

Convention Will Provide Opportunity to View Savory Grazing Method

Lou Armijo

Allan Savory is a man with a mission which he pursues with evangelical fervor. That mission is to revise the thinking and methods of stockmen with grazing animals and through them to reverse the process of desertification of vast areas of the globe.

Easier said than done. Only in the past 2 years has acceptance begun to snowball as more and more ranchers attend the Savory Grazing Method (SGM) school in Albuquerque and federal land management agencies try it.

"The largest hurdle," says Savory, formerly of Rhodesia, "has been convincing range professionals, including personal friends, that the grazing method does not negate all the

ier, and politician who has packed extraordinary experiences into his lifetime, earns a good living from his consulting and teaching, but that is not his goal. He and fellow Rhodesian Stan Parsons started their school and consulting firm 3 years ago. In 1981 came a friendly parting because of differing attitudes.

Parsons preferred to continue as a private consultant to individual ranchers. Savory's goal, he says, is to work as a conservationist. He feels that by convincing U.S. range professionals in government agencies and universities of the efficacy of his technology it will spread throughout the world, especially to developing nations where misery and starvation are current problems because of desertification.

Again from his book: "Despite having some of the most advanced agricultural practices in the world and universities specializing in range management, America has millions of acres of rangeland that have been reduced to very poor condition and productivity. Millions of acres of once productive Africa have become man-made desert and millions more are in the process of being converted to desert." This is true in all arid and semi-arid parts of the world, he adds.

A perception of the world-wide problem began to take



Phyllis and Jack Carlisle listening to Allan Savory explain the Savory Grazing Method.

range management knowledge gathered through decades of research. The Savory Grazing Method is built on that research. My contribution is a new technology based on a reinterpretation of existing data."

New is Savory's holistic approach to range management. "Holism is based on the theory that in any ecosystem the components function together as a whole but are meaningless individually unless viewed in relation to the whole," says Savory in an early chapter of a book he is writing.

"Another new aspect of great significance," he adds, "is the importance of the 'time dimension' and its effect on the physical influence that animals have on the ecosystem. This was a fact resisted by range scientists who were generally taught that the physical impact of animals was detrimental to the range."

Savory, 47, articulate former game warden, rancher, sold-



Jack Carlisle on left out on the ground with Allan Savory discussing plants and grazing.



View of SGM cell on the Spurlock Ranch, Navajo, Arizona.

shape when Savory was a 20-year-old game ranger in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). As he matured so did his thinking and the theories that evolved.

Perhaps fortunately, Savory had no training in range management. His only degree is in botany and zoology conferred by the University of Natal in South Africa. As his interest in range conditions grew he was able to examine with a fresh eye the accumulated data of generations within the framework of his own observations.

He found that under the brief but intense impact of large herds, wild or domestic, grasslands did not deteriorate. Hoof action and concentrated waste products of large herds were necessary to maintain healthy grazing lands.

To simulate this natural order Savory often recommends a rapid increase in the number of animals grazing an area. To concentrate the stock a paddock fencing arrangement is employed, often, but not necessarily, in the shape of a wagon wheel with fences in place of the spokes.

After considerable success on private ranches in Africa and the Southwestern United States, Savory was retained by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Tribal Council of Sandia Pueblo—just north of Albuquerque—to establish the first SGM cell in New Mexico Tribal Lands. It went into operation in February, 1982. Since then other federal agencies have sent range specialists to the SGM school with an eye toward trying the method on public lands.

A major challenge for the SGM method has begun on two national forests in Arizona. The Forest Service and two permittees on the Tonto and Apache-Sitgreaves have agreed to test the method on two distinctly different ranges. The challenge is applying the technique on multiple use land in competition with the many recreational interests of a jealous public.

Wildlife will benefit, Savory maintains, and there will be little or no interference with the activities of hunters, fishermen, hikers or any other recreational users of the national forests.

One concern is the use of low voltage wires in the fencing of the active paddock. Savory feels warning signs will keep most people away and even if accidentally touched, the shock would not hurt a healthy person. "Everyone would rather do without these wires but they are the best tool we have available at this time. I hope research will find a better way," Savory said.

The two national forest pilot sites are in remote areas. One is the Dodson Allotment of Jack and Phyllis Carlisle and their three sons northeast of Show Low. The other is the much lower desert country Greenback Allotment of Ed and Betty Conway and their two daughters. It lies southeast of Payson and just north of Roosevelt Lake.

Both ranchers are familiar with SGM and enthusiastically volunteered to participate in the trials. The agreement drawn up in 1981 calls for the Forest Service to pay for the fencing while the rancher provides the maintenance, cattle management, and the extensive record keeping required by SGM.

"The major responsibility falls to the rancher," Savory said.

Planning for SGM begins with goal setting, and involving interested parties in the planning process. "With everyone concerned involved in the planning from the beginning the chances of conflict are held to a minimum" Savory believes. In the Carlisle Ranch case the planning committee includes the Carlisles, Savory, the national forest and district range conservationists, and a representative of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Once operational, the full committee will need to meet only infrequently.

