Range Management Worldwide: Introduction

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Nearly half the land area of the World is natural pasture or, as we know it, range. These range areas vary from humid, densely covered grasslands and savannahs to almost desert where little vegetation is available for the livestock grazing on them.

On much of this area range livestock production is the main industry, furnishing the living for the people and tax revenues for the governments of many developing nations. Most of these livestock producers are proud of their animals. Unfortunately, in developing countries, many producers do not realize the importance of efficient management of the rangelands they use. The result is that these lands do not produce the meat and other animal products of which they are capable. Much is being done by the U.S.A., FAO, and private funds in technical assistance, in one form or another, in an effort to improve agricultural production. During the Keynote Session on Feb. 1, C. Kenneth Pearse, in his presentation on "Expanding Range Horizons—Worldwide", gave some background relating to technical assistance concerned with rangelands and some problems confronting FAO in their efforts. His paper is included in this published series. We, interested in range, would like to see more effort pointed to the range management and improvement problems. The tremendous improvement in range management in the U.S.A. during the last 50 years both on public and private rangelands, indicates the potentials in developing countries.

The session on Range Management Worldwide includes five papers. The first, by Dr. Drosdoff, deals with the broad subject of technical assistance in agricultural development. The next four papers consist of a panel on strengthening range management technical assistance: Dr. Cox from the standpoint of the administrator, Dr. Johnston for the advisor, Dr. McKell and Dr. Adegbola for the receiving country, and Dr. Tomanek for the Range Society.

In addition to papers presented at the Annual Meeting in New Orleans, a special effort has been made to bring together other papers from abroad and also worldwide news and notes of interest to range people in this International Grasslands Issue.

(Note: Before the papers were presented at the session, ASRM members were introduced from Venezuela, Mexico, and Canada.)

Technical Assistance in Agricultural Development

MATHEW DROSDOFF


World hunger is much in the news today. We read and hear about food shortages. We read about millions of subsistence farmers in many countries who are unable to meet their families' food needs. We read about the exploding populations and the serious food problem in India. The U.S.A. and the world are facing a major challenge—closing the gap between the have and the have-nots—the rich and the poor countries. The tragic war in Vietnam, the problems of the Dominican Republic and the serious food shortage in India are all related to the problems in the countryside and their relationship to the political, economic and social issues of the day.

In his recent State of the Union Message, President Johnson said:

"This year I propose major new directions in our program of foreign assistance to help those countries who will help themselves.

"We will conduct a world-wide attack on the problems of hunger and disease and ignorance.

"We will place the matchless skill and the resources of our own great America, in farming and in fertilizers, at the service of those countries committed to developing a modern agriculture."

Despite all we read and hear it is still almost impossible for many of us to understand what life is like in most parts of the world.

Imagine that your yearly income is below $100. You live in a shack with no bathroom, no running water, no electricity, no furniture save a table and one chair, a meager supply of poor quality food.

Imagine no newspapers, magazines, or books—no money for them; your family can't read anyway.

Imagine your nearest clinic or hospital 10 walking miles away; a midwife in charge instead of a doctor.

Imagine expecting to live only 30 or 40 years.

Imagine daily facing hunger and the drudgery of unrewarding labor.

Half the world lives this way. Of all the people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 80%