

EDITORS CHOICE

Rangeland Ecology & Management, Volume 71, Issue 5

Transhumance as Antidote for Modern Sedentary Stock Raising

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Issue 5 of *Rangeland Ecology & Management* Volume 71 is a Special Issue primarily devoted to furthering our understanding of how to integrate the social-ecological aspects of rangelands into their management. It achieves this objective by providing a series of cases, examples, and components from silvopastoral ecosystems throughout the world. These systems are characterized by lush grasslands with an overstory of common but scattered shade-bearing trees. Silvopastoral systems include grazing by livestock as an important component of the rangeland ecosystem. In addition, these areas have historically appealed to humans for their refreshing park-like attractiveness that provides open space and the opportunity to fulfill an innate need for humans to maintain and foster a connection with nature. Silvopastoral ecosystems provide an opportunity to better understand social-ecological interactions in rangelands and begin to solve complex and multidimensional environmental problems that are complicated by intense involvement of humans as a major component of the ecosystem. This Special Issue, developed and coedited by Lynn Huntsinger and Tobias Plieninger, explores the added value of integrated social-ecological perspectives for the analysis and management of these rangeland systems. Much of its scientific value comes from the required dialogue between social and ecological sciences. The contributions in the Special Issue draw on and enhance the concept of social-ecological systems that is often providing new insights about managing rangeland ecosystems. The studied settings are predominantly outside of the United States and include numerous countries and regions, including Estonia, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latin America, Portugal, Romania,

Spain, and Sweden. This work offers an opportunity to draw insights from diverse international experiences and to potentially apply what has been learned in the research and management of rangelands abroad to those in the United States.

It is impossible to choose any single article as the Editor's Choice for Issue 5 of *Rangeland Ecology & Management* Volume 71 based on their scientific contribution because each article is a well-crafted social-ecological assessment and essay. The Editor's Choice article for *Rangeland Ecology & Management* Volume 71, Issue 5 is "Transhumance as Antidote for Modern Sedentary Stock Raising," by Dr. Paul F. Starrs from the University of Nevada at Reno. This choice was based on his creative and interesting ability to turn words into pictures of the mind and convey his messages in magically woven lyrics that combine into sweet phrases, which cause the reader to enjoy the reading so much that smiling is irresistible. Here is a short sample of Dr. Starrs' writing:

Few grazing themes so endure yet are so difficult for outsiders to document with certainty as historical and current-day livestock grazing routes: stock driveways. Excursions from one biome, ecotone, or landscape to another—in general, undertaken to seasonal cues—allow livestock owners and their hired herders to exploit different environments that offer notable advantages in terms of freeing livestock from an unvarying diet, overtaxed grazing grounds, common diseases, and cycles of drought or drenching rain. Movement at whatever scale permits herders or shepherds an escape from monotony when they shift grazing grounds to montane-woodlands or back to

lowland environments in travel that benefits both jaded humans and husbanded animals. Significant economic and ecological advantages accrue from the shifts of seasonal silvopastoralism, but the terrain, and in particular the routes animals travel, often stretch across varied land ownerships, and sifting out rights of passage is an ethnographic adventure requiring longstanding observation and consistent fieldwork.

His writing is so enjoyable to read that it is ridiculous for me to try to rephrase the essence of this manuscript for you. So, in Dr. Starrs' own words, his "synthesis focuses on livestock driveway establishment in two landscapes: Spain and, secondarily, the western United States of America, with an overarching theme of how stock driveways can connect ecosystems and, by sustaining customary use, knit together silvopastoral society." I hope you take some time to read his article and browse many of the wonderful stories, articles, and essays in *Rangeland Ecology & Management* Volume 71, Issue 5. (Much of this paper was lifted directly from the Special Issue, which you can find in *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 71(5):519–658.



Figure 1. Sheep and goats in the dehesa, a silvopastoral system that persisted since Roman times, in the Eastern Sierra Morena, Spain. Photo courtesy of Elisa Oteros-Rozas (Bx).

Roger Sheley
Editor-in-Chief, Rangeland Ecology & Management

Rangelands 40(5):168–170
doi: [10.1016/j.rala.2018.08.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rala.2018.08.002)

Rangeland Ecology & Management

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Integrated Social-Ecological Approaches to Silvopastoralism

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