

meter by 10,000. These data will evaluate how abundant and widespread the species are and, if taken over a series of years, can show whether a particular species is increasing or decreasing on the area and in what portions of the area.

Conclusions

The metric belt transect offers a relatively fast, simple, highly accurate, and consistent method of estimating the crown cover, species composition, forage production, total

biomass, abundance, distribution, and trends of plants. Disadvantages of the system, such as projecting plant growth or reconstructing grazed plants, can be avoided by making estimations at full season of growth and/or minimized by making comparisons with fully developed plants in the area. The system is widely adaptable for use in obtaining data for management of public and private lands, for evaluating ecological relationships, and for monitoring the effects of range treatments and management practices. ●

Legislation, Policy, and Survival in the Ranching Industry

Jeanne W. Edwards

Napoleon Bonaparte was a stickler for crystal clear communications. He had a saying that applies to much of today's world of legislation. An order that can be misinterpreted, will be misinterpreted. The story goes that Napoleon kept an idiot sitting on a camp chair outside his headquarters. The idiot wore corporal's stripes because he served a very important purpose. Whenever Napoleon wrote an order he would show it first to the idiot. If the idiot did not misinterpret the order, Napoleon felt it was safe to transmit it.

There is little need for me to tell you about impacts of legislation upon the private rancher. You *are* aware. When I look around this room I see some of the most sophisticated, best educated, most politically aggressive range professionals in this nation—and maybe in the world. Within this Texas section of the SRM, one can find an impressive list of members who have worked diligently to assist our federal law makers to produce good legislation—and, believe it or not, there really has been some good legislation. For those tireless efforts, we ranchers truly are grateful.

Because the Texas community is somewhat unique in its political awareness, I find myself, once again, in the bringing "coals to Newcastle" syndrome. Unlike many other sections, Texas is aware of the threats to the private rancher—and this can be seen in the theme of your annual meeting. Legislation, Policy and *Survival* in the Ranching Industry.

Survival is such an interesting and appropriate term when applied to the producer. Someone (and I can't remember who) once said, "If America dies, it won't be murder it will be suicide." And in truth, if this great nation *does* do herself in, it will be because in the malaise of our spirit, we have failed to recognize and/or failed to take action against, the ever increasing reasons for the producer *not* to produce.

Incentives to produce are the aortas in the body of success—and for the rancher—a giant aneurysm—has

appeared. We would be most fool-hearty if we buried our heads and refused to recognize the symptoms—and causes—and the prognosis.

While we as Americans preen ourselves and then proudly letter the term "Free Market Place"—for the rancher and farmer—there is no such place. Getting our products to the market place is *very* expensive. And, as the recent years well attest, many never make it. In 1981, in Elko County, Nevada, four of my good colleagues have "thrown in the towel." As one of these ranchers said, "After three generations of giving her all we got, it just isn't worth it any longer."

Not only do we face the whims and caprice of nature, but today our own government often postures herself in the "opposition corner."

During these economically perilous times, we food producers desperately need our government to recognize her obligation to agriculture—not to guarantee that everyone who tries to run a ranch or farm will be successful, but to see that her federal policies give as many of us as possible the opportunity to try. In other words, not eliminate the incentive.

As a Nevada rancher, specific legislation impacting the Saval to a significant degree—and, in particular to our range management, are the Organic Act, Wild Horse and Burro Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Federal Water Pollution Control Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, Clean Water Act, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, RPA, RCA, and the Wilderness Act. The activities that are impacted by these rules and regulations are soil and water conservation, nonpoint pollution abatement, pest control, predator control, brush management, feed lot waste disposal, land use patterns, land management plans, number of animals, and kinds of animals. These are just a small percentage of the actual "guide lines" under which we must operate. As a matter of fact, I can honestly say, *few* of our decisions are made without the "helpful hand" of big brother!

The impacts of environmental regulations have been to skyrocket the cost of production—and decidedly lower the levels of production—but these are the facts of life—and we must live—and produce by them.

Whether the environmental protection legislation is necessary for a safe tomorrow is debatable—and as you are well aware, *has* been debated, over and over-and over.

Again, I can only say that the legislation—the rules—are a fact—and for the rancher, so much now depends upon the interpretation of the legislation—the “intent” or goals of the federal agency implementing the legislation. I, like most thinking adults, have concerns for our future. It seems so simple to me—without adequate food, we are dead. Individually, one human being, or, as a nation, without food, we are dead. It certainly doesn't take a mental giant to see the wisdom of that.

