

## IX. RANGE EXTENSION AT THE UI

*Kenneth D. Sanders\**

The University of Idaho extension program in range management was initiated with the appointment of Arnold E. Poulsen in December 1939 as extension conservationist. An alumni of the College of Agriculture with a B.S. in Agronomy, Poulsen's program emphasis was on soil conservation. He resigned from the position in February 1943 to engage in a farming enterprise near Aberdeen. His son, Neil, still operates the family farm and, among other agricultural endeavors, is a commercial grower of range grass seed.

The position remained vacant until 1948, when Ray O. Peterson was hired as extension conservationist. In August 1950, Peterson resigned to join the Bureau of Reclamation in South Dakota. Unfortunately, this is the only information that was available concerning his tenure.

Liter E. Spence was hired as extension conservationist in October 1950. A 1928 alumni of the University of Idaho School of Forestry, with majors in range and forestry, Spence taught in the school from 1930 to 1935. Following several years with the Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Grazing Service, and in private enterprise, Spence returned to the University of Idaho in 1950. He helped form the Idaho Section Society for Range Management and was one of the founders of the Grassman of the Year program. Spence left the University of Idaho in February 1959 to accept an assignment with the State Department in Libya. He passed away in 1964 at McCall.

Ralph Samson assumed the position of extension conservationist in the spring of 1960. An alumni of the University of Idaho Agronomy Department, Samson had taught agronomy, worked at the Sandpoint Experiment Station and, most recently, served as Owyhee County agent. Samson conducted extension programs in pasture management as well as range management. In

early 1968, he left the University of Idaho to accept a position with the Idaho Department of Lands. He is now retired on the family farm near Boise.



**\*UI Range Extension Specialist and Associate Professor of Range Resources, Ken Sanders has been a faculty member since 1975. He is currently stationed at the UI Extension Office in Twin Falls.**

From 1968 to 1980, the Extension Service did not have a specialist working in the range management area. However, Dr. Lee A. Sharp, Professor of Range Resources in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, ably fulfilled this vital function of the university. From the time he started to work for the University in 1949 until the present, Dr. Sharp has been very active in the service role. There is no doubt that, through his teaching, research and service role

with the University, he has done more to further good range management practices in Idaho than any other individual.

The range livestock industry is currently—and certainly has been over the past 75 years—the number one industry in Idaho in terms of revenue generated and acreage used. The extension conservationist position from 1939 to 1968 was an indication that the Extension Service recognized the need for a specialist in range management. However, the extension conservationists covered soil conservation and pasture management, as well as range management. With the exception of Lister Spence, they were all agronomists rather than range specialists. It was not until 1980 that a full-time range specialist was added to the extension program.

In 1980, at the urging of the range livestock industry, the Idaho Legislature approved funding for an official range extension and service program. The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences and the College of Agriculture worked out a cooperative arrangement whereby a greater total effort in range extension might be provided. A team of scientists consisting of Dr. Lee A. Sharp as leader; Dr. Ken Sanders, range extension specialist; and Neil Rimbey, extension

range economist, were designated to serve the university and the people of the state in this important area. Other members of the Department of Range Resources also contribute a considerable amount of time to service activities.

The Idaho Rangeland Committee, consisting of representatives from the various agencies and organizations concerned with Idaho's rangelands, was designated as an advisory group to the range extension program. A letter from the Idaho Rangeland Committee to Governor Evans in 1977 suggested that a "healthy economy and a quality environment" be the goal of rangeland use and management for Idaho and the nation. Thus, it is understandable that the primary objective of the range extension program is to provide technical and professional assistance to individuals, local associations and state and federal land management agencies in addressing problems and issues relating to achievement of this major goal of rangeland use and management. An additional and important objective of the program is to assist and strive for improved local, state and federal relationships in the management of the range resources. Cooperative coordinated management is a major emphasis as a strategy in attempting to achieve this goal.

