

imize your net profit with the right quantity and quality of native forage.

The off-ranch benefits of a well-managed livestock enterprise can make you real popular with your agricultural and nonagricultural neighbors. The Rocky Creek Watershed story is a classic example of this. It's a story I don't think can be told too often.

In the early 1960's, landowners of five ranches covering about one-half of the watershed began extensive range improvement. By 1970, springs that had been dormant since the 1930's began to flow on all five ranches. West Rocky Creek now supplies about 7 percent of the water supply of San Angelo, 20 miles away.

How did these ranchers do it? They enhanced grass cover by reseeding the range, controlling brush, and managing grazing more closely. The grasses help to hold both soil and water on the land. That reduces sedimentation of downstream water supplies and allows water to soak into the aquifer. More water. . .and better water. . .that's a real plus.

The public is aware of the environmental consequences of our actions as ranchers. What better proof is there of this than the 1985 Farm Bill? It makes us look at the kind of land, including rangeland, we've been putting into crop production in years past and reconsider the wisdom of our actions.

The Conservation Reserve Program has some attractive incentives for taking highly erodible land out of production and restoring a good cover of grass or trees. Of course, there are pros and cons to it all. . .and uncertainty about the future, 10 to 15 years from now, for the range industry when some of that grassland comes out of the Reserve. But, working together, I think we can help each other make the right decisions.

If you are participating in the CRP and plan to leave your land in permanent vegetation, I encourage you to put the best possible cover on the land you've enrolled. Kansas is on the right track with 92 percent of its CRP land in native grass. Strive for the best permanent cover you can. If you can't get the seed you want right away, keep the land in temporary cover. Seed dealers are committing a lot of their resources to providing you the best. I think you'll find that optimum ground cover will pay dividends down the road.

I know what it's like to make conservation and untraditional marketing decisions for a ranch. I've had to make plenty of long-range decisions that affect my own operation and my neighbors'. We keep our country in good condition by using proper stocking rates. We manage for quantity and quality of grass. And we have a brush-control program that we've used since 1936. This program affects the availability of water on and off the land. . .as well as wildlife habitat conditions.

Earthen tanks we built ensure good grazing distribution and attract wildlife. Conservation tillage and contour terraces are a must on our cultivated acreage.

It's a profitable operation managed for domestic livestock, and bobwhite quail hunting is a valuable byproduct, thanks to good conservation measures. If I can do it, you can do it!

To gain the most of what your rangeland has to offer, work closely with your friends in the Society, with your local conservation district, with your state and local agencies and universities, and most of all with your neighbors.

Ranchers have a proud tradition of good business sense as well as stewardship. Let's keep sharing ideas that will keep this tradition going.

A National Outlook on Ranching's Future

Wilson Scaling



Wilson Scaling

It's a real privilege and honor to have this time on your agenda.

Fred Bryant asked if I'd bring you my perspective on ranching and perhaps a look down the road into the next century.

You should be aware that, basically, my perspective comes from rural Texas, where I've spent my private life. But today I'd like to bring you a national outlook from my public life.

I think all of us who are ranchers have at least the same set of values, if not the same perspectives: And that is, we want to make our own decisions for our own operations, and we want to keep our country in tip-top condition. Our pride and our good business sense wouldn't let us do it any other way. And that's why the ranchers that are here today are members of the Society. . .we share a concern for good range management.

As to the future, I doubt any of us has a crystal ball that's very accurate. But from my perspective, our future in the ranching industry depends on four driving forces:

1. Economics will continue to be a driving force in our decisionmaking. The economic forces are no longer just local or national; they are global. Out of economic necessity, range managers are breaking with some traditions. . .and becoming more resourceful than ever before. We're diversifying our operations, looking to multiple uses, and, most important, sharpening our marketing skills. We must look ahead to new opportunities—new traditions—for profitability and sustainable use of this resource. We're more of a dynamic industry than we ever were.

2. All too often, the public views the Nation's range resources as entirely publicly owned. They are wrong! There is a lack of understanding not only about the extent of private ownership but also about the extent of contributions those owners make to wildlife habitat, riparian areas and resource improvement. The private rangeland owners are integral to this vast resource system. Their contributions are real contributions. I see us working harder than ever before to ensure our private property rights are protected. . .and, at the same

time, to meet our private property responsibilities as good resource stewards.

