



Searching for the Holy Grail - Questions, Myths, Realities

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For decades we have been seeking the Holy Grail - range readiness, rest rotation, the Savory Grazing Method, seasonal grazing, short duration, high-intensity, low-frequency. When it comes to grazing management, ranchers vary from totally committed to genuinely disinterested. No grazing system has universal applicability to all ecosystems, and much less to all plant communities, all forage types, or all ranchers. The Holy Grail is a myth. Where has the grazing system been applied, and to what conditions - upland or riparian, warm or cool season, and sod-forming, bunchgrasses or woody plants? What level of managerial ability is required? How relevant is the strategy to this ranch? We must do four things: 1) Define the physical and biological characteristics; 2) Separate myths and misconceptions from ecological realities; 3) Develop a set of applicable guiding principles; and 4) Apply the guidelines to the ranch in an adaptive management approach. Grazing management can be boiled down to three questions. What are we managing? What are the ecological realities? And, what is the required level of rancher commitment to planning, managing, monitoring and improving the grazing strategy?

2009. 62nd Society for Range Management Annual Meeting. Paper No. 65-10.