Place of the Range Professional in Worldwide Agricultural Development

My oversimplification of what a range man does (JRM 22 (1): 66-67, 1969) and Hooper's justifiable criticism of this viewpoint (JRM 22 (1): 67-68, 1969) leaves an important evaluation of our professional status hanging in limbo. This statement is intended to clear up some of these uncertainties.

Most professionals critical of simple statements about their professional status are reluctant to articulate their thinking into an effective and understandable synthesis. This is a reasonable reaction when one considers that shortcut or simple statements may be grossly inadequate and at times misleading. In pondering this question for the past several months, it has occurred to me that the whole set of concepts and principles referred to by Dr. Hooper is a reasonable approach if one can and will boil them down into a relatively concise summary statement. One possibility of doing this is to redefine a range professional as one with the ability to serve as a catalyst in the field of resource management. Otherwise stated, range people, in my opinion, have a unique capability of linking the intensively and extensively managed resources and in identifying problems and solutions where integrating actions are required.

The relevance of this ability to link or integrate resource uses to a sound forage development program in foreign countries is obvious. For example, it is not uncommon in tropical savannas with large areas of native forage to have agronomic developments as the single most important or key measure to expedite grazing management on native pasture. However, agronomic improvement, per se, will not accomplish the overall objectives of resource managers. These conditions call for services of the range professional who looks upon the essential improvement in forage crops as a means of improving the grazing patterns on large acreages of dependent range rather than as a desirable objective in itself, i.e., the replacement of all natural forage by improved species. This ability to place himself in the shoes of a livestock or game manager who must be concerned about the 12-month nutritional status of his animals sets range people apart from other professionals involved in managing our natural resources.

Range forage serves also as a common denominator linking forest and farm resources. As foresters practice more intensive management, the understory plants are becoming more important. This fact was brought "home" to me recently in a forestry research review where two silviculturists preceded me on the program. After they showed excellent examples of the increased understory occurring under stands thinned to produce maximum increments of forest products, I prefaced my remarks by emphasizing the need to use this new forage crop more efficiently. Indeed, the basic question for the intensive forest manager is: Do I spend thousands of dollars to control competition with crop trees, or do I look for a solution which takes advantage of animals in converting this competing understory vegetation into a useful product? Hopefully, their action will emphasize both game animals and domestic livestock in using this new source of forage.

Two recent developments by members of the ASRM have advanced the cause of range management and the range professional in national and worldwide involvement. These are: (1) The recent decision of the Library of Congress to add "Range Management" as a new subject heading and (2) The timely and valuable article on "Conservation Development and Use of the World's Rangelands" by Williams et al. (JRM 21 (6): 355-360, 1968). The time has come for each member of the Society to better equip himself to tell the story of our profession in each of our contacts with scientific and lay groups. Our effectiveness will depend to a great extent upon how concisely and lucidly we can portray the role of a range professional.—Donald W. Hedrick, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

A Perspective of Range Management

The following paragraphs are taken from the February 10, 1969, issue of The Grazier published by the Oregon State University Extension Service.

The Oregon State University Program in Range Management seeks to contribute as effectively as staff and funds permit to the research, teaching, and Extension needs of the range resource areas and their dependent user industries in Oregon. Because Oregon has range resources comparable to all surrounding states, our program does contribute to solution of problems in a much wider area in the Northwest and Great Basin. Actual cooperation on research and Extension short course programs has brought us together with colleagues in Washington, Idaho, Nevada, and California. Within the University, we also strive for the most effective possible coordination of effort among departments and schools to focus the energy and expertise of capable individuals whenever they are on range problems.

As range scientists and managers, we feel a strong tie with the urban citizen through our fundamental obligation to make all lands contribute to their full capability to our National, State and local economy. This tie is also significant and often very direct through the impact of our activities on the red meat our urban friends consume, the water they drink, the hunting and fishing they enjoy, and the outdoor recreation from which they benefit in preparation for another week or year on their respective jobs.

Range resources are one of a trinity of key food and fiber producing resources of the world—agricultural crop land, range land, and forests. Ranges provide a strong and essential tie between agriculture and forestry. We in range are inextricably tied to both—Range to Agriculture by the commonality of animal feed and red meat production and by the contribution that vegetation management makes to soil stability and water yield for agricultural and cultural use; Range to Forestry by the ecological reality of the total forest (overstory and understory occurring under stands thinned to produce maximum increments of forest products, 1969).

(continued on p. 292)