3. How we treat our soil and water is becoming more and more a public concern. People are recognizing that conservation is not work for a few but work for everyone. Consequently, our actions as range managers are becoming subject more and more to public scrutiny. Range managers must stay on top of needs and changes in the range ecosystem and adapt management accordingly. In this regard, our agricultural colleges and federal and state agencies must provide better services and advice to the range sector.

4. As we deal with complex economic and environmental issues, we're finding more cooperation and mutual respect between private landowners and others who have interest in the management of range, such as the federal government. This cooperation is doing far more than any regulation can do to protect the rangeland environment.

Let's take a closer look at each of these forces in our lives.

Although multiple use of rangelands is nothing new to the industry, more and more of us are getting in step with the practice. Forage for livestock will continue to be the traditional primary use, but other uses will be economically desirable. Wildlife habitat, recreation, and crops for industry, energy, and food are market demands we can meet if we're willing to break away from some of our traditional grazing uses. The bottom line is we're becoming more flexible and market-wise.

We're finding also that we cannot not put all our "eggs" in the production "basket." In other words, income from production is not the only end. We're becoming conscious of the offsite benefits of our management practices. . . and how our actions save tax dollars, for example, by cutting offsite damage caused by erosion and by improving water quality.

Let's be aware that multiple uses may increase pressure on our rangelands. There may be competition, for example, between livestock uses and recreation uses. It's important to recognize that recreation uses need not compete with the livestock industry. In fact, I envision them working for the good of ranching by increasing the value of the resources and helping improve the economic climate for an important segment of our economy. . . and also educating our urban population as to the values and hardships as well as the opportunities of ranching. I believe that the future is bright for the sheep and cattle industries, but we may have to be managing differently in the future.

Proper management of our rangeland in a watershed can be critical to local communities as well as to the individual rancher. Brush management on Rocky creek here in Texas is a classic story of how management on private land benefited a municipal water supply dramatically. Our management practices also affect water quality, a major issue we're only just beginning to face.

Along with our private property rights, we have to be alert to our private property responsibilities in the management decisions we make. . . and their effects on society.

We are letting the courts decide too many disputes over rights and compliance with laws and regulations. Any case that goes to court is a signal that the people closest to the issue have failed to find a solution to the problem. Remember, only attorneys win in the courthouse. I think we often could

find solutions out of court if everyone involved shows respect for the rights of others and understands that changing long-standing uses and traditions takes time and patience.

Of course, because we stand to gain or lose the most as ranchers, we need to work out our own course of action. But, management of natural resources on public or private land is under greater public scrutiny than ever before.

There's a growing awareness and concern about the environmental consequences of current farming and ranching methods. . . especially their impact on water quality and quantity. And there's growing political strength behind the environmental concerns. The '85 Farm Bill is a perfect example. Who would have thought 5 or 6 years ago that Congress would enact the conservation compliance, sodbuster, and swampbuster provisions?

The '85 Farm Bill is putting a lot of good conservation on the land. . . but it is adding to the number of critical management decisions that ranchers already have to make. In all, it's good that we're required to look at the kind of land we've been putting into crop production in years past. . . and reconsider the wisdom or stupidity of our actions.

The Conservation Reserve Program has some attractive incentives to take highly erodible land out of cultivation and restore a good cover of grass or trees. Of course, there are pros and cons to consider. Last September in Denver, I asked the Society for Range Management to play a major role in helping ranchers and farmers make wise decisions as to the disposition of CRP land after the 10-year contract period is up. I'd like to repeat that challenge right now:

1. Help identify which land is best suited for use as range, and thus help to prevent adverse effects of the CRP on the range industry or on individual producers.

2. Use your society's resources to help educate and persuade operators with CRP land to make the correct decisions now so that the land will stay in grass after 10 years.

3. Help show the wildlife benefits, water quality benefits, and other erosion control benefits that result from permanent vegetative cover on these fragile, erodible lands.

4. Be a leader! Work closely with other organizations to build a consensus—not just a group of single-interest decisions.

5. Encourage state and local hunting laws that allow CRP land to be maintained for hunting and thereby kept under protective cover.

6. Work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies—and also private sector sources—in identifying needed legislation, policy, and procedures to continue the benefits of the CRP on beyond 10 years.

7. Improve marketing for the livestock industry. Most important is to work with the National Cattlemen's Association or others to dispel the "12 Myths About Red Meat," because without the red-meat market, grass production drops significantly in value.

Good cover on our rangeland watersheds benefits water quality. And as you all know, water quality is becoming a key public concern.

