A Guide
for County Range Management Committees

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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A GUIDE FOR COUNTY RANGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

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PROPER RANGE MANAGEMENT is essential to conserve, maintain and produce native forage for livestock grazing. A pasture covered with high-producing palatable native perennial grasses is the cheapest livestock forage that can be produced. Grass is a good conserver of soil and water. Soil seldom is moved by wind and water when it is covered with deep-rooted perennial grasses.

Grass is the foundation for any livestock and ranching operation. Good grade livestock do not produce their best on a poor, rundown range. The income produced from livestock and livestock products is a great asset to any county. Improved and proper range management practices on every native grass acre should be the goal of the range management committee.

In most counties, the range management and livestock committees can serve as a joint committee since the two are closely related. One chairman should head the livestock subcommittee and another chairman the range management subcommittee. The range management and livestock programs should be tailored to fit the county needs.

This guide is written to assist you in developing an educational program for your county. Adapt it to fit your local situation.

THE COMMITTEE

The greatest achievements in range management follow a well-planned, coordinated educational program developed by interested individuals, organizations and agencies. The following groups may be represented on the range management subcommittee:

1. Bankers.
2. Livestock association directors.
3. Soil conservation district supervisors.
4. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation county committee.
5. Farmers Home Administration county committee.
6. Farm Bureau and other farm organizations.
7. School system representatives.
8. Ministers and church organizations.
9. Civic clubs and chambers of commerce.
10. County home demonstration council.
11. 4-H Club council or representative.
12. Farm editors, television and radio farm directors.
13. Implement and chemical company representatives.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMITTEE

Every ranching county needs an up-to-date, progressive range management program. This program, fitted to the county needs, should furnish proved and practical range management information to stock farmers and ranchmen.
Your responsibilities as a member of the range management subcommittee are to:

1. Determine and list the local range management problems.
2. Determine and list probable solutions to these problems.
3. Decide what resources are available to carry out the program.
4. Select projects to be worked on now and in the future.
5. Prepare a calendar of these projects designating the time and area of the activity.
6. Assign members of the committee to be responsible for each activity.
7. Present the range management educational program to the county program building committee.

**DETERMINING THE PROBLEMS**

Range management problems may vary from human to technical. Generally, most problems will be countywide, but some may be limited to a community. The range management subcommittee should consider all problems within the county. Examples of common problems are:

1. Failure to know differences between good, fair and poor plants for livestock grazing.
2. Failure to know the benefits of proper and flexible stocking systems and different grazing systems.
3. Failure to know brush control methods and how to apply the cheapest method to obtain the greatest returns.
4. Lack of acceptance of water and salt distribution practices to obtain proper grazing use and improve range conditions.
5. Failure to know the proper methods for reseeding native grasses.
6. Failure to know proper seedbed preparation and the best adapted varieties to use in reseeding old fields and denuded rangelands.
7. Failure to know that the existing good native grasses better fill the stockmen's needs than the so-called imported "wonder grasses."
8. Failure to know the functions of native vegetation in producing forage for livestock grazing on a sustained yield basis.
9. Failure to understand how to use and combine range management practices for specific range conditions.
10. Failure to know how to use and adapt research findings to the ranch, such as a deferred-rotation grazing system and use of temporary pastures for grazing and fast range improvement.
11. Lack of interest and participation in existing range programs.
12. Failure to realize that range improvement work is slow to show results of increased income.
13. Lack of acceptance that a feed reserve for winter and drouth is essential for a sound ranching enterprise.
14. Inadequate finances to carry out an improvement practice or change.
15. Failure to realize that wildlife can be an asset to the ranching operation.

**SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS**

The solutions to most range management problems are long-time projects. The short-time projects are mainly a step toward solving the long-time ones. Your committee should attempt to list the final solution to each problem. For solutions, use specific units of measure to outline the procedure to follow. The long-time and short-time projects are
broken down for your use in planning range management activities through the years.

