

PRESENTATION OF TERESA OE:  
NORTH DAKOTA'S STATE BEEF  
AMBASSADOR

**HON. EARL POMEROY**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 24, 2000*

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, on September 28–30 of this year, the North Dakota Stockmen's Association held its annual convention in Bismarck, ND. I would like to take this opportunity to share with my colleagues the remarks of one of the conference presenters. Ms. Teresa Oe, a high school student from Belfield, North Dakota and North Dakota's State Beef Ambassador, gave an impressive speech to the convention delegates. Ms. Oe's remarks addressed the environmental benefits of cattle grazing. I would encourage my colleagues to take a moment to review her remarks which may help to bridge communication between cattlemen and environmentalists.

THE MISUNDERSTANDING

(By: Teresa Oe—North Dakota State Beef Ambassador)

Cattlemen and environmentalists have long regarded each other as the enemy. Rarely do they wish to converse with one another, let alone compromise. When they eventually agreed to "discuss" matters, the resulting arguments are based primarily on biased opinion and accusations. This communication gap has led to the disastrous misunderstanding that cattle and conservation cannot successfully coexist.

The irony in this notion, however, is that modern day cattlemen, equipped with new range management tools, are extremely capable and dedicated conservationists. Believe it or not, grazing cattle are their most valuable means for upgrading environmental well being.

According to the 2000 Cattle and Beef Handbook, produced by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, "Grazing lands comprise about one-third of the land in the United States." Due to steep terrain or dry conditions, these lands often are not suitable for cultivation or development. Cattle graze these virtually useless lands, utilizing grass, one of our country's most ample, renewable resources. Cattle are capable of efficiently transforming grass and other forage into nutritious high-protein beef.

Nevertheless, more and more every day, environmentalists are questioning if cattle belong on the rangelands. Surely, if environmental agencies only knew the significance of cattle to these areas, then their minds would be at ease and our cattle could continue to do their job. With this motive in mind, it is my privilege to share with you five major environmental benefits of cattle on the rangelands.

First of all, properly grazed cattle promote healthy soil and plant vigor. As a matter of fact, as documented in the Soil and Land Conditions publication, the Wildflower Research Center states, "Grazing is necessary for the maintenance of grassland systems." Cattle actually help plants and grasses grow by aerating the soil with their hooves. When cattle saunter over the land, they loosen the dirt which allows more oxygen to enter the soil. Without this oxygen, the soil develops a hard crust and is unable to readily absorb water and nutrients. Moreover, cattle naturally fertilize the soil in the form of manure.

Cattle also encourage plant reproduction. As a natural means of reseeding, they scat-

ter the seeds of various plant life and bury them in the ground, surrounding them in soil that is necessary for the onset of growth.

Regulating bothersome weeds and shrubs is also characteristic of cattle. They consume these nuisances which, otherwise, without the use of herbicides, would have the potential to grow and reproduce uncontrollably.

Furthermore, cattle are doing a large favor for many species of wildlife. Elk, deer, wild sheep, antelope, and geese, among others, are partial to young, palatable grass shoots. In order to stimulate and enhance this new, preferred growth, cattle must first remove the rank fall vegetation that other animals are hesitant to eat.

Last, but certainly not least, cattle grazing aids in preventing fires. Longer vegetation helps carry uncontrolled wildfires that cause mass destruction and expense. In the *Wow that Cow!* pamphlet published by the American National Cattle Women Inc., it points out that grazing these areas reduces the amount of matter on the ground, thus limiting the quantity of fuel to burn and restricting the fires ability to spread quickly.

Many members of our society have been misinformed that rangelands are in pitiful condition and that cattle are to blame, when in fact, just the opposite is true. As quoted by Rockwood Research in 1996, "73 percent of cattlemen's range of pasture land had been reported as improved in the past ten years, while only six percent had declared a decline." Not surprisingly, this study also showed that 62 percent of cattlemen reported an increase in wildlife. People for the USA! Grazing Position Paper states, "Scientists and range experts are constantly proving that rangelands are currently in their best condition since the turn of the 20th century, and the improvement is continuing."