I think we all recognize that prudent use of agricultural chemicals is a must in the future of agriculture. I'd like to give SRM's President Jack Miller a pat on the back for the Society's well-thought-out response to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service concerning

their joint effort to link pesticide use with the endangered species program.

There's another water quality issue that's real sensitive also. . .fencing of riparian areas.

Economically and managerially speaking, fencing riparian areas under range conditions is an impossibility for private operators.

Yet, it is true that much of the water that falls on a watershed eventually must pass through a riparian area to reach a stream. Therefore, as the Nation's riparian areas go, so goes the quality of the Nation's streams.

SCS understands the concerns over riparian areas. So we are helping ranchers handle riparian concerns by planning sound grazing management.

SCS is working hard and taking a leadership role in the water quality arena. . .to help make sure that a balanced conservation program is recognized by the policy-making agencies. . .and to help conservation districts find practical and reasonable ways to help production agriculture and other landusers address water quality issues.

I believe that federal agencies have come a long way in the last several years toward better cooperation and coordination of our efforts to help American agriculture. I see much greater cooperation and mutual respect among ranchers and government technical specialists they deal with. We have found that it's just as easy to build a bridge of effective communication as it is a wall of silence. I'd like to give a special pat on the back to—

- The Forest Service for its poster on managing range. . . and for Dale Robertson's leadership in total reevaluation of the agency's range program.

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Extension Service (ES), Forest Service (FS), conservation districts, and others for cooperating in the coordinated resource management (CRM) planning process in areas where private and public lands are intermixed. We feel that leadership by BLM, ES, and FS, along with SCS, will be important to broaden the use of the CRM process to other areas and uses.

- The Forest Service cooperated with SCS on the 1987 National Resources Inventory to develop procedures to reduce the differences between the resource data that are gathered and presented by our agencies.

- Frank Dunkle, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, deserves acknowledgement for his support of the practical use of chemicals on rangeland. Frank also helped postpone the Endangered Species Act for a year so as to establish a common-sense rationale.

I'm pleased to see our increased involvement in range issues in USDA. Since the 1985 Range Conference in Oklahoma City, we have taken action on several conference recommendations:

1. We're funding university positions at Texas A&M, Texas Tech, and Utah State University for studies on (a) range data automation and software development, (b) nontraditional

uses and economics of rangeland, (c) rangeland hydrology.

2. We've assigned an SCS range specialist to work with the Agricultural Research Service on improved erosion-prediction technology.

3. Close to \$1 million has gone to 23 state SCS offices during each of the last 2 years to accelerate range activities. This money is being used to hire additional range conservationists, provide training, and fund special range projects.

4. We're upgrading our computer equipment and we're automating our resource data in all SCS field offices so we can do a better job of helping ranchers look at range resources and economics.

5. We're moving to implement the intent of the memorandum of understanding on coordinated resource management.

Although the '85 Farm Bill has demanded a lot of our resources and time, SCS continues to emphasize rangeland conservation and we're striving to upgrade our range expertise.

In our 1987 National Resources Inventory, we collected the best range data that we've ever had on a state-wide basis. As in past NRI's, we included erosion rates and range trend, but this year we improved certain data elements such as range condition by range site, and canopy cover to measure the amount of brush infestation on rangeland.

SCS participates on USDA's Range Issues Working Group, which has set about the task of updating Department range policy.

In September of this year, SCS range specialists will meet in Fort Worth to discuss our range work in the agency and to make sure we're capitalizing on the important technical information we gather from this week's conference. We're also participating later this year with Range Conference leadership to see where we all are in terms of the recommendations drawn up at the '85 conference.

I thank the Society for Range Management for putting together such a fine agenda for this week. SCS puts high value on field experience and on the quality research contributions discussed at every one of your conferences. They will be of tremendous value in the development of SCS technical assistance today. . .and as we go into the year 2000.

I hope everyone here has the opportunity to go on the King Ranch tour. You'll find it a real eye-opener on the past, the present, and the future. They're high-tech, and they've got some real history behind them to match. I know these folks personally, and they're constantly on top of their agricultural operations.

I have great pride in the men and women of the ranching industry, who care for nearly two-thirds of the Nation's range resource. From my perspective I can truly say you deserve your country's gratitude for responsible management of that resource. Rangeland is in good hands. . .and I'm confident it will stay that way, come the year 2000 and beyond.

Thank you all. Have a good meeting!