



The Australian Rangeland Society

RANGE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER
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Range Management Newsletter

Official newsletter of the Australian Rangeland Society

Editor — Mr G. Tupper, CSIRO, Private Bag,
P.O., Deniliquin, N.S.W. 2710

No. 76/1 March 1976

EDITORIAL

Graeme J. Tupper, Editor, Range Management Newsletter

After a fairly substantial first issue (75/1) of the Range Management Newsletter, our second issue is relatively thin. We have done fairly well with five issues of the now superseded Range Assessment Newsletter, and then the Range Management Newsletter, and perhaps there is currently a temporary exhaustion of ideas. Some members of the Society have been busy in producing and polishing up articles for the first issue of the Journal of the Australian Rangeland Society. All members are busy with their respective occupations, whether in the open air, office, lecture room, or etc.

I find myself preparing this issue of the Newsletter at night in shearers' quarters after a long day of field work. No doubt many members have an experience akin to this, and it is not very conducive to creative thought and action. However, may I suggest that each member resolve to make at least one contribution per annum to the Newsletter, and the sooner the better. If we each take this action we will have a very viable Newsletter.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Contributions for the Newsletter are sought on the following and related matters:

1. Range assessment
2. Details of proposed experiments and investigations
3. Research problems
4. Letters and other contributions from pastoralists
5. Management strategies for pastoralists
6. Articles on administration
7. Alternative uses for rangeland
8. News and views
9. Personal paragraphs
10. Financial situations as they affect rangeland managers

The Newsletter comes out in March, June, September, and December. Copy for the next issue is required in Deniliquin by 31 May 1976.

COUNCIL NEWS

Elections

At the Deniliquin meeting the President discussed the forthcoming election of office-bearers for the Society and indicated that the Council was of the view that it would be to the Society's advantage for the Council to remain in Western Australia for a further 12 months. Council was not keen to remain in office for the sake of the positions the members would hold, but rather for the benefit it would be for the Society for them to do so. The first issue of the Journal is being prepared for the printer now and it is hoped that it will be available by June. There are a number of issues concerned with publication that can only be resolved by the Council and for the first issue when the future format is being decided it was thought that it would be desirable for the Council to remain in the State where the printing will be done now and in the future.

Council is also concerned that we should as a Society sponsor the publication of at least one of the proceedings of the U.S./Australia range panel, beginning with that held in Adelaide. This first business undertaking would be best handled by the present Council in order to provide continuity.

Accordingly Council wishes to recommend to the membership the following office-bearers for the positions shown.

Vice President	Mr. R. W. Condon
Hon. Secretary	Mr. A. L. Payne
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. K. M. W. Howes

Mr. Condon has told Council that he is unwilling to take up the post of President in 1976 but is prepared to take up the duties in 1977.

For the convenience of those members who wish to go against Council's recommendation, a nomination form is attached to the Newsletter.

Council, however, hopes that it will not have to call for a postal ballot in accordance with Section 10(d) of the Articles of Association.

[Nomination Form is Page 5 of the Newsletter - Ed.]

U.S./Australia Panel on Range Science - Publication of Proceedings

We have almost completed arrangements to publish the proceedings of the 2nd U.S./Australia panel on range science held in Adelaide in 1972. This meeting dealt with the effects of herbivores on arid lands. It covers the whole range of herbivores from termites to cattle and sheep and should prove a valuable reference source for the membership. We will provide a list of the papers and a short précis of same with an order form in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The Society of Range Management in the U.S.A. will be taking some of the 600 run which we will be producing if our printing negotiations turn out satisfactorily.

Annual General Meeting of the Australian Rangeland Society

Notice is hereby given that the first annual general meeting of the Australian Rangeland Society will be held at 8.00 p.m. on Monday, May 31, 1976 at the Seminar Room, CSIRO, Underwood Avenue, Floreat Park, Western Australia.

- Agenda:
1. Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting
 2. Matters arising from the Meeting
 3. President's Report
 4. Treasurer's Report
 5. Elections
 6. General Business

At present there is no general business.

A. L. Payne (Hon. Sec.)

Kalgoorlie Conference: July 1976

Most members will know that the Australian Arid Zone Research Conference will be held at Kalgoorlie, W.A. in July next. Council is unwilling to organise a formal function at the meeting, but it will be pleased to receive suggestions about a suitable gathering from members who are going to attend, and Council will be able to support it to some extent. Council would also like to know whether the membership would like to hold a meeting of members?

Public Relations

Keith Hyde, a Territorian member of the Society, wrote recently about his experiences in U.S.A. and particularly about some of the activities of the Society of Range Management in that country. Keith has suggested that we could take up some of the projects which the SRM undertakes.

One such project is a photographic contest within the membership in, say, three categories

- (a) Panoramic studies
- (b) Rangeland use
- (c) Overseas rangeland interest.

Entries can be in black and white or colour. The Society would keep the entries as a base for a photo library.

Keith was impressed with the publicity which the SRM is generating towards the rangelands of the U.S.A. There, the Society is concerned with demonstrating the harmonious relationships which can exist between the various users of rangeland in the U.S.A. Some sections have developed a slide/tape set to publicise SRM views on wise rangeland use. Other sections have produced tourist-type brochures for rangeland areas.

If any member would like to take up one or other of these ideas Council will be pleased to help financially to some extent.

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY

The object of the Journal is to develop an Australian approach to all aspects of rangeland science and art. Council is particularly keen to include papers on administrative, social and operational aspects of rangeland use as well as scientific papers. Contributions could fall under the following headings or others -

- (a) Scientific research or review papers on any aspect of rangeland use
- (b) Papers on administrative or social aspects of rangeland use
- (c) Discussion or case history papers in the operational field of rangeland use.