If statistics verify that rangelands and the wildlife therein are truly thriving, why then do members of the environmental community still feel the cattle should be removed from these areas? Mistakes by ranchers of the past are mostly responsible for the negative attention that cattle receive, but this is unfair. Cattle can only be as efficient workers as their owners are good managers. Ranchers of the past did not have the educational resources that are available to us now. Today's cattlemen have a tremendous understanding of the correlation between the proper maintenance of natural resources and their success as livestock producers. Educated ranchers of this generation are better able to make use of cattle grazing as an effective management tool.

Please, take just a moment to visualize the rangelands without cattle. Better yet, try to imagine McDonald's without hamburgers, a shower without soap, Tupperware

In order to prevent this dilemma, we must enlighten others with the truth about cattle and grazing. The devastating misunderstanding that cattle and conservation cannot successfully coexist will be reversed only by knowledge and communication. Please take it upon yourselves to share with others the virtue of cattle on our rangelands and beef in our every day lives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cattle and Beef Handbook Facts, Figures, and Information, National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Englewood, CO. (June 1999)

Grazing. National Cattlemen's Beef Association. (1996). [Online]. Available: <http://www.teachfree.com/ffyf/grazing.html>

Non-Federal Grazing Lands in the United States. United States Department of Agriculture. (1997). [Online]. Available: <http://www.nhqr.ncrs.usda.gov/BSC/grace/nonfed.html>

Grazing Position Paper: Facts vs. Fiction. People for the USA! [Online]. Available: [www.pfw.org/grazing](http://www.pfw.org/grazing)

Soil and Land Conditions: Myths and Facts about Beef Production. [Online]. Available: [www.beef.org/library/myths-facts](http://www.beef.org/library/myths-facts)

Wow That Cow! American National CattleWomen, Inc. Englewood, CO.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

**HON. KEN CALVERT**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 24, 2000*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Eastern Municipal Water District, who observed its 50th anniversary of service to western Riverside County on October 14th. On that nostalgic day Eastern Municipal celebrated with present and past employees, and their families, with a fly-over, antique car show, displays and demonstration, live '50s music, clowns, a magic show and much more.

Formed in 1950 to secure additional water for the western Riverside County, which faced declining groundwater supply and continuing droughts, Eastern Municipal has exceeded expectations. Originally only serving a lightly populated area, it now has a service area of 555 square miles, with a total of nearly 440,000 people, while additionally providing sewage collection and water recycling services. In 1999/2000 Eastern Municipal sold 83,000 acre-feet of fresh water alone (one-acre-foot is 325,900 gallons, or as much as two families use in and around their homes in one year). One quarter of their water supply comes from wells, while the remainder comes from the Colorado River Aqueduct and its connections to the California State Water Project. Additionally, Eastern Municipal sells to eight other water agencies, which serve the areas of: Elsinore Valley, Western Riverside County, Lake Hemet, City of Hemet, Nuevo, City of San Jacinto and Rancho California.

In water storage, Eastern Municipal maintains 76 tanks which hold nearly 170 million gallons of water. These tanks provide assurance that water will be available during possible future droughts or declining water supply.

Mr. Speaker, for the state of California there are two issues constantly at the forefront: water, and more water. Therefore, the importance of municipal water districts cannot be underestimated—they will continue to grow and play an increasingly important role in southern California. As the Riverside and the Inland Empire continue to grow, we will need to find ways to live within the 4.4 million acre-foot restriction on the Colorado River that has been imposed by the Secretary of the Interior on southern California. The goals of reclamation will become even more important. Eastern Municipal Water District has proven itself capable of solving our water supply challenges for the past 50 years. I look forward to working with them on our important shared goals for