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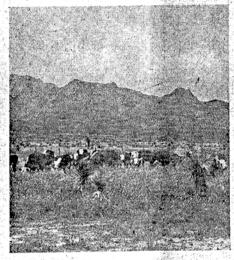
Range Forage Utilization

Adherence to Proper Use Preserves Good Ranges and Restores Depleted Ones

By Fred N. Ares, Range Superintendent, Jornada Experimental Range, Las Cruces, N. M.

The degree of utilization of forage on southwestern ranges is one of the most important factors in range management and livestock production and as such warrants considerable study and experimentation. In fact, the importance of utilization studies can hardly be overemphasized since not only the restora-tion of our depleted ranges but also the maintenance of all our valuable grazing lands depends directly upon the fixing of certain standards of utilization which if adhered to will insure against that close, destructive grazing of perennial forage plants which so impairs and

Serves Its Purpose Well-



View of cattle grazing on summer range on the Jornada Experimental Range. An abun-dance of this type of forage makes possible the deferred use of the valuable black grama grass ranges which are reserved for winter-spring use.

weakens their vitality that a high mortality is usually sustained during the frequent drouth years.

Many forage plants are found on the

Many rorage plants are found on the Jornada Experimental Range, a branch of the Southwestern Forest and Range Experiment Station,* located about 23 miles north of Las Cruces, N. M., but black grama grass is considered the most valuable because it cures well on the station of the stalk and furnishes a supply of palatable feed for grazing animals dur-ing all seasons of the year. Therefore, it was selected as the utilization indi-cator plant and the determination of all range use is based upon the degree of grazing found on this important species. In other words, when black grama is found to be properly used, the range is considered fully utilized regardless of the degree of use found on other less palatable plants.

The following terms are used to describe the various degrees of utilization

*Maintained at Tucson, Ariz., by the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in co-operation with the University of Arizona, and covering Arizona, New Mexico and the western third of Texas.

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Range Forage Utilization Important Management Factor

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found by range examination: light use, proper use and over use.

On deferred black grama ranges light use should be found on the range at about the half way point of the season of use. The Jornada black grama ranges are used during the winter-spring season, approximately from November until June, so this degree of use will be found in February and March. Light use consists of about half of proper use or about 25 to 27 percent of the total volume by weight of the feed produced by the plant.

Proper use is of course the degree of utilization which will be found on well managed black grama ranges at the end of the grazing season. This, on the Jornada, corresponds to the early summer season just preceding the summer

If the proper methods of stock control have been used, this degree of use should be fairly uniform over most of the range with possibly some unavoidable heavy use near watering places where cattle gather. The most effective means in use on the Jornada to minimize this uneven range utilization is the practice. this uneven range utilization is the practice of salting the range to secure proper distribution of the stock:

Proper use of the range is said to be obtained when the examiner judges that roughly about four-fifths of the flower stalks have been cropped down to a height of from two to three inches from the ground. This constitutes only about half of the total volume by weight of the herbage produced by the plant. The portion of the plant remaining should never be considered as waste feed but as a reserve highly necessary for the welfare of the plant and for drouth contingencies.

It has been shown by a recently com-pleted clipping experiment conducted over a 10-year period on the Jornada that black grama cannot withstand the repeated total harvesting of its foliage. Plots which were clipped frequently during the growing season lost heavily be-

fore the fifth year of the experiment while even those clipped only once each year, and that after the growing season lost practically all plant cover befor the end of the tenth year.

By way of contrast, black grama pas-tures 9 and 10 of the Jornada, which have been conservatively used over long periods, have maintained themselves in excellent condition year after year and were able to carry a herd of catti through the 1934 drouth without supple mental feeding. Use of these pasture has always been so regulated that a re serve supply of feed is left ungrazed at the end of the growing season.

The term over-use describes the state of the range when through overstocking all the herbage has been grazed down to a height of two inches or less from the ground. This degree of use cannot be otherwise than harmful as the continued close cropping gives the plant no opportunity whatever to manufacture and store up the food so necessary to maintain plant vigor. Black grama depends very little upon seed for reproduction but spreads from stolons or prostrate flower stalks which take root at the joints and form new sets or tuffs. Therefore, removal of all the foliage leaves the plant practically without means to reproduce itself. close cropping gives the plant no oppor-

Boren Buys Crosby Show Prospects

Two promising show and herd bull prospects were recently sold by Peirce Crosby, Jr., wellknown Polled Hereford breeder, Clarksville, Mo., to Boren Farms, Linton, Ind. These included a rarms, Linton, and These included a summer yearling bull calf and a schlor bull calf, both sons of the Crosby sire. The Ridley Type. Boren Farms owned by W. O. Boren, are establishing a Polled Hereford herd and plan to have a few select show animals at some of the leading polled shows this fall. These two will go into that string. The here two will go into that string. The herd is to be fitted by Boren Farms herds-man, Bernard Hart.

A poor herd sire may father is many cattle as a good one but what will they amount to?

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