People From The Past

Harold F. Heady

Editor's Note: As we commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Rangelands magazine, we pay tribute to SRM members who have helped shape the profession of rangeland management.

By Kindra Gordon

To many range management professionals, Harold Heady needs no introduction. This well-known range scientist and consultant is author of "Rangeland Management," a major text used internationally for range management education.

Heady is also a charter member and past president (1980) of the Society for Range Management. As he says, "In retrospect, I've been a member of SRM longer than there has been an SRM."

A native of Buhl, Idaho, Heady was brought up by his father on a 40-acre irrigated farm where they raised cattle and crops. From that experience came his interest in range management, he says, "My interest in rangeland conditions and management began while I was in high school, about 1932. At that time, I owned a few cows that grazed on public land during the summer. It was land washing away when the snow melted, grazed to bare ground in spring, and blowing away in dry season winds."

These were times of both drought and the Great Depression, and by 1934, having tired of farming, Heady rented the land and went to the University of Idaho to study range management – in the school of Forestry, where only one professor taught range management. Upon graduation in 1938, he accepted a scholarship toward an MS degree in forest ecology at Syracuse, New York. He and his wife then returned to the West, and he had a brief stint working for SCS in Washington state and later accepted a teaching job at Montana State College, Bozeman in

1942. When he arrived at Montana State, World War II had begun and as faculty left to become officers, he taught everything from geography to meats.

In 1946, Heady recalls that he was preparing for an interagency symposium on range management to be held March 28-30 in Moscow, ID and organized by Dr. Vernon Young at the University of Idaho. It was a milestone because March 29 was Heady's 30th birthday. But it was also a milestone because the last panel and discussion focused on the need for a Range Society. Heady says, "The discussion became a bit heated as to whether we should be attached to another society or on our own." But, the outcome was that Joe Pechanec, Terry White, then SCS range leader for the Northwest, and Heady put the Society together and became its first officers.

In 1948 Heady earned his doctorate from the University of Nebraska.

In the fifty-plus years since that time, Heady has been an active SRM member, authored and co-authored more than 150 journal articles and is listed in the National Leaders of American Conservation. He is the recipient of two Fulbright Scholarship and the SRM Certificate of Merit, as well as the Fellow and Renner awards. The California SRM Section presented him with the Man of the Year award in 2001. He retired from the University of California-Berkeley in 1984.

Today, Heady's innovative spirit and "make it happen" attitude are still evident. Asked his thoughts about the *Rangelands* magazine, he says, "The basic purpose of *Rangelands* and its predecessors in my mind was to interpret research and present rangeland information in useful ways to land owners and managers. Descriptions of practical ex-

amples were to enhance effectiveness. It certainly is different from, more readable, and more popular than the *Journal of Range Management*. My concern with *Rangelands* is that it has not kept pace with the changes in attitudes about rangelands, with the green revolution. There should be invited papers, editorials, picture stories, etc. from the detractors around us who equate us with rangeland use by livestock." He notes that viewpoints and letters to the editor help keep an active dialogue about rangeland management and the purpose of SRM.

As a final thought, he says, "The five published objective of SRM have changed very little in 56 years. Yet, all of us talk about the changes in the profession that SRM represents. I suggest that it is time someone or even a commission took those objectives one by one, analyze the history of how they were attacked and conclude how they should be handled for the future."

Harold Heady currently resides in Berkeley, California.

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