So, if this astute, adroit thesis is correct, it only follows to believe Agriculture is important to the individual and to this nation. Now, if we take this thought one step further—What is agriculture? It is, in essence, the food produced. It is not soil, not water, not agriculture research, not extension—these are all necessary components or tools—but each and every one must be picked up and put to use by the producers. Without *the producers, there will be no food*. If you doubt my words, I urge you to examine Poland. Poland has soil, Poland has water, Poland has technical expertise. The only thing Poland does *not* have is private producers. Poland destroyed the incentive for private producers, and today Poland is hungry and thus on the brink of Civil chaos and held hostage by her food needs.

We, in this nation, *must* take notice. For us there is a glaring threat that we, too, may see, in the not too distant future, a loss of private producers, a loss due to “it's no longer worth the struggle” attitude. How long do you think a sound man can hold out against not only economic woes but the negative or indifferent attitudes of a community.

Recently a nightly news commentator in his news presentation said, “Unfortunately, both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are made of “pro-agriculture” members.”

I wonder if this gentleman thought that this nation would be better served by Ag Committees comprised of “anti-agriculture” members.

For the past decade “anti-producer” sentiment has become ever increasing. This sentiment may have come about because of our inability to politically enunciate our economic constraints. We are called subsidy-greedy or worse.

I really do believe most of us producers understand that there is more to agriculture than just profits—that there is the moral imperative for environmental protection, water quality, and soil stability. But it *must* be within the framework of a viable ongoing economic unit and with the recognition that for the food producer and his operation, the banker must *always* be faced. Never once has the bank accepted the environmentalists' applause in lieu of hard cash.

I am so *weary* of rhetoric and noble thoughts, I am so tired of being told that “land is *not* something that I inherit from my parents, but is something I borrow from my children.” *I know this*, but *how* can I produce if no one cares about the cost of property producing—other than myself and my banker.

Again, I must say that we producers have not made the facts clear. We are often regarded as symbols of profit and greed (a distinction seldom drawn) and this profile has come

about due to our lack of communication, both through the media and through politics.

Producers by and large are ready and willing to serve their communities, their professional societies, their industry associations. They are usually timid, however, about getting involved with politics—and through the media taking public positions on a variety of issues. It is an understandable view. Politics is probably the cruelest form of activity known to man short of war and cannibalism.

Not as cruel but equally risky is the involvement with the media. There is always the possibility of embarrassment, of making people angry and attracting unwanted attention from various quarters. However, it seems to me that if producers are to play the role they can, and should, and *must* play in a world in need of stability, we will *have* to come out of the closet and deal with both politics and the press. This is what the producer can do about *public* sentiment. What about our partners in USDA, their policy, their interpretations, their goals?

I refer back to an earlier statement: “For the past decade ‘anti-producer’ sentiment has become ever-increasing.” This I believe is not only by the public, but, of all places, I seem to sense or fear, in some USDA policies or directions.

Perhaps “anti-producer” is too strong in connection with USDA. It would probably be closer to an “indifferent posture”, but for me, the rancher, it is just as deadly.

Without rancor, without spite, but with great sadness, I tell you USDA has forgotten “who brung her to the dance.” For so many years the food producer has looked to USDA as the needed source of help—as the staunch ally. Can the producer rest in the same comradery today? It seems to me that we have made a pretty darn good team. Why not align ourselves now?

Without the rancher, without the farmer, there is no need—there is no *reason* for USDA—for SCS, for ASCS, for APHIS, for AR or for Ag Extension. We, the producers, are the bottom line. If we fail, USDA must know for whom the bell tolls—it tolls for her.

The hierarchy of the USDA *must* be reminded by all of us that Washington's excellence of “policies and papers,” “rhetoric and reviews,” are not the stuff of which success is made. Our federal agencies must not let what seems like good politics become bad politics!

Success is the local SCS conservationist aligning himself with the cowboy and together, as a team, overcoming whatever conservation and production problem assails the private land operation. Success is the county extension agent working with and for the producer, extending knowledge so that the rancher or farmer is better equipped to handle the ever-changing problems. Success is that little known, little recognized, agriculture researcher working out the answer for those private producers, while he understands the economics of the industry, and fighting to find the answers that the producer can afford.

This is the stuff of which USDA has built her reputation and her support. The *local*, on-the-ground excellence. Not political showmanship from Washington. We must not force the cart to pull the horse.

At one range meeting I ran into a retired bureaucrat. He said, “The reason I'm here is to see what they are teaching the young people.” What *are* we teaching them? What do we show them about “success”?

