

RANGE MANAGEMENT

How Big Shall We Grow?

Presidential Address—Seventh Annual Meeting, American Society of Range Management, Omaha, Nebraska, January 26-29, 1954

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THIS is our seventh annual roundup and the time has come for you to learn how our Society fared in 1953.

Please accept my thanks for electing me as President of this wonderful organization. The other officers are grateful too, and they have shown this by working hard and cooperatively. An additional hundred members have served faithfully on the committees that are so necessary for carrying on the affairs of the Society.

Particular credit should go to the Chairmen of the Arrangements Committee, Wilkie Collins and Marvel Baker, and their helpers, for doing the numerous things necessary for our comfort and convenience at this meeting. Harold Cooper and his committee on exhibits are due a lot of praise for their fine work. Floyd Larson, our new President, recently Vice-President and Chairman of the Program Committee, with the help of several active committeemen worked out a fine program. The committee drew many suggestions for the program from members of the Society, and the speakers selected are authorities in their respective fields.

Vice-President Floyd Larson, Secretary Terry White, and members of the Board of Directors, Larry Stoddart, Red Atkins, Fred Kennedy, E. J. Dyksterhuis, Harold Heady, Dave Costello and Vernon Young are top hands—they gave prompt help on numerous assign-

ments. Terry, as our Secretary, is indeed a windfall for the Society. I wish we were rich enough to pay him more for what he does for us. He is one man who truly holds the keys to our kingdom.

Our Journal is a fine one and we want to thank Joe Pechanec for pitching in as editor this year. As you know he was one of the founding fathers and our first president. Joe has worked on too many jobs for me to list here, and he handled the job as editor in his usual reliable way. Bob Darrow is our new editor, and as in the past, we can rest easy because the Journal is in good hands.

We have slowly been coming of age and one development has particularly marked this advancement. This is the growth of the sections. There are 16 now. The reports of the

sections have been loaded with fine accomplishments. We have made good progress in the past with a set of national officers serving as head and shoulders. Now these sections are giving us strong sinews all the way out to the individual members in the country.

The sections are carrying the mail all the way across the country and are doing much toward strengthening the warp and woof of that magic carpet—our grassland. These sections are starting work where it will do a lot of good, and that is with our boys. Range schools, grass judging events and camps for FFA boys, 4-H clubs and boy scouts have become general activities within the last five years. Much of this progress has resulted from efforts of the sections.

The Wyoming section has \$89.15 toward a range scholarship fund. Range exhibits are seen at most agricultural meetings these days. A reporter from the Northwest section says 10,000 people saw one of their grass exhibits. The Nevada chapter is sponsoring a range essay contest with three awards. Ranchmen-Of-



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The-Year awards are being made in some sections.

We could fill one issue of the Journal with all the good things the sections are doing—but we must move on. Section officers are getting training and experience in the conduct of Society business. Future nominating committees will find in this group a prime source from which to draw experienced candidates as potential officers and directors.

You will be interested to know that Fred Kennedy, one of our directors, and several section chairmen have worked up an excellent handbook to be used by the sections. This handbook will serve as a guide to section officers and aid materially in bookkeeping and record keeping.

Many have doubtless heard about the \$5,000 award received by two of our members for the outstanding research achievement in agriculture in the United States for the past three years. This award, given by Karl Hoblitzelle of Dallas, Texas, went to Dr. Wayne Cook and Dr. Lorin E. Harris of the range department, Utah State Agricultural College.

Our 1953 income met our budget and we had a little to spare. V. H. Osborn, certified public accountant of Portland, Oregon, audited our books and his report of January 6, 1954 reveals the following regarding our financial status:

"All cash received has been properly accounted for. Bank deposits have been made as cash was received. The work has been carried on in a business-like manner, and efficient forms and time-saving procedures have been developed and placed in effect during the past year. Adequate records are being maintained at minimum expense to the Society.

"The accompanying balance sheet reflects the financial position of the Society as of December 31, 1953. The net worth of the Society was \$16,541.74 at the close of 1953 as compared with \$14,683.03 in 1952.

"The enclosed statement of income and expenses summarizes the transactions for the calendar year 1953. Income exceeded expenses by \$1,356.44. This compares favorably with a net profit for 1952 of \$1,326.10."

The question of how big shall we grow has been unanswered ever since we organized. Fred Renner raised the matter as a challenge when he was president. Some members have indicated that we need to get big enough to finance a good monthly journal and pay for the major time-consuming jobs that have grown too big to ride free. Other members have felt that we ought to let ourselves grow and see how big we can get.

Terry White recently told me that a minimum of 3500 members is needed this year, or soon, in order to print a journal of sufficient size to carry out an adequate editorial and advertising program. We could thus give greater service to our readers at a moderate cost. The enlarged journal and the enlarged membership would have wider appeal to advertisers. At present, we have become too big to ride free without becoming rich enough to pay full fare.

