
RANGE MANAGEMENT

Report of the President, 1957

Presidential Address—Eleventh Annual Meeting, American Society of Range Management, Phoenix, Arizona, January 27-February 2, 1958

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Here in this wonderful setting for our 11th annual meeting, it is hard to realize that it is a full year since your present officers assumed positions of responsibility in the Society. Now it is our obligation to give an accounting of what we have accomplished during this time. I say "we" advisedly, for although this presentation is called "the President's report," it obviously represents the work and accomplishments of many persons. The Executive Secretary, the Vice President and Directors, the National Committees, the Editor and Editorial Board, the Section officers and many others have all contributed. To all who have helped so well during the past year I give thanks. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with such a fine group of people and to be your presiding officer for the year.

The year just ended has seen the start of our second decade as a Society. The first youthful stage of initial establishment and rapid development is being succeeded by one of greater maturity and increasing responsibilities. We have become, rather rapidly, a recognized Society, taking our place along with many older and larger groups. We are now an acknowledged spokesman for the range resources and their man-

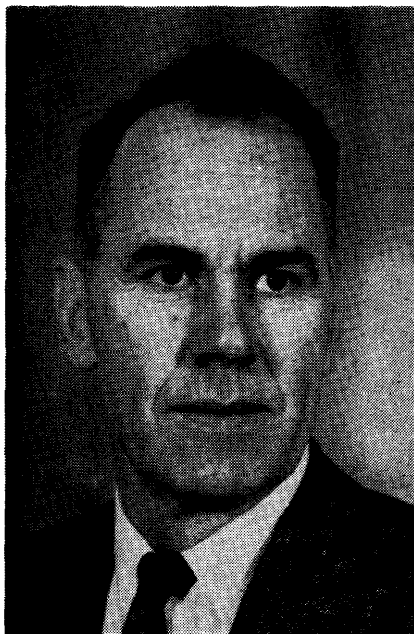
agement. Our publications, our meetings and other activities are now a part of the accustomed scene in the range areas of this continent. To our 18 sections has just been added a new member, the first section from our good neighbor to the south, the great country of Mexico. I am sure that I speak for all in extending a hearty welcome to Martin Gonzales and all of the group from Mexico whose efforts during the past year have built up member-

ship and made this new Section a reality.

This latest addition gives us 2 Sections which are located entirely in other countries than the United States, and 3 others which have a substantial part of their membership in another country—Canada. This international flavor is something to be valued, and presents a great opportunity to help with the development of range resources in many parts of the world. As one contribution in this direction, we have recently entered into an agreement with the International Cooperation Administration whereby membership in our Society is provided at nominal cost for a 3-year period to persons from other countries who have trained here under the I.C.A. Technical Assistance Program.

New Responsibilities

Growth and recognition bring responsibilities, and with increasing frequency the Society is being called upon to measure up to its position. One aspect of this position involves cooperation with other organizations concerned with grazing and forage problems. Last fall, in connection with the American Institute of Biological Sciences meetings at Stanford, the Joint Committee on Grassland Farming participated in the program. This Joint Committee (recently renamed the American Grassland Council) is a coordinating group composed of about twenty societies interested in grasslands. As a member of the Joint Committee, our Society took part in the program at Stanford, and a committee headed by Dr. Harold Heady brought range into the picture



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along with cultivated pastures and forage crops.

More recently we have been invited to take part in a symposium on methods of forage evaluation to be held in connection with the next annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy. Other groups involved in this symposium include the American Society of Animal Production and the American Dairy Association. In the near future, probably at the Tulsa meeting, our Society plans to act as host for some or all of these groups in a joint session with the American Grassland Council. Additional projects, planned or already initiated, involve working cooperatively with other national organizations.

I am certain that you are all well aware of the tremendous part played by the Sections in Society affairs. They constitute the real mainspring of the organization, and are the means by which most of our members, along with many other persons, are reached. As our Sections continue to grow in the strength and variety of their programs, so will the Society grow. It has been a pleasure over the past two years to read the Section newsletters and realize the fine programs of meetings, field tours, youth programs and other activities which have been developed. These Section activities are conducted on a scale and in a manner that is building recognition and prestige for our organization.

Committee Work

There is another important phase of the Society's activities which may not be so fully appreciated, namely the work of the National Committees. There are 17 of them at present, covering a wide range of activities. These committees are set up to handle specific items of Society business and considerable effort is given to making them broadly representative both area and occupation-wise. The largest group consists of committees essential for

the normal functioning of our Society. These include the Program, Local Arrangements, Displays and Contests, Nominations, Membership and many others without which we could not operate. The fine program we are enjoying here, and the excellent arrangements are good examples of the work done by these committees, and of the many hours of work contributed by their members.

Another type of committee deals with special problems. We have 4 of these at present, working on range research methods, a national inventory of range research, cooperation with youth organizations and a brochure on careers in range management. Each of these committees has been working for more than this past year, but because of the importance of their jobs I would like to report briefly on their overall progress to date.

A comprehensive publication on range methods is being prepared by the Committee on Range Research Methods, under the chairmanship of Dr. Wayne Cook. This relatively small committee is being helped by many other persons, with the various chapters assigned to different authorities. Publication in book form will be financed by the National Research Council. Good progress is being made, but this is a tremendous job, and not something to be tossed off in a hurry. When complete, this work will mark a major step in reviewing and presenting in one volume the many methods now being used in various phases of range research.

