

# Psst, Do You Want Some Information on Rangeland Resources and Management?

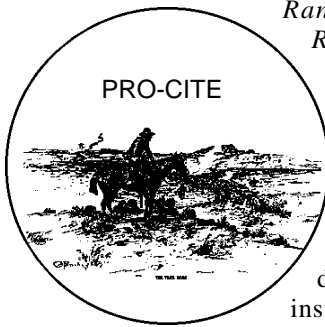
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Ha, just try and find it! Volumes and volumes of information exist; the challenge is in plowing through all of these volumes to find the subject of interest—such as a specific plant, how to control a pest, the impacts of burning or hundreds of other subjects. Well, the solution to that problem has just gotten a whole lot easier. Members of the Society for Range Management (SRM) and the Australian Rangeland Society (ARS) now have access to the most comprehensive bibliographic database of rangeland resources and management that exists, thanks to a joint initiative between the two societies.

The database contains a read-only record of all of the articles that have been published in *Rangelands* and its predecessor *Rangeman's Journal*, the *Journal of Range Management (JRM)*, *The Rangeland Journal (TRJ)* and its predecessor the *Australian Rangeland Journal (ARJ)*. Furthermore, the database doesn't require an advanced degree in computer science to use. All that is required is a computer with a CD-ROM drive, the ability to follow simple instructions for installing the program and the basic skills of scrolling and double-clicking with a mouse in a windows 95/98 environment.

Each record in the database contains the names of the authors, article title, name of the journal, year, volume number, issue number, page numbers, abstract (where available) and key words (where available). All records can be quickly searched by author, title, Journal or keywords. A little practice will enable advanced techniques capable of full text searches for selected words in the above fields. Word searches in *Rangelands* are good only for authors and titles because abstracts do not exist; but the database is capable of pointing you to the exact location of that article that you have been wanting to review only you forgot which issue it was in.

The database is currently available as a read-only version from the Society for Range Management office. The database and the files for searching it are supplied on a CD-ROM disc which comes with instructions for installation and a small manual from ProCite with brief instructions for using the application. A small executable file may be installed on the computer's hard drive which permits the records to be searched directly from the CD-ROM disc if you choose.



There are currently 6953 records in the database which is complete through 1998. Of these 6953 records 72.8% are from *JRM*, 21.9% are from *Rangelands* and 5.3% are from *TRJ/ARJ*. This large number of records in one location makes this a great resource for anyone interested in rangeland resources and their management. Fortunately, the ProCite application enables users to search thousands of records in the blink of an eye.

**The Journals:** *JRM* was first published in 1949 and contained information on the society, gradually added information on resource management research. The Society decided to convert *JRM* to a peer-reviewed journal for scientific research. However, this created a need for a lay journal where managers and rangeland users could share ideas and personal experience relating to rangeland issues and resource management. This led to the publication of the *Rangeman's Journal* in 1974 which became *Rangelands* in 1979.

The *Australian Rangeland Journal* was first published in 1976 and became *The Rangeland Journal* in 1992. Although the journal is small in terms of the number of papers published each year, it accepts papers of scientific merit on a diverse range of issues associated with rangeland resources. Ecology, monitoring and management feature predominantly in published papers, but these address issues that are not restricted to grazing or pastoralism (ranching). This diversity is reflected in the special issues of the journal that have been published in recent years. Topics covered include wildlife and conservation in rangelands; contemporary values, goals, needs and expectations of rangeland users; grazing management; and water in the rangelands. In addition, papers are published concerning range rehabilitation, feral animals and their impact and management, native herbivore/domestic stock interaction, native grasses and range condition and monitoring. Papers are accepted from anywhere in the world and there is an increasing number of international papers being published.

**The History of the Database:** The concept of the database began in late 1992. However, at that time no digital files existed for any SRM publications (the first digital files were created in July 1994.). So a search began to discover if any SRM members had created a bibliographic database for their own use. The search was successful. John and Terri Walker, then at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in DuBois, Idaho, had created a database that included both *Rangelands* and *JRM*.

John agreed to transfer his database into the ProCite software and to make the bibliography available, through the SRM, to everyone who wanted a copy. Distribution of the database first began in 1994. About the same time the ARS contacted SRM about the possibility of including the information from their journal in the database. SRM agreed and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was formally adopted by both organizations in 1997. The MOU specifies the responsibilities of the two societies in respect of the database. SRM has agreed to handle the production and development of the database while the ARS has agreed to provide its records for inclusion in the database, provide new records as they become available and promote the database within Australia and elsewhere through its publications. The MOU also acknowledges that each Society retains the rights to their published information.

By this time, John Walker was assuming new responsibilities with Texas A&M University and, because he and Terri no longer had time to work on the database, they turned all of their rights over to the SRM. For that contribution, the SRM owes John and Terri Walker a great debt of gratitude. One of us (CBR) wanted to see the database completed because of the tremendous value that it has for rangeland resource managers and scientists. Therefore, he volunteered, in 1997, to update the *JRM* records and add the records from the Australian literature. He continues to this day, adding abstracts to the *JRM* records (since the original database did not contain abstracts). He has recovered *JRM* abstracts from the 1980s [from word processing disks created by SRM on an unrelated project called Communications on Renewable Resources (CORR)]; from abstracts created by SRM members Linda L. Conde, Steven Warren, Don Michael Andrews and Brian V. Hulet of articles published in Volumes 6-10 and 12-17, 1953-1964 (Volume 11 was not found); and with scanning assistance from Bob Rich to recover missing abstracts.

On the Australian side, we are grateful to Gary Bastin of CSIRO in Alice Springs for his work in preparing the Australian records for the database. Most of the early paper titles and abstracts were not in electronic form so these required scanning, character correction and formatting before they could be imported into the database. Gary is also extracting 'key words' for papers where they do not exist (i.e. issues prior to volume 19, published in 1997) and has agreed to continue providing new records as they come to hand to ensure the database is up-to-date.

**The Future:** A bibliographic database is never complete. There is always new information being released that needs to be included. Adding value to the current database is possible by including abstracts and keywords where none exist (which we hope to have completed by the next release). We could

seek agreements with other organizations to expand the database. We are particularly interested in information published by the Grassland Society of Southern Africa and have contacted them to learn of their interest in participating.

New and different ways of providing this information are also possible. SRM could, for example, make this database available on the World Wide Web, where anyone could search the database on-line. The important questions are what would be most valuable to managers and scientists in the field, and to others interested in information and rangeland resources. Finally, there is always, the bottom line - what are the costs and how will the financial resources be obtained to accomplish the desired end. However, we are convinced that these problems will be overcome and that this valuable SRM/ARS information resource will only become more valuable and more easily accessible.

The Australian Rangeland Society views this joint initiative with SRM as being of great importance to rangeland science and management through the sharing of ideas across international borders. We live in a global environment these days and many rangeland issues are common between different countries. However, the issues are often dealt with in different ways and we can all learn from each other in working towards optimum solutions for range resource issues. The joint database is one way of helping to share this information, and including other professional publications in the database will enhance its value.

#### **Where can you get a copy?**

Copies of the bibliography are available from the SRM, 445 Union Blvd., Suite 230, Lakewood, CO 80228, USA. The cost of the read-only CD-ROM is \$125 (U.S.) for SRM and ARS members and \$140 for non-members, with shipping charges of \$4.00, \$5.00 and \$10.00 to US, Canada/Mexico, and all other countries, respectively.