

Our Range Management Schools

IN SOME of our schools, range management is taught as a separate major in range management departments which are independent from other fields. In other schools the range teaching is in departments of Forestry, Animal Husbandry, Botany or Agronomy. In each of these separate cases, the range material taught has a distinct flavor of the subject matter department in which the courses are given. Thus, in the department of Animal Husbandry, no forestry and often too little of the material in plant sciences is required. This may be very well and what one would expect but it does seem that if students are properly trained in range management they should have a well-balanced curriculum of all these subjects. Many of our universities and colleges do not grant a degree in range management but a great many do have one or two courses in range that are service courses to students majoring in other fields.

In brief, range management is taught from the standpoint of a separate science in some schools, to a bare mention of the subject matter in others. Here is a good field of effort for the Society and I suggest that it take action to promote additional training in range management particularly in the western schools.

The many variations mentioned above lead to the suggestion that some sort of standard should be established for the training of technicians in range management. The Curricula Committee made a good start in 1950 (See Journal 4:212-1951), and the effort is being continued in 1951 through the combined Civil Service Eligibility-Curricula Committee. I believe that every school that offers a major in range management should have a minimum number of required credits, on the semester equivalent basis, in the field of range management and in the several closely allied subject matter fields. I am not proposing an accrediting system

but I do think that the American Society of Range Management could serve as a non-partisan organization to make recommendations as to basic curricula for the range management student. The Civil Service requirements do this in part, but let us also use the influence of the Society with the colleges to improve the offerings and the teaching where it is done.

I also feel that each student should be allowed to follow his special interest through the device of elective courses in his curriculum. He may, therefore, obtain much information in a second field in which he is interested. The greatest lacks in the training of students in range management are in the fields of economics, salesmanship, leadership, psychology and sociology. Very few have enough economics, and practically none have training in the other four fields.

At the present time a list of the schools offering courses in range management includes Abilene Christian College, A. and M. College of Texas, Colorado A. and M., Iowa State College, Montana State College, New Mexico A. and M. A., Oregon State College, Texas Tech. College, and the Universities of Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. Many other schools offering one course and not currently meeting Civil Service requirements are not listed.

In 1950-1951, five of the schools claimed the granting of approximately 90 B.S. degrees, 14 M.S. degrees and 5 Ph.D. degrees in range management. At the same time, these five schools mentioned the enrollment of about 160 students with junior and senior classification. Most schools are expecting a drop in enrollment this year due to the activities of the Armed Services. Many of the schools which give a major in range management also have graduate courses for

advanced work. However, the number of graduate students is not great in any of the schools except Utah State Agricultural College and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

The size of the staff in range management varies a great deal. Most schools have from one to three staff members and often these men are on part-time teaching and part-time research. The largest staff of nine men is at Texas A. and M. College. In that department, much of the basic teaching in ecology, forage plants and taxonomy is done. This department also has several courses designed as service courses to students majoring in animal husbandry, agronomy, agricultural education and veterinary medicine.

The training of the present teachers presents an interesting pattern. Nearly all of the teachers of range management who hold the Ph.D. have obtained that degree in plant ecology. The major colleges giving the training to these teachers include University of Nebraska, University of Minnesota and University of Chicago. It seems, then, that the teachers of range have had good training in the fundamentals of the plant sciences from some of our better known universities. I suspect that the training of our teachers in the future will shift to the western schools and will include more work in the animal sciences.

There are many places in our present training program in range management that can be improved. Efforts to make such improvements should be fostered and insisted upon by the American Society of Range Management. If this paper serves to point out some of those possibilities for improvement it is worthwhile.—*Harold F. Heady*, Associate Professor, Department of Range and Forestry, Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, College Station.