

Rangeland Management

(Theory)

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1.1 What is Rangeland?

In order to know what Rangeland Management is, understanding of the meaning of the word “Rangeland” is essential.

Rangeland has been defined as an extensive land area, usually not adopted to cultivation, covered with natural grasses and other forage plants best suited for grazing of domestic livestock and wild animals. Rangeland may be privately or publicly owned, fenced or unfenced, and supporting a natural or artificially seeded vegetation.

There are similar terms have the same meaning of Rangeland such as: Range, Grasslands, pasture, and Ranch.

1.2 Meaning of the terms “Pasture” and “Ranch”

Pasture normally refers to:

- 1- Improved and often irrigated, fertilized and fenced grazing land, in more favorable precipitation zone, which is seeded to domestic forage plants.

2- According to this definition no pastures exist in Iraq.

Ranch: may be defined as

- 1- **“an establishment with specific boundaries, together with its lands, buildings, cattle sheds, cages and stores used for the grazing and production of domestic livestock.**
- 2- Ranch is an equivalent of the word “Farm” whereas, an establishment on agricultural land used for producing crops is termed a Farm,
- 3- The one used in a range for livestock production is known as a ranch. The Ranchers permanently lives on the ranch with his family and livestock.

Difference between Rangeland and Pastureland:

Rangeland	Pastureland
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural and open uncultivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultivated land mostly enclosed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perennial grass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual/perennial
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous species	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exotic species
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permanent in nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary in nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No frequent cultural operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent cultural operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Naturally or Ecologically maintained/managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artificially maintained/managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harsh climatic condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Favorable climatic condition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stony/desert like environment/not suitable to grow forest and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good soil and high productivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly diversified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less diversified

1.3 What is Range management?

- 1- Literally, range management means **management of rangelands**. But since there is always a specific purpose assigned to any management, a more comprehensive definition of the term is needed, and therefor **Range management scientifically**

has been defined as “the science and art of obtaining maximum livestock production from rangeland consistent with the conservation of the land resources”.

- 2- In other words Range management is the wise use of natural or modified grazing lands by managing the animals using the forage and browse produced by those lands. It involves managing for the benefit of those plants which are most desirable for the production of livestock products, watershed values, and any other uses important to the particular area of land.**

- 3- The wise use of rangelands implies that the resources will be used for current benefit but also in such a way that they will be protected for future use.**

So..... What are the main objectives of Range Management?

On the basis of the discussion in the previous paragraphs, the objectives of range management may be summarized as follows:

- 1) To keep the range covered with desirable, strong forage plants.**
- 2) To insure stability of range watersheds by controlling soil erosion, and increasing their water infiltration capacity.**
- 3) To obtain maximum livestock production.**
- 4) To provide a suitable habitat for the development of wildlife.**
- 5) To achieve proper combination of grazing and forestry, in forested ranges.**

These objectives point to the great necessity of maintaining all grazing lands in superior “ range condition” as only through a good cover of vegetation can these objectives be achieved.