Examples of long-time projects follow:

1. Get every stockman to learn the forage value of all plants and manage for the high-producing palatable key plants on the ranch.

2. Get every stock farmer and ranchman to participate and practice proper stocking and forage use on all grass acres within the county.

3. Get every stock farmer and ranch boy or girl to study and enter grass and range judging contests and carry out a range management result demonstration.

4. Establish by reseeding or deferred grazing a protective and productive perennial cover of deep-rooted palatable native grasses.

5. Get stock farmers and ranchmen to construct fencing and watering facilities to establish and maintain a deferred-rotation grazing system.

6. Get every stock farmer and ranchman to practice deferred grazing during the growing season each year on one-fourth of his ranch.

Examples of short-time projects follow:

1. Practice deferred grazing 3 to 8 weeks following rains to allow native grasses to produce top growth, root systems and seedheads.

2. Pit and reseed badly denuded rangelands that do not have a native grass seed source with adapted native varieties.

3. Construct net wire and rock spreader dams to hold and conserve water in areas with less than 25 inches of rainfall.

4. Construct outlets from bar ditches to divert runoff water on native rangelands.

5. Plant and use temporary pastures for grazing and feed reserve where cropland is available to obtain faster range improvement.

6. Practice early chemical control of annual weed growth followed by deferred grazing.

7. Graze the early growing threeawn grasses heavy in early spring; then practice deferred grazing during the growing season so that deep-rooted good perennial grasses will crowd out the poor ones.

8. Use the cheapest brush control methods that will return the most range improvement and income in a short time. Brush control methods include chemical, mechanical, biological or a combination of these methods.

9. When feasible, use goats to control resprouted brush growth following aerial applications of herbicides in oak areas.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

In each county certain human, political and natural resources can help the range management program to progress. These resources and availabilities may vary from leadership to financial. As a committee member, you should consider the talents of each person and organization and use these talents to solve the range management problems. Some available resources are:

1. County extension agents who are educational specialists. They are familiar with the agricultural problems and needs in your county. Through them, the resources of the Texas A. & M. College System are available to you. These resources include advice by the range management specialists, findings of experimental tests, planning assistance, demonstration material and free
publications. The county extension agents can furnish information about the state and area grassland contests and other awards programs.

2. Soil conservation district supervisors are elected officials within your local phase of self government. They are concerned with the total field of conservation. Your district may be able to furnish certain equipment and materials to conduct range improvement practices, planning assistance, leadership and sponsorship of some of your educational activities. The supervisors also will be able to furnish information about state and national conservation awards programs.

3. Soil Conservation Service personnel are technical conservation specialists. Some are trained especially in the field of range management. They furnish full-time, technical range assistance to the soil conservation district and to cooperators within the district. Technical range management information and ranch planning are available through this group.

4. ASC county committeemen and FHA county committeemen can furnish financial information and guidance. Many range conservation programs and practices are financed by these agencies.

5. The press, radio and television can keep the people in your county informed of your range management educational program and report its results. One or more representatives of these communications media can assist you in planning and disseminating public information that your committee prepares.

6. Many local organizations, such as home demonstration clubs, garden clubs, 4-H Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, civic clubs, farmers, ranchmen, livestock organizations, and organized community groups, have a vital interest in range management. These groups can assist in carrying out organized educational programs and group activities.

7. Interested individuals such as vocational agriculture instructors, ministers, bankers and school officials can furnish ideas, needs and leadership for many range management activities. Seek their assistance in planning and carry out a sound educational program.

**ACTIVITIES FOR THIS YEAR**

Part of your committee's responsibilities is to select range management educational activities that are needed in your county. These activities may be adapted to the entire county or to an individual community. Long-time and short-time projects are listed under "Determining the Problems" and "Solutions to the Problems." Suitable activities for this year are projects that can be accomplished or initiated as steps toward reaching the long-time goal. For example, your committee may feel that the lack of knowledge about range plants is the stumbling block in the advancement of the overall range management educational program. A solution to this problem might be a training school to study range plants, prepared and conducted for all county stockmen.

