people and ideas. So long as the ASRM embraces these broad concepts, its "goals" must also remain broad.

With all due respect, President Dyksterhuis as a range man may set goals as restrictive or as broad as he sees fit. However, goals or restrictions as advanced by any individual need not limit the scope and effectiveness of the ASRM.—*Dillard H. Gates*, Oregon State University, Corvallis.