Agricultural Work of the Noble Foundation

R.L. Dalrymple

Editor's Note: R.L. Dalrymple was invited to write this article about the Noble Foundation in Oklahoma. We think it is well written and tells a story of what private enterprise is doing towards range and pasture management. Below is an excerpt from Lloyd Noble's Charge to the Original Trustees, October 22, 1945:

"We have had the privilege of living in a marvelous age. We have seen many tools developed for the use of man. Any thinking individual must recognize, however, that the development of the human race itself in its moral concept is far behind the accomplishment of its scientists. At times we may be discouraged with our job, as we try to analyze for visible results. However, if we continue to keep in mind the force of the tiny atom when harnessed, who can say, if we keep on the beam along the line of attempting to do for our fellow man in a manner that will be truly helpful to him, how far-reaching may be our results."

The above is a good thought to think about. Hope you can enjoy the article.

Agricultural research, demonstration, and consultation is done predominantly by various state and federal government agencies. Private consultants and companies also perform some of these functions. In Oklahoma, there are 2 privately financed foundations that also provide the public with these and other services. They are the Noble Foundation and the Kerr Foundation, with the Kerr Foundation being formed after a pattern set by the Noble Foundation.

The Noble Foundation is a unique private organization dedicated to helping mankind. The late Lloyd Noble founded the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in 1945, naming it in honor of his father. The organization, located at Ardmore, is dedicated to charitable work as set forth in the founder’s goals. The initial work of the Foundation was to recognize and promote good agricultural practices. Since its inception the organization has undergone considerable metamorphosis to reach its present function as an integrated consultation-research-demonstration facility.

The Foundation was originally an operating foundation but it now also participates in grants to worthwhile projects. The operating function can be conveniently divided into: Administrative, Biomedical, and Agricultural Divisions. Particular emphasis in this writing is placed on the Foundation’s agricultural approaches and in particular the forage-livestock aspect of agriculture.

The Foundation presently employs 88 personnel; 31 are Agricultural Division employees. Seventeen of the 31 are professional agriculturalists. The organization has an agricultural library, agricultural laboratory to provide soil and forage analysis, and a printing facility.

The consultation service is somewhat unique in that much of it is done from an integrated specialist team approach. Specialist categories include: Pasture and Crop Specialists, Soil Fertility Specialists, Livestock Specialists, Horticulturists, Farm Economists, and Wildlife Management Specialists. Several specialists have within their profession a unique speciality that adds depth and diversity to the entire staff. Any one, any combination, or all of these specialists consult with a given producer. The most promising economical approach is often of paramount importance in the consultation work. The actual degree or depth of consultation varies from a casual phone call or letter to complete in-depth recommendations by several specialists depending upon the producer’s requests, desires, needs, resources, and Foundation staff time. Information used by the specialists comes from virtually any available source including our own research and demonstration results.

Consultees are not actively solicited. They receive information assistance simply by requesting it. Initial contacts are often the result of neighbor-to-neighbor contact or various publicity. The general working area is considered about a 100-mile radius from the offices, but teams or individual specialists do occasional consultation into all neighboring states and all regions of Oklahoma.

This region of the United States is a composite of units ranging from very small diversified farms to large ranches. Most of the region is grassland agriculture of some sort. Ardmore used to be the largest inland cotton port in the nation and the small farms of that era have changed to forage and other crops.

The Agricultural Division has about 500 active annual consultees of all types. There are about 50 new cooperators each year and during the last 2 years these new cooperators have

Bermudagrass-weeping lovegrass mixtures have been good pastures in southern Oklahoma.
These steers gained an average of 1.92 lb/day for 80 days on this planned volunteer crabgrass pasture during 1980, the hottest, driest summer on record in Southern Oklahoma. (More about grazing crabgrass on page 107, Rangelands June 1980.)

represented about 100,000 acres of area. The units range in size from very small part-time units to ranches of several 10,000 acres each. We believe Foundation personnel have an annual influence on about one-half million acres more of agricultural land via direct operator contact.

All Noble Foundation services, including publications, tours, field days, and conferences are free. The organization is self-supported with budgeting originating from investments of original and inherited endowments.

The Foundation has three demonstration and research farm locations in Southern Oklahoma. This region is basically forage country and these farms are strongly oriented to forage-beef cattle enterprises. However, also included is an extensive pecan orchard, peach orchard, peanuts, guar, and rye for seed.

These research and demonstration farms are used in part to research and demonstrate some of the major forages, or potential forages of the region. Forages represented presently or in the near past include: alfalfa, bermudagrass (Costal, Hardie, Midland), bermudagrass-weeping lovegrass, Caucasian bluestem, crabgrass, hay (numerous kinds), kochia, legumes (various in winter pasture or permanent grass), native range, oats, pearl millet, Plains bluestem, rye seed, sudangrass (including hybrids, etc.), turnips (and other fodder-root crops), volunteer winter annuals (Japanese bromegrass, little barley, rescuegrass), weeping lovegrass, and winter pasture (intensive annual pastures of various small grains, ryegrass, and forage legume mixtures in prepared seedbed or sodseeded situations).

Replicated forage research work is also centered around the major forages within this group. Some research projects presently in action include forages: bermudagrass, crabgrass, Asiatic bluestems (Plains, Caucasian, Canadian, WW-Spar), winter small grains, and pasture legumes. Some major products of Noble Foundation forage research include the development of nationally known Elbon, Bonel, and Maton forage rye varieties and the evaluation of varieties and management on bermudagrass, crabgrass, winter pasture, weeping lovegrass, and Asiatic bluestems.

Forage, of course, is of little value without livestock and much of our forage work has been integrated in beef cattle evaluation and demonstrations, and vice versa.

Some of these perhaps of greater value include: beef cattle crossbreeding and upgrading demonstrations; development and management of intensive stocker cattle-winter pasture enterprises; evaluation and development of no-water grazing of stocker cattle on winter pasture; evaluation and development of limited grazing of stocker cattle on winter pasture; performance vs. auction barn origin Angus females in the production of Brahman cross cattle; European and Brahman crossbred cow-calf herds; performance selection of commercial cattle for herd improvement; and the performance of stocker cattle on numerous warm- and cool-season forages. Associated with the livestock-forage work are evaluations and demonstrations of numerous high tensile, electric, and other fences.

Tours, field days, and conferences are a regular part of the Noble Foundation research-demonstration-consultation ap-
no official arrangements with any governmental agencies, we have had some cooperative research projects. There has been occasion when some of our work received international notoriety and literature was even translated by a foreign country to be of more value to them.

The Foundation publishes much agricultural information including technical leaflets, management bulletins, field day reports, and special conference proceedings. Such information is disseminated widely, including filling foreign country requests. Unfortunately much research and demonstration data has never been assembled and that information is basically available on a person-to-person basis.

Members Round About

Nick James Cozakos, District Manager for the Bureau of Land Management, Burley, Idaho District, and a 35-year Federal employee, left the Federal service November 1, 1983. Cozakos had a long and distinguished career with the BLM having served 31 years in the field in Colorado, Utah, and Idaho. For the past 11 years he has served as the District Manager in Burley. His career began as a range conservationist in Canon City, Colorado. He served in a number of Utah Districts and held the position of State Range Specialist in Salt Lake City for five years prior to his assignment in Burley, Idaho, in 1972.

Max E. Robinson retired on July 29, 1983, from the Bureau of Land Management, Richfield, Utah, after more than 30 years of Federal service. Max is known by many in the society as a special friend and dedicated to the range management profession. He was honored in 1983 by the Utah Section, Society for Range Management as Rangemen of the Year.

E. Durant McArthur has been named Project Leader for Forest Service research in shrub improvement and revegetation conducted at the Shrub Sciences Laboratory, Provo, Utah. In his new assignment, Dr. McArthur will direct studies on shrub and associated species improvement and culture for rehabilitation of wildlands, and the biology of associated diseases and insects. Dr. McArthur succeeds Dr. Arthur Tiedemann, who has accepted a position with the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station at LaGrande, Ore.

Requiescant in Pace

A. Starker Leopold, an honored authority on wildlife management, died August 23 of heart failure at his home in Berkeley, Calif. He was 69 and had been a member of the University of California faculty for 37 years. His studies and his influence, according to a recent award citation, have been from the points of view of teacher, hunter, conservationist, wildlife manager, scholar, field biologist, and sportsman—roles he believed should not exclude each other. He was a long-term member of SRM.

He graduated in 1936 from the University of Wisconsin and earned a Ph.D. in zoology from U.C. Berkeley in 1944. His father, Aldo Leopold, is well known for essays on nature, especially "Sand County Almanac." Of Aldo's five children four became professional scientists and three, including Starker, gained election to the National Academy of Sciences. Starker's writings include more than 100 articles and a number of books.

Starker Leopold held the office of president of the Wildlife Society, the California Academy of Sciences, Cooper Ornithological Society, the Nature Conservancy, and vice-president of the Sierra Club. He won medals honoring high accomplishment from the Audubon Society, the Wildlife Society, the Department of Interior, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, and from the Smithsonian Institution. Among his many public roles, probably the most influential was as chair of an advisory board to the Department of Interior. The Leopold Committee, as it was known, made key recommendations on America's national parks in the 1960's.

He is survived by his wife Elizabeth of Berkeley, son Frederic Starker Leopold of Bellevue, Wis., daughter Sarah Leopold Klock of Tampa, Fla., and three grand-sons.

Howard B. Passey, a long-time member of SRM, died Sept. 21, 1983, in Carlsbad, N. Mex., while on a family vacation. He worked 35 years as a range conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service. His first permanent job after graduating from Utah State University was at San Simon, Ariz., in 1939. After that he served as State range specialist in Utah, Arizona, and Texas. His last two years of service were spent in Washington, D.C., as Chief of Range Management. He retired in 1974 and with his wife, Beth, moved to American Fork, Utah, where he was living at the time of his death. He was 68.

Passey presented many technical papers on range management throughout his career and published numerous scientific articles including the Range Management Handbook used by the Soil Conservation Service.

He discovered a previously unidentified species of wild onion which was named Allium passeyi in his honor.

Howard Passey was loved by all who knew him; he had a dry sense of humor that just wouldn't quit.