The time has come for our Society, including individual members, sections and officers and directors to face this issue head-on because we have a problem. Terry White reports that for the past three years the total number of suspensions has exceeded 500 per year. Prior to 1953 our gain in members was considerably greater than total suspensions and cancellations. This year, our membership has levelled off and there has been less than a 5 percent increase over a year ago.

Pat McIlvain, Chairman of the Membership Committee, and many section helpers have made extra efforts to enlarge our membership. Without this special emphasis we might have lost ground. We know that current crop and livestock prices and some other factors have

made people hang on to their cash, tighten their belts and try to live on their fat until conditions settle down. A good many members believe that some tensions which have slowed our membership drive have relaxed and that we may find it easier to increase the size of the Society again this year. There are too many people who need the services given by our Society for us to level out at our present membership. There are several hundred more ranchmen who would make excellent members. There are 500 more men in the Soil Conservation Service who ought to come in and other agencies have similar potential members. We need especially to recruit more members from several eligible sources that now have only a small representation in the Society, such as the Extension Service, state experiment stations, P.M.A., National Park Service, Indian Service and foreign technicians.

If we want to, we can still double our membership this year if every man will get a new member. This is not hard to do because some members have recruited several new ones this year. Also it will help if annually-elected officers in the sections will start their membership drives early in the year. Secretary White has a lot of good ideas on sparking membership drives and I hope you will call on him for help. And as "Doughbelly" of Taos has said, "If you want to get there soon, start quicker."

We really have a top outfit. One of the reasons for this is that our members represent both ends of the grass trade: production and science. Our producers include cattlemen, sheepmen, goatmen, dairymen, seedsmen and salesmen. Among our scientifically trained men are administrators, botanists, teachers, researchers, ecologists, biologists and foresters. This variety yields vigor that mixing of proper blood lines always gives. But because most of us are tied in with only one end of

the total range job, we are continually subjected to the magnetic pull of our own specialty. There is a continual temptation to want to reshape the objectives of the Society to conform with our own interests.

For that reason we need always to keep in mind the objective set forth by the founding fathers of our organization:

"To foster advancement in the science and art of grazing-land management, to promote progress in the conservation and greatest sustained use of forage and soil resources, to stimulate discussion and understanding of scientific and practical range and pasture problems, to provide a medium for the exchange of ideas and facts among Society members and with allied technologists, and to encourage professional improvement of our members."

If we think deeply of this objective we can readily realize our true area of responsibility. Basically ours is the technical society for range management. Our major trade territory is the native grazing land of the country. A special breed of men operates this kind of country. These men are the products of a unified social, economic and spiritual climate.

If we drifted from the course of our present objective and headed in one of several possible directions we

would have to drop an important group of our members that would have no interest in one of the other specialties. Also we would find that these other fields are already pre-empted by existing organizations.

Let's consider some examples. Say we decided to move entirely into one of the fields of botany, agronomy or ecology. Each of these sciences already is represented by an independent society, and each puts out at least one journal. The same condition is true of the livestock field. Livestock producers have their organizations, livestock researchers have their organizations and publish commercial, trade or scientific magazines according to needs.

None of these groups operate totally in the field we represent, yet we need a little seasoning from each of them to enhance our organization whose true major is range management.

There will be need for a vital range society as long as we find holes in the magic carpet of grass and as long as we can count ribs on livestock. And we need to do more of what we talk about.

A short time ago I asked one of our members whether a certain section program had been stimulating. He said, "Well, it largely was an echoing of re-echoing echoes but the

ideas were sound and we got what we needed."

This man made a point that is basic to education—and finally to action—that is repetition of the basic principles of our trade. We need to put new angles on basic principles in order to educate new members and to maintain the interest of seasoned members. But like the principles of law and order and of Christianity our basic principles of range management will need to be reemphasized until the millennium. The millennium in range management will come when the holes in the magic carpet are healed with grass, when all underprivileged animals are grass fat, and when all grassland is conserved and ranched right. At this glorious time our grasslands will provide gracious living for our people and hunger will be unknown.

Individuals are able to magnify their efforts by working with a strong organization that has the facilities through which one man's efforts can be multiplied. Organizations are kept strong by making it possible for members to grow. This relationship between society members and the society is the strength that makes for democracy in action. It is this quality that has made our American government unique and wonderful.

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR 1955 ANNUAL MEETING

Members who wish to present papers at the annual meeting in San Jose, California in January, 1955 are invited to offer them now. This is in accordance with Article V, Section 6 of the Bylaws. (See March 1951 Journal, Vol. 4: 134).

Titles and approximately 200-word abstracts should reach the Program Chairman before *August 1* to permit consideration by the Program Committee.—Kenneth W. Parker, Chairman, Program Committee, U. S. Forest Service, Agricultural Building, Washington 25, D. C.