The Journal contents will include:-

scientific papers	book reviews (invited)
communications	thesis summaries
articles	editorials (guest)
society business	editorials (Editorial Board members)

All communications should be addressed to: Dr. G. N. Harrington, Chairman, Editorial Committee, The Australian Rangeland Society, CSIRO, Private Bag, P.O., Deniliquin, N.S.W. 2710. Copies of "Instructions to Authors" are available from the Chairman of the Editorial Committee.

PERSONAL PARS

Our President, David Wilcox, is on a study tour of extension and rangeland evaluation in South Africa during his long service leave. He has a full itinerary including Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Highveld research centres, Natal, Karoo Region, Kruger National Park, Orange Free State, and the Cape. David returns to Australia on about 12th June, 1976. In particular he is investigating extension programmes as they relate to the voluntary veld stock reduction scheme, and evaluating methods used in management, research programmes, survey and condition assessment. David will also have a holiday accompanied by his wife, Barbara, and two children, including a very new daughter.

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Ray Perry was invited to present a paper at a meeting arranged by the Royal Society in London during March 1976. The meeting was titled "Resources development in semi-arid lands" and Ray's contribution was titled "The Australian Experience".

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Development of a Range Assessment Method for Arid Rangelands in S.E. Australia - G.J. Tupper and A.D. Wilson
CSIRO Division of Land Resources Management, New South Wales.

The N.S.W. Range Assessment Committee, consisting of representatives from the Soil Conservation Service of N.S.W. and CSIRO Division of Land Resources Management, is undertaking the overall development of a method for the assessment of range condition which is applicable to the rangelands of arid and semi-arid south-east Australia. They are selecting a series of representative sites on which to test the proposed method. The sites are being located in the following range units in N.S.W.: saltbush on the Riverine Plain; belah in the Ivanhoe-Darnick area; poplar box near Cobar; bluebush in the Arumpo-Hatfield area; Barrier Range saltbush; mulga in the Mootwingee or Packsaddle areas; and Mitchell grass.

The Soil Conservation Service is supporting the program through its work on mapping of land systems and land units, the production of property maps, and range unit identification; whilst CSIRO is testing many facets of methods on the selected range units. The approach is based on the concept of an index of range condition being in ecological terms (departure from an undisturbed state). There are a number of related objectives:-

1. To determine the parameters which affect an expert's assessment of the condition index of a site, and the association between parameters.
2. To formalize these measurements on a scientific basis, so that the association between field indices and scientific measurements is understood and hence supported, both within the scientific and legal worlds.
3. To examine the accuracy, repeatability (observer and seasonal) and speed of various measurements relating to the one factor (e.g. vegetation), which could be regarded as alternatives within a practical method.
4. To compare the indices of condition obtained by using several existing or newly developed methods and the subjective assessments of "experts".

The known history of the range units is listed and used to assist interpretation of plant succession. Scientific knowledge pertinent to the unit is gathered, concentrating on vegetation data such as season of growth, acceptability to animals, nutritive value, perenniality of species, reaction to grazing, and data on animal production and erosion. This information is used to classify species into decreaser, increaser and invader categories; desirable and undesirable species on a 1 to 5 scale on the basis of productivity, palatability, forage value, perenniality and retention of forage value; and functional groups such as chenopods, summer perennials, winter perennials, summer annuals, winter annuals, and medics.

Up to 10 locations of each range unit are chosen to cover a wide spectrum of conditions. The experts select these on subjective assessments of vegetation and erosion and subsequently rate them on a scale of 1 to 5. One of these locations is chosen as the reference area, and given an index of 5. It is used as a base to adjust data for seasonal variation. This location is an area where heavy grazing is unlikely to occur.

The tests include ways of measuring vegetative cover, botanical composition, and species frequency; soil chemical and physical characteristics and surface condition; and, within woodlands, density of woody shrubs.

Vegetation and soil measurements are commencing on three range units in 1976. The initial programme will be completed in about three years, and a method for measuring the Range Condition Index will be published. However, it is anticipated that the method will be progressively refined as new information comes to hand.

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AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS - NOMINATION PAPER

We hereby nominate
of
for the position of
in the Australian Rangeland Society.

Signed)
.)
.) Two financial members

Date

Countersigned:

I agree with the above nomination
. Nominee

Date

(Send to Mr. A. L. Payne, Hon. Sec.,)
(Australian Rangeland Society,)
(54 Broome Street,)
(Cottesloe, W.A. 6011.)

Membership form for The Australian Rangeland Society. Detach and send, with cheque to Mr. K. M. W. Howes

For full membership of the Society

THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY

Mr. K. M. W. Howes, (Hon. Treasurer),
Australian Rangeland Society,
CSIRO,
Private Bag, P.O.,
WEMBLEY, W.A. 6014.

Dear Sir,

I
of
. State and Country

apply for membership of the Australian Rangeland Society and agree to be bound by the regulations of the Society as stated in the Memorandum and Articles of Association in existence from time to time.

I enclose fifteen dollars (Australian currency) being my subscription for the year 1976.

Signature

Date

Date of Approval of Council

Entered in Register of Members

Date

Signed

Signed

(Members of Council)

For individuals and institutions wishing to subscribe to Newsletter only

Mr. K. M. W. Howes (Editor),
Australian Rangeland Society,
CSIRO,
Private Bag, P.O.,
WEMBLEY, W.A. 6014.

Dear Sir,

I wish to receive the Range Management Newsletter and enclose my ^{cheque} bank draft for \$4.00 money order

Australian currency, being for one year's subscription.

My address is:

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. Post Code