The work on a national inventory of range research is still in the preliminary stages. The idea is to conduct a nation-wide survey of range research now in progress and of additional research needs. Many partial surveys have been made, but nothing really comprehensive. The ground work is now being laid for a full-scale survey similar to that conducted 3 years ago by

the Society of American Foresters. Like the Foresters, we hope to enlist the support of one of the Foundations to finance this project on the scale required for a satisfactory job. The present committee, headed by Royale Pierson, includes representatives of the major research and land management agencies and of the universities.

Another project of major importance is that of the Committee on Cooperation with Youth Organizations, headed by Karl Parker, and composed mainly of men in the range extension field. The principal task of this committee is the preparation of teaching materials on range management suitable for the use of high school and other youth groups. There has been a dearth of material which is at once factual and attractive. Already this committee has a manual prepared in draft form which, when adapted for each major range region, should go far toward supplying the present needs. There is probably no phase of land management with which the general public is less acquainted than that of range. The opportunity for disseminating such knowledge is particularly good among young people, provided that we have the right sort of materials as a base. This we can expect to have in the near future, and the project is one which our Society is proud to support.

Another problem which is being attacked is that of recruiting young men for college training in range management. At present, and for some years past, there has been a shortage of college graduates majoring in range, although there are adequate training facilities in many parts of the country. A committee with Dr. Bob Humphrey as chairman is now working on a brochure on careers in range management, which will tell boys entering college something of the opportunities available in the field of range management. Many other

professions have such publications, and it is time we did likewise. It is hoped that this first brochure will be published this summer, in time to be effective with students starting college or electing their major field this fall.

Apart from the "project" committees, there are a couple of others which have a continuing and important function. One of these is the Committee on the Program of the Future, whose job it is to look ahead and suggest ways in which our Society can grow stronger and keep in tune with changing conditions. Already Harold Cooper and his committee have come up with a number of instructive ideas, and this study is continuing.

Salaries and Standards

A group which has an important task on its hand just now is the Civil Service Committee, under chairman Joe Wagner. It is the responsibility of this committee to keep us informed as to the employment and salary policies of the public agencies who hire professional range management people. There are many problems in this area. At this time last year we were concerned over the discrepancy in entrance salaries at the GS-5 and GS-7 grades for range graduates as compared to foresters. A resolution protesting this situation, was sent to the Federal Civil Service Commission and the principal employing agencies. This situation has now been rectified for the Range Conservationist and Range Manager positions.

A current problem in this field is that of entrance standards for professional jobs in range management. For several years there has been a shortage of well-qualified graduates, which has made it difficult for the employing agencies to fill available positions. As a result, pressures have developed which could lead to a permanent lowering of standards. Protests have already been

made by your Executive, and continued vigorous action is needed to guard against any downgrading of educational requirements.

Your Society has not endorsed the idea of accredited curricula in range management. It has, however, expressed its opinion definitely as to the minimum training which can qualify a person for entering this field of work. Details of the recommended curriculum was published in the September, 1952, issue of the Journal of Range Management, and have formed the basis for the GS-5 Range Conservationist rating which has been used for the past few years. To depart basically from the desirable standards set in this Range Conservationist rating for any technical position in the field of range management would be a step backward in a profession which still needs further strengthening. There are now some 16 or 17 schools equipped to offer full-fledged training in range management. If these range departments receive the full support of employment agencies, they should be able to supply all the personnel needed, with no need for recourse to students with little or no training in range, or those without college training.

New Developments

Following discussion at Great Falls last year, the idea of a summer meeting of the Society was tried out for the first time. For a beginning, it was decided to combine a regular Section meeting with the summer meeting of the Board of Directors, and to invite all Society members to attend. The place chosen was Jackson, where the Wyoming Section played host in fine style. While the attendance did not approach that of our winter meetings, the program did attract members from many parts of the country. There are some real advantages to a summer meeting, even though many

members are unable to attend at this season. Perhaps the greatest advantage is the opportunity to see the range resources and problems of the host area in a much more satisfactory manner than is possible in most areas in the winter time. This summer meeting idea is one that deserves full support, and could develop into a regular feature of great interest and value.

There are many other matters which could be reported here, but most of them are already familiar to you. Our financial situation presents some problems, as has been indicated in a special report by our Executive Secretary in the November issue of the Journal, and at the general business session. It does not appear to be a problem that need slow down any of our activities. In these days of rising prices, our annual dues are remarkably low for the services rendered. They will have to be increased soon to put us on a sound business basis, and I see no reason to anticipate any appreciable loss of members through such action. In finances, as in membership and related problems, our past record gives us no reason to fear for the future. As long as our Society is growing in its activities and influence, so will its membership and financial support.

In conclusion, let us never forget the basic nature of the resource upon which our organization is founded. "All flesh is grass" now as in the pre-Sputnik era, and food remains a fundamental need of mankind. The process by which green plants manufacture food by means of the sun's energy still remains the basic force which dominates the affairs of men and his animal kin. As self-professed students and custodians of grass we need not feel outmoded by the noise of rockets and the flight of artificial satellites. We are still dealing with the very basis of life, and in this field the challenges and opportunities were never greater.