I have seen many good, bright, intelligent people become so discouraged and leave USDA. We must not allow this to

happen. It is a major mistake to wait until these professionals reach GS 13 or 14 before recognition is given to them. They must be shown that a standard of excellence is most important at the field level—and recognition is not given for playing the right political game.

A strong agriculture industry must have, and be able to work with, a strong, supportive USDA if any of us are to survive. USDA becomes strong by her people. One of the most basic requirements is for good people—for an adequate and continuing reservoir of the essential skills without which the agency cannot succeed. Most young people in USDA are optimistic and look forward to the job in USDA, the job in the most fundamental sense, of encouraging and helping producers produce. The minute the young person sees the agency become an adversary of the producer, or sees the agency destroy the incentive for production, he then recognizes that USDA loses its uniqueness and becomes just one more arm of the giant octopus of bureaucracy. The young person is lost to us.

Thanksgiving night on ABC's Nightline program, Ted Kopel spoke of this nation's Special Blessings that we are squandering—and though we may be a nation of beauty and abundance today, we are looking possibly at a food system

in collapse for tomorrow. This, he said, is due largely to soil loss.

Neil Sampson, on the same program, warned of the loss of prime farm land to urban development.

Neither one told the American people of the number of individual private producers who are "throwing in the towel", either willingly or forced. A food system in collapse! The possibility is certainly staring us in the face. We together—the producer, USDA, and academic communities—must see that the possibility does not become a fact.

In closing, I would like to read a short press release from UPI, and I quote:

"Dateline: Moscow.

President Leonid Brezhnev has made official what every housewife has known for a long time—food is the number 1 problem.

"The food problem is economically and politically, the central problem of the five year plan", Brezhnev said earlier this week in a speech to the nation's parliament.

A housewife could have told him, it is also the single most crucial problem of a family's daily plan—"how to get enough to feed the children." And on this, I rest my case. ●

National Conference on Grazing Management Technology

The recent convergence of new technologies and emerging philosophies related to grazing management has stimulated interests of scientists, educators, action agency personnel and producers in the U.S.. Accelerated activities within these sectors emphasize the need for a national conference to facilitate communication, coordination and evaluation of current and future grazing technology.

Texas A&M University will be the site of such a conference November 10-12, 1982. The conference will (1) examine previous grazing management concepts relative to current methods of grazing management research and its practical application; (2) enhance awareness of current grazing management research; (3) discuss future approaches for research, development, transfer and application; and (4) examine relative effectiveness and efficiency of technical information transfer from research and development to practical application of grazing management technology.

The Conference will open with a tour of the grazing management research sites on the Native Plant and Animal Conservancy of Texas A&M University. Short duration grazing and related studies will be emphasized.

Panels of research scientists from throughout the United States will develop and present research concepts and approaches relating to plant, vegetation and animal responses to grazing management. The systems approach to grazing management will be analyzed. In-depth discussions of the topics will follow the formal presentations.

Current research studies and summaries will be presented through a posterboard session. It will feature the objectives, approach, significant findings, and research direction of universities, private research groups, state experiment stations, and federal research agencies.

Panels of action agency and university personnel will explore the topic of technology transfer. The agency panels

will look at the transfer of technology to ranchers on private lands and technology transfer in agencies managing publicly owned rangelands. A panel of university and Extension personnel will look at the role of the education institution in technology transfer.

A group of ranch owners and managers will discuss implementation of grazing management technology. In addition, this portion of the program will highlight economic risks of grazing management. A private consultant, Dr. Stan Parsons of Ranch Consultants Limited, will explore the role of holistic ranch management.

A wrap-up session will be a reaction to the conference and a "crystal ball" look at what is next in the area of grazing management. A panel composed of a rancher, a researcher, an agency representative, and an educator has been charged to handle this portion of the program.

Registration entitles conference participants to the proceedings, barbeque, local transportation, conference sessions and local tour. For registration information and additional conference information contact Dr. Jerry Stuth, Grazing Management Technology Conference, Department of Range Science, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843 (713/845-5548).

Bear Research and Management

The Sixth International Conference on Bear Research and Management will be held at Grand Canyon, Arizona, February 18-22, 1983.

Scientists, managers, and administrators who wish to present papers should contact David M. Graber, Research Scientist, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Three Rivers, CA 93271 (209-565-3341). Information on preparation of abstracts, manuscript format, and deadlines will be provided, and you will be placed on the mailing list for program and registration information as it becomes available.