

Glossary

Agency: A division of the U.S. Department of Interior such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of Agriculture such as the Forest Service, or sometimes a division of state government that makes administrative and management decisions on public lands.

Allotment: A grazing area on public lands, usually fenced along its borders, where from one to many ranchers are permitted to graze livestock exclusively.

Cowsense: The knowledge or perception of what livestock will do under certain circumstances. Modern cowsense is more often perceived as knowing all the rotten things cows will do when handled the usual way.

Desertification: A process characterized by a declining number of plant and animal species and a lack of plant productivity. Accelerated soil erosion, a poorly functioning mineral, energy and water cycle can also be measured.

Drift grazing: Encouraging a herd of cattle to walk and graze at a slow pace for the purpose of helping them understand that a rider will not be aggressive or forceful and won't do the things that bother them and that pressure has a release. Drift grazing is used to get a herd to move calmly for a rider, stay mothered-up, or slow down prior to stopping and placing a herd.

End of lesson: A period of time following release of pressure for an animal. This period of time allows an animal to associate what it just did with the release of pressure it just got which is called a training lesson. The handler allows a period of time--ranging from seconds to days--in which there is no more pressure on an animal to do a certain thing. This time interval between releasing pressure and pressuring again is what separates different training lessons, or steps, in the training of livestock.

Force: Any type of handling that causes discomfort, anxiety, stress, or panic in livestock. Force is handler movements that cause livestock to stop, move, or change directions by scaring, blocking, or roping them or by the use of noise or fast movements or by other means that cause cattle to have little good choices but to do something. Any manner of handling that livestock interpret as force is force. Anytime livestock feel they are under restraint of handlers can be interpreted as force.

Good handling: See Stockmanship

Good movement: Cattle that are moving at a comfortable pace (walk) for whatever class of animal is involved. Stock moving with good movement are inclined to follow the movement of others and are going at a pace that will encourage the movement of others. A herd going with good movement will keep itself going without requiring excessive pressure from the riders. The stock are moving straight and cows are mothered with calves. There is no bumping, curving or crowding within the herd.

Grazing Association: A recognized entity of cattle owners who graze livestock in common on public lands. Grazing associations usually have an organized structure and members with specific duties and responsibilities as well as written rules and bylaws for the way they operate.

Herding: A form of livestock management where riders strive to keep livestock together as a herd and rotate the herd through a grazing rotation based upon a set of range management principles or rules.

Holistic management: A decision-making process developed by Allan Savory that is based on four key insights that are crucial to reversing environmental deterioration. Holistic management and decision making is based on the practice of involving all the people, resources and capital being managed and collective development of one goal, comprised of three parts. Resