

# Washington Cattleman of the Year Program Promotes Good Range Management

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**WE WANT** people to know that cattlemen are making strenuous efforts to handle their own and the public's land and water resources as efficiently as they put pounds of beef on their cattle. We also want to inspire other cattlemen in the state to increase their efforts along these lines." These are the words that Bob Rutter used when he recommended that the Washington Cattlemen's Association sponsor a "Cattleman of the Year" program. Bob, who started this whole thing, was president of the Association at the time, but ill health forced him to resign last fall.

I appreciate your interest in our association's Cattleman of the Year program, and the opportunity to tell you of the good it has done, especially in promoting range management and the objectives of the Range Society. I feel that the objectives of our program and those of this Society are nearly the same. The words are different, and so are the methods of pursuit. But I'm sure we're heading for the same goal.

Our 1950 program was a very successful affair from many standpoints. Editors of newspapers and farm magazines, leaders of agricultural agencies, and nearly everyone of our 2800 members have said that it is one of the finest things our association has ever undertaken.

Our 1950 experience showed us where we could improve the program. There's no question that the 1951 Cattleman of the Year program was more successful than it was the year before. More people took part in it. Also, we put more emphasis on *educational* values.

## HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Our association is made up of members from 25 county cattlemen's associations. Each county association chooses its own county cattleman of the year. From this group of county nominees a special committee of the Washington Cattlemen's Association selects the individuals for state honors.

We didn't want the program to turn into a "popularity contest." Officers of the state and county associations got together with the members of the state judging committee and worked out a set of grading standards that we are very proud of. County and state judging committees use the same score sheet in appraising each operation. The following points are used:

1. Improvement in land use: management of soil and water resources, grazing land management, grazing distribution, range condition, reseeding, etc.
2. Beef production efficiency: feeding efficiency, percentage calf crop and uniformity, quality of breeding herd, herd bulls, wintering program, etc.
3. Appearance of ranch property: corrals, buildings, home, and other conveniences.

4. Business management: is operation profitable.

5. Civic, community, and industry activities.

The first and second items, quite properly, are given the greatest scoring weight.

These five items are included for very good reasons. Bob Rutter expressed it this way. He said: "Washington's cattlemen of the year are men who have done an outstanding job of soil and water conservation, not only on their own land, but on that land which belongs to all of us—the public. Their cattle are the kind that do an efficient job of converting feed and forage into the product they sell—beef. Their buildings and equipment show the pride they take in their appearance. They are men who have made money in the cattle business because they are what every successful cattleman must always be to survive the good times and the bad times—a good businessman. And they are men who have consistently and without personal reward worked for the betterment of their community and the industry which is their bread and butter."

In 1950, fifteen county associations participated in the program. In 1951 twenty associations selected county cattlemen of the year.

The state association's judging committee is made up of 9 cattlemen and 6 representatives of state and federal agricultural agencies. This committee spent a full day on the ranch of each county winner. After completing their round of visits the committee met and reviewed each operation. The men chosen for state honors are selected by a majority vote of the committee.

The committee votes on selections two weeks before we announce the names of the winners. That gives newspaper, radio, and magazine editors time to get cattleman of the year stories in print.

This information is released the day after we honor county and state winners at our association's Honor banquet. I assure you that the press and radio people appreciate such foresight.

It was stated earlier that our 1951 program was more successful because we put more emphasis on education. In 1950 the men on the state judging committee got a fine education in the process of visiting and discussing the operations of the 15 county nominees. Why not, they asked, give others the same opportunity?

Officers of our county associations, therefore, organized "livestock and land use" field days on the ranch of each county cattleman of the year. These field days were scheduled to tie in with the visit of our association's judging committee.

Discussions were held at each ranch. Discussion topics dealt with the points on the score sheet as they affected each operation. Over 3000 people attended these "cattle and grass" field days. Discussions were led by the local county agent or soil conservationist. These men called on members of the state judging committee best qualified to talk on a particular subject. Land use and range management took up a big part of these discussions. Is there a better way to promote good land use and "the art and science of grazing land management"?

Ed Curtis, one of the cattlemen who was on the judging committee, put it this way: "For my money these (field days) were the best part of the whole cattleman of the year program. Folks saw some mighty fine ranches, good grass, and beautiful cattle. Saw some outfits I'd like to own myself. I got a lot out of seeing how these cowmen figure things out. They're a heck of a lot smarter'n I am, but now I find I'm much wiser than I used to be."

### REASONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

There are good reasons for the success of the "Washington Cattleman of the Year" program.

1. Fine leadership. Good ideas die a natural death unless the right people take hold of them and put them to work. Bob Rutter not only supplied the idea but a lot of the inspiration and drive to put our program across.

2. Soundness of the program's objectives.

program. They helped set up the score sheet. They did a top notch job of choosing their top cattlemen. They organized and carried out the field day programs, and they did it in keeping with the spirit and objectives of the program.

5. Emphasis on education. This is the most important reason for the program's success. People at field day programs learned a lot. They listened to talks on many subjects: new and improved methods of beef cattle management,

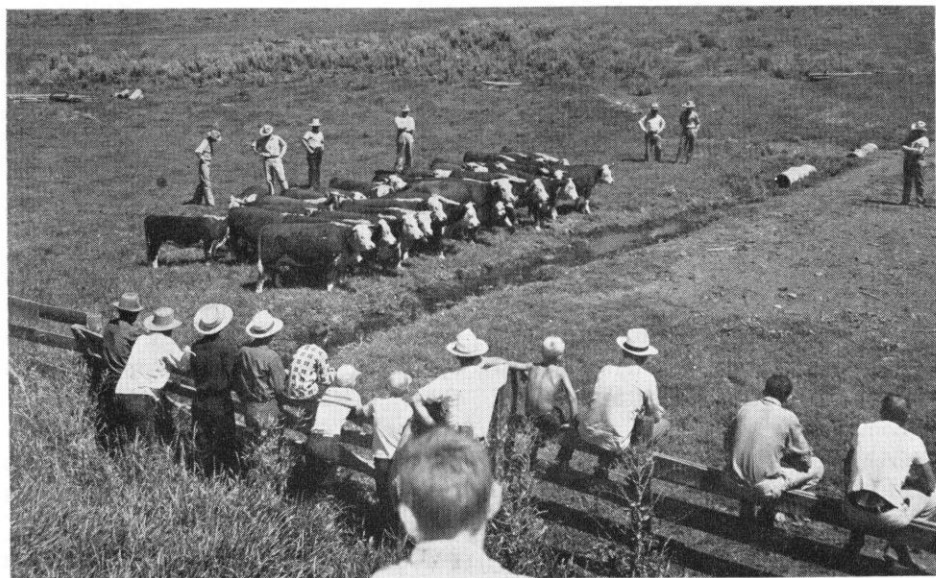


FIGURE 1. Portion of Cattleman of the Year field day attendance on Columbia Stock Farms near Hunters. The partners of this enterprise, Phil Monette, Don Monette, and Bob Hanson, were Stevens County "Cattlemen of 1951."

3. A constructive program with a positive approach. It shows people what cattlemen in Washington are actually doing. A constructive and positive program generates its own public relations. Judging from what editors and other people have said, this seems to be the reason the press, radio, and farm magazines have wholeheartedly accepted the program.

4. Fine support of our county associations. Our county cattlemen's associations had a hand in the development of the

feeding, breeding, nutrition, marketing, and range management (Fig. 1). They learned, among other things, how to grade bulls, and of the value of good registered bulls on herd improvement. They learned to judge range condition, range trend, and how range condition affects beef production (Fig. 2). They learned of soil and water conservation; the value and place of new grasses and legumes in a range, pasture, and forage improvement program.

6. The state association's judging com-

mittee. The men on this committee devoted a lot of time, energy, and thought to the program. Everyone agrees that the committee has done a fine job of handling a tough assignment. There was only one thing typical about any of the 35 operations they studied in the past two years—each cattle rancher is faced with a wide assortment of problems in his attempt to raise beef at a profit.

ent agricultural agencies that work with us. Each one of them was asked to assign somebody to represent them on the state judging committee. Charles R. Kyd, Extension Livestock Specialist, for example, represented the Extension Service. John Chohlis, Range Specialist, represented the Soil Conservation Service. Fred Kennedy and Reginald De Nio, Assistant Regional Forester and Forest



FIGURE 2. Range management discussion by part of attendance at Cattleman of the Year field day on W. J. Leonard ranch near Pomeroy. Leonard was Garfield County "Cattleman of 1951."

With that much variation, how can one man be chosen as the best? A good question. The committee spent many hours wrestling with it. They measured each operation from an "ideal". They asked themselves (on the basis of what they had seen), "How far has he gone along the road of *full* and *permanent* production from each acre of land and from each animal unit." With an approach like that each ranch stands on its own, and each nominee is judged on performance.

