

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## THE WESTERN RANGE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

By MARION CLAWSON. 401 pp. McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc. New York 18, N. Y. 1950. \$5.00

**D**ID you ever get into an argument on how to measure the value of a ranch? . . . on ownership of public lands? . . . on selling calves or 3-year-old steers? . . . on any economic phase of range livestock production? Chances are that you have and that you finally gave up because of too scanty information. The economic aspects of livestock production in the western range area have received too little attention in the past from all echelons in technical and practical range management. Until recent years range management students had little or no opportunity to learn the over-all principles nor the finer details of range economics. These have come the hard way of experience or not at all to ranch operators and technicians alike.

Mr. Marion Clawson has accomplished a very creditable objective in this first book on the economics of range livestock production. Not only does the book give organization to the subject matter but also the most important economic principles are set forth. Mr. Clawson is an old-timer in economics with more than 20 years of professional work in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Bureau of Land Management of which he is now director. In addition he has many years of living in the western range area and considerable training with Professor John D. Black of Harvard University. Viewpoints are bolstered, much to the author's

credit, by the mention of 39 names and others not listed specifically in the acknowledgements.

Space does not permit the listing of the 27 chapters by title. Nevertheless they are grouped by subject matter. The first two define "range" and give its general importance in national affairs from the standpoints of political pressures, employment, income, and investment.

The next four chapters present Western Range as a region (eastern boundary established in Senate Document 199) and divide it according to various factors such as physiography, climate, vegetational types, and others. This is done to show the intimate dependence of the range livestock industry upon land, vegetation, and climate. Few technical range men or plant ecologists would disagree with the importance of the relationship. However, most will disagree with statements that vegetation of the range region today is very similar to the climax of two centuries past. Better descriptions of the physical factors and vegetation which characterize the Western Range are available but none of them are as complete in focusing attention to their economic significance. A very good analysis of the range condition reports by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics is included.

Chapters 7 through 12 describe the general economic structure of the region. The separate chapters discuss ownership patterns, administration of federal lands, relationships of livestock numbers and production rates, the most economical utilization of feed and forage, fattening and marketing patterns, and several

other factors. The administrative policies of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are discussed with a backdrop of the recent conflicts between ranchers and agencies. The viewpoints expressed cover many sides of the multiple-use conflict and the latest developments. The reader is left to his own conclusions on the merits of different arguments.

Four chapters give general descriptions of ranches from data in the U. S. Census of Agriculture, of special problems of ranches, and of the management of cattle and sheep ranches of different types. These are followed by chapters on ranch values and income, land values and grazing fees, and credit.

An analysis of movement, supply, and demand of meat and wool is covered in 6 chapters. As with the other parts of the book, the center of attention is turned toward the problems of the range livestock producer.

One chapter deals with the range livestock industry during the second world war but it covers only briefly trends in numbers, demand, fattening operations, prices, income, and wages. The last chapter includes a short conclusion of the major points and an admittedly hazardous look ahead.

The book is an attractive member of the McGraw-Hill Forestry Series. Format, variations in sentence structure, generally short clear sentences, coherent expression of thought, and well spaced headings make readability high. Illustrations number 84 figures and 26 tables. Literature is cited in footnotes and may be somewhat scanty for those wishing to read further on certain subjects. The author has leaned heavily on Senate Document 199, *The Western Range*, and on *Farm Management* by J. D. Black, Marion Clawson, C. R. Sagre, and W. W. Wilcox.

Mr. Clawson is quite frank in recog-

nizing the limited scope and content of the book. Many phases of Range Economics are left out or incompletely covered, such as: techniques of livestock production, marketing procedures, processing of livestock, fattening, historical summaries, and political and governmental regulations. Further, many supporting facts and descriptions are omitted. Some may criticize the book for this reason but it has allowed a clear presentation of principles without an over-dose of illustrations and minor details which so often cloud major issues. The college teacher can add the details of local or regional situations as he sees fit. The technician has the major superstructure on which to add other building materials. The livestock operator can easily compare the principles of over-all range economics with the details of his ranch operation.

This book deserves the reading of all interested in range livestock production and should be in every library for ready reference. It is by no means the complete word in range economics but it does give sound advice on the questions beginning this review and many similar ones. Other books that stress subjects omitted and add details to the materials covered need to be written. The goal of Range Management cannot be reached until the full force of economics is realized and appreciated—until recommended practices are economically sound as well as technically sound.—*Harold F. Heady*, Dept. of Range & Forestry, A. & M. College of Texas, College Station, Texas.



#### MODERN BREEDS OF LIVESTOCK

By HILTON M. BRIGGS, 755 pp., 27 charts, 52 tables. The Macmillan Co., 60 Fifth Ave., New York, 1949, \$5.50.

An up-to-date consolidation of livestock breed histories has been prepared by the author. A subject of such tremen-