



News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management

By: Pete Bauman

Last October, with support from the SD Grassland Coalition, we held the annual banquet, elections, and awards ceremony for the SD Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) in Chamberlain. You may not know who SRM is or what SRM does, so we're taking the opportunity to re-introduce our organization and explain why we are relevant in rangeland science, management, and youth education.

Who is SRM? The Society today is a collection of agency professionals, ranchers, academics, and various land managers interested in advancing the understanding and healthy management of rangelands. Rancher-members are an important voice in the organization, especially in South Dakota.

When was SRM formed? Late 1940's.

Why was SRM formed? At the time, there was a strong belief that range science and education needed to be advanced, especially after the Dustbowl era. One of the primary goals was to develop and publish a journal, which became "The Journal of Range Management". Today after 72 years, SRM helps agencies set and maintain professional standards and ethics as well as provides universities with standards for range education degrees and certificates. The Society also hosts an annual international conference focused on range science and education. Issues that SRM has been involved with over the decades includes everything from ranch resources, management policies on public land, livestock production, wildlife habitat, and drought. Youth education has been a staple of the organization since the early 1950s and has included youth essays, plant ID contests, scholarship awards, rangeland judging, and the Youth Range Forum. Here in South Dakota, youth education and recognition of top rangeland managers is our focus.

Who is SRM in South Dakota and what do we do? The South Dakota Section was formed in 1950, shortly after the national organization was established. SD SRM is a non-profit and has a traditional board of elected officers and directors. Today, approximately 70 members keep us active and relevant, working with partners to advance the mission of the Society. We have standing committees dedicated to awards, membership, newsletter, students, producers, research, and youth activities.

What does SRM membership offer to today's SD rancher? Great question. At a recent gathering of SRM leadership, we re-committed the organization to advancing the science of range management, re-engaging the rancher and providing a forum for him/her to share experiences, and continuing to support our youth education agenda. By joining SRM, you will help ensure that we are offering relevant and meaningful information and support to ranchers. In particular, a stronger membership helps ensure that educational programs, including the Range Degree at SDSU, remain available to the next generation of rangeland managers.

To join SRM simply log on to sdrangelands.com and select the membership tab. You will be routed to the national SRM website where you can join or renew your membership

National SRM Conference coming to Minneapolis February 10-14. Visit www.rangelands.org for more info.