I. The school may be organized as follows:

A. At the beginning, each training period should not exceed 3 hours weekly. The course of instructions should begin with grasses, as these plants are the most important to stockmen. Then discuss grasslike plants, weeds and brush plants so the stockmen can learn where these plants fit into the grazing and livestock management program. Use live plants that grow within the county for instructions. Point out the key climax plants that should
be managed for and maintained by proper utilization.

B. Have one or more inside technical periods to teach the fundamentals of plant identification.

C. Conduct other training periods on a ranch so stockmen will recognize the plants as they normally see them.

D. Have stockmen bring unknown plants to the training periods. Discuss the plants at the beginning of the period.

E. Point out and get stockmen to observe the following during ranch training periods:

1. Number and kinds of grass seedlings.

2. Drouth-resistant grasses and those which carry the grazing load.

3. Kinds of plants that are increasing and decreasing.

4. Signs of active erosion -- gullies, trails, plants on pedestals.

II. Plan and conduct field days and tours to show how long and short-time projects can solve the county’s range management problems.

III. Obtain sponsors for and conduct a countywide range judging contest for junior and senior 4-H Club and FFA members and adults.

IV. Obtain sponsorship to send an outstanding 4-H range demonstrator to the annual Range Camp.

V. Encourage 4-H Club members to conduct and complete one or more Result Demonstrations outlined in D-469.

VI. Encourage ministers to participate in Soil Stewardship, Rural Youth and 4-H Club religious weeks by devoting one or more activities which show how grass has been the foundation for building a sound soil, water, wildlife, farming and ranching program.

VII. Provide speakers to discuss range management and the role that grass plays in our economy for garden clubs, civic clubs, Boy and Girl Scout troops and other organizations in the county.

VIII. Encourage landowners and operators to participate in awards programs available in your county.

IX. See that information on range and grass management meetings, activities and results reaches the public.

**CALENDAR OF WORK**

Your committee’s success depends on the results it produces. A schedule of activities should be planned. The time of year, locality and personnel to lead each activity should be scheduled. In this way each activity can be planned adequately, suitable assistance can be obtained and advanced information can be released. A suggested calendar of activities follows:

1. **January - February**

   a. Assist county agents and vocational agriculture teachers with the final training of grass judging teams for the winter livestock show contests.

   b. Assist county agents and demonstrators in preparation of a
seedbed for native grass reseeding demonstration plot.

2. March - April
   a. Assist demonstrators and county agents with the planting of the native grass plot.
   b. Set date to observe results of different grass varieties.
   c. Designate persons to select plants to be used in training plant identification teams.

3. May - June
   a. Assist with training 4-H grass and range judging teams for area and state contest.
   b. Plan field days and tours to show results of weed and brush control demonstrations.
   c. Conduct countywide range judging contest.

4. August - September
   a. Plan field days in conjunction with the election of soil conservation district supervisors.
   b. Mount plant samples for training plant identification teams.

5. October
   a. Assist in collecting seed from the grass demonstration plot.
   b. Assist in making final evaluation of forage production from grass demonstration plot.

6. November
   a. Analyze accomplishments during the year.
   b. Assist county agent in making county plan of work and annual report.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
Each committee member has a responsibility in developing and carrying out the range management educational program. In most cases, you will want to ask other people for assistance; however, each member should be assigned the responsibility for a specific phase of range management.

Examples are:

1. Community leaders could arrange facilities for meetings.

2. Press, radio and television representatives could prepare information on range management activities and secure a public address system for large field days and tours.

3. The county agricultural agent could provide range specialists and other program assistance.

4. The soil conservation district supervisors and soil conservation service technicians could provide assistance during field days and tours.

5. The home demonstration club representative could assist other clubs with their range management activities and programs. The home demonstration club could furnish refreshments and food for field days and tours held in their community.

PRESENTING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

When your committee has determined the range management problems, has taken an inventory of available resources and developed a plan of attack to solve these problems, the chairman should make recommendations to the county program building committee.