

NAVAJO AGENCY

OCT 17 1936

Fryer

Fryer

October 9, 1936

SUGGESTIONS AS TO METHODS OF REDUCTION - NAVAJO LIVESTOCK

The Navajo range is limited and far short of present needs. Range deflection grows worse with the years and succeeding droughts have accentuated the unfortunate trend. The necessity of reducing the range load is unquestionable and while a tribal problem primarily, it is none the less of national significance.

Propositions for reductions and attempts at execution are short-circuited with little gain at solution.

The careful survey of the range — its cover, capacity, and present load — with Indian enlistment in the studies should assist majority thought and action for definite and workable program for range control.

Of the approximately 7,000 families holding livestock about 25 percent average little above the actual subsistence level estimated at 57 ewes by the survey. Another 50 percent of the families would average under 125 sheep, or a number that could promise a fair time standard. Then, if 25 percent of the 7,000 families — 1750 to 1800 families, would take definite action for range relief, the problem could be well met for the present. They could act individually, collectively, or in groups, as would suit controlling factors.

1. If for the present allowed 125 sheep year-long range use as basis, they could individually, in groups, or as they will, lease range or field crops for their excess. The outstanding and larger holding flock-masters would thus follow the course that they know their white neighbor flock-masters are doing from year to year, and this requirement would indirectly favor by increasing rate the elimination of the unprofitable of their flocks.

2. Individually or collectively, others could arrange for the purchase of alfalfa or alfalfa range as available at Pima and elsewhere for their excess. This procedure, too, would show recognition of success and the qualifications for leadership as well as chance for elimination of unprofitable stock.

3. Lastly, there may be a market, if any at all, that could justify the sale of unprofitable stock to the outside and purchase of the more profitable from the better flocks within the reservation for a more equitable distribution of the range load.

A study of these three procedures might enlist the Indians in the possible avenues for relief rather than antagonize them with any arbitrary order for sale on unfavorable markets. Their enlistment is necessary and desirable for success.

FD 60

This brings to mind a successful Navajo flock-master of a past decade who was confronted with a range problem. He and his wife had about 2,500 sheep and therefore made use of an extensive territory. He had about 1,000 well bred ewes shearing above a seven-pound fleece on their scant range. This flock, of which they were particularly proud, had his individual attention. The wether rams were of first quality and commanded a good sale price. In all his 1,000 ewes brought three times the income rate of the average Navajo ewe. True, he was a range thief. He loved his sheep too well and his neighbor's rights were given too little thought. He was subjected to frequent tongue-chastisement by the farmer, Indian judge, and reservation superintendent. He was discouraged. He bought a car, took to drinking, and he is out of the sheep business today. His flock could have supplied the Navajo with possibly three hundred excellent rams each year of quality, breeding, and adaptation that we are now seeking through a Breeding Farm at Wingate. It is believed this Indian, then ranging in the shadows of Shiprock in this part of the year, could have been a worthwhile example for better range practice. He could and possibly would have been willing to have sold the 1500 average sheep if given the right encouragement for his choice flock of which he was so justly proud. He could have served his fellow flock-masters as a leader by that course, whereas he is now against any measure offered for range control.

I recite this individual case only to emphasize the necessity for enlisting the successful flock-masters, individually, in understanding and sharing in this important task of bringing the livestock load in keeping with proper range use.

It is believed that leaders like Chee Dodge, Deshne Clah, De Jesus and Lynch, could be enlisted in some measure in one or the other of these procedures and what they want, like all men, is recognition of their capacity for leadership.

C. E. FARIS

COPY

COPY

FD 61