Savory feels the planning committee approach will assure acceptance of the new method on multiple use lands. "If a problem is anticipated with skiers, hunters, miners, loggers or whomever, their interest groups must be represented on the planning committee so that their concerns can be accommodated."

The Carlisles—Jack has attended the Savory school in Albuquerque—are excited. They feel the SGM techniques will turn a barely surviving ranch into a profitable operation.

They began with a 240-head herd of hereford and hereford-angus cross. They expect to send heavier cows to the feedlots with leaner and cheaper meat. Problems anticipated, at least initially, are the added time needed to move cattle more frequently until they become accustomed to the process, and fence maintenance.

Society for Range Management members traveling through Arizona on their way to or from the convention in Albuquerque in February can view one of the Savory cells in the first year of operation or the Sandia Pueblo cell which by then will be in its second year. The Spurlock Ranch at Navajo, Arizona, near Holbrook, provides an opportunity to view the effects of Savory cells that have been in operation for several years. The Spurlock Ranch was the first in America to adopt the method.

If convention goers plan to visit, please write ahead to arrange a time convenient to the ranchers: *Mr. and Mrs. Ed Conway, P.O. Box 398, Tonto Basin, Arizona 85553. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Carlisle, P.O. Box 355, Show Low, Arizona 86901. Spurlock Ranch, Navajo, Arizona 86509.*

Two tours are planned during the convention to the Sandia Pueblo cells.

Editor's Note: Another SGM just going in is on the Chilson Bar T Bar Ranch southwest of Winslow, Arizona. The Arizona Section, SRM, sponsored a very informative and interesting tour of this ranch and SGM in July during the SRM Summer Meeting in Flagstaff. Ernest Chilson, ranch owner and manager, and Emmett Jones, ranch range manager, are enthusiastic of the possibilities of this new method of grazing. The method is coordinated with cattle grazing on the Coconino National Forest during the summer months. The SGM is being set up off the National Forest on state and privately owned grazing land. The Arizona Game and Fish Department will monitor the deal to see what effects if any the new method will have on the grazing habits of pronghorn antelope.

Metrication—Its Impact on Range Management

Peter F. Ffolliott

Two questions being asked in many quarters today are—will the United States adopt the International (or Metric) System of Units and, if adopted, what impact will metrication have on me? Recently, the *Society of American Foresters*, in conjunction with the *American National Metric Council*, proposed metric units for use in forestry (see Ffolliott, Robinson, and Space in the *Journal of Forestry* for February 1982, p. 108-109). In addition to presenting specific metric units, this proposal solicited comments as to applicability of these metric units in forestry practices in the United States.

While the above proposal was directed toward the forestry profession, many range managers may also be concerned with metrication and its possible impacts. The purpose of this short note is not to offer metric units to range managers. Such a task, if undertaken, should be assigned to a duly sanctioned committee of interested range managers. Instead, possible impacts of metrication on the range management profession, if, in fact, the International System of Units is adopted, are discussed.

First of all, it should be recognized that, to a large extent, the United States is already employing metric units in everyday activities. For example, the size of most camera films that we buy is expressed in millimeters. Concentrations of many

industrial chemicals are given in milligrams per liter or the equivalent. And, many alcoholic beverages are often packaged in fractions of liters. For these and many other instances, the impacts of metrication on range managers, or anybody else for that matter, have already been felt and, quite possibly absorbed into one's lifestyle.

Of particular interest to range managers are suggestions, for example, to quantify standing crops of forage resources in kilograms per hectare rather than in pounds per acre. With metrication, animal weight gains may be expressed in kilograms instead of pounds per animal unit. And, grazing capacities could be presented as AUM's per hectare, not as AUM's per acre. For the most part, these and other measures commonly used in range management can easily be converted from English units to corresponding metric units. However, in the article on proposed metric units for use in forestry, it was recommended that "hard conversion," not "soft conversion," become the practice. In other words, measurements will be taken directly in metric units, rather than initially in English units with subsequent conversion to metric units.

It may be time for the *Society for Range Management* to undertake a study of the impacts of metrication on the range management profession. Certainly, the fate of the pound and the acre are in question. The same is true for all standard English units currently in use in the United States, that is since 1975, when the Metric Conversion Act declared that the policy of the United States is to coordinate and plan for the increasing use of the International System of Units.

Author is professor, School of Renewable Natural Resources, College of Agriculture, University of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz. He is also chairman, Subsector Committee on Measurement Units, Society of American Foresters-American National Metric Council Forestry Sector Committee.

Editor's Note: I read the news release from the Society of American Foresters, entitled, "What will Happen to the Foot and Board Foot?"

I immediately wondered what impact metrication would have on range management. Upon my request Peter Ffolliott prepared this news item and handled the subject very well.