7. Cooperation of state and federal agencies. We recognize and appreciate the good help we received from the differ-

Supervisor, represented the Forest Service. George Wilson, State Land Appraiser, represented the State Department of Public Lands. Glenn Mitchell, Public Relations Adviser, the State Game Department. A. T. Flagg, Soil Conservation Coordinator, represented the State Department of Agriculture and the Department of Conservation and Development. The American Society of Range Management was well represented too. Nearly every one of the 15-man committee is a member of the Northwest Section of the Society.

The men on this committee, especially the technicians, did a good share of the

talking at field day programs. This can be good or bad. In our case it was good. I assure you that it was a cattleman's program every step of the way.

As a result of this agency participation many people—including cattlemen—became conscious of something they were only vaguely aware of: that we have state and federal organizations ready and willing to give us the special help we need to make cattle ranching a stable and profitable business.

Efficient beef cattle management. Washington's Extension Service through its county agents and Charley Kyd, the livestock specialist, have been talking this up for years and doing a fine job of it. Our program gives them a chance to do an even better job.

Efficient and proper use of soil and water resources on private lands. We have organized 73 soil conservation districts in Washington for that very purpose. In our state the Soil Conservation Service spends very nearly all its money helping people in districts lick their soil and water conservation problems. It is significant that thus far 28 of the 35 county cattlemen of the year are cooperating with their local soil conservation district, and that 7 of the 35 county winners and over 100 of our members are (or have been) supervisors of soil conservation districts.

At the Society's Billings meeting Alan Rogers said: "There is no better vehicle for fact finding and fact using than the Soil Conservation District. Here in one corporate entity we have the actual user of the soil and the scientist, the free enterpriser running his own show, and the technician advising and otherwise helping the operator." May I add that he was expressing the feeling of the Washington Cattlemen's Association.

Efficient use of public lands. Judging from what I read and hear, Northwest

stockmen must be unique. Our association believes the U. S. Forest Service in our state is doing as good a job as it knows how under the circumstances and the appropriations it has to work under. We do all we can to improve both. In this respect we are sorry to hear that Fred Kennedy is leaving the Northwest. We wish him every success in his new job at Denver.

The State Department of Public Lands knows (thanks to resolutions from our association and the state association of district supervisors) that stability of tenure is a *must* before any stockman undertakes to improve land he leases from the state. George Wilson is doing a fine job of putting the department's new leasing policy into effect.

#### CATTELMEN HONORED

At our annual Honor Banquet in Ellensburg we pay tribute to each of the county cattlemen of the year and their wives. We also pay special tribute to the men selected for state honors.

One of the high points of the Honor Banquet comes when the Range Management award is presented. A handsome plaque, donated by the Northwest Section, is given to the county cattleman of the year who has done the most outstanding job of grazing land management. In 1950 the award went to Fred Hanson of Ellensburg for his excellent management and improvement program on 20,000 acres of rangeland. Evan Blankinship of Randle received the award in 1951. The committee was mightily impressed with his 6,000-acre summer range allotment in the Tatoosh Mountains of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. He has been using this range for 28 years. There are no fences on it. Blankinship and Forest Service men have carved trails along the mountain sides and developed many springs. He

gets his range management job done by careful salting and by spending long hours in the saddle moving cattle from one part of the range to another. District Forest Ranger Dave Gibney said that you often see Blankinship's fine Herefords grazing alongside mountain goats.

We're mighty proud of Loy McDaniels of Loomis, our Washington Cattleman of 1950. We're just as proud of J. H. "Jidge" Tippet of Clarkston, my good friend and neighbor, who was the Washington Cattleman of 1951. And we are proud of the men who were chosen by their friends and neighbors as the top cattlemen in their counties—a great honor in itself.

If you want to pay tribute to men who have worked hard to become successful cattlemen, men who are aware of their responsibilities to their country and their land, I recommend a program such as we have sponsored these past two years. It will bring widespread acclaim to the men you honor. It will bring about a better understanding of the cattle business and its problems. And it will inspire many others to become better cattlemen, better land users, and better citizens. It will take many hours of hard work to make such a program a success, but I'm convinced that the benefits are worth the effort.



#### BRIEFS

Keep on plugging, and the chances are you will stumble on something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I have never heard of anyone stumbling on anything while sitting down.—  
*Charles F. Kettering.*



I never did anything worth doing by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident.—  
*Thomas Alva Edison.*



The man who wakes up and finds himself famous—hasn't been sleeping!—*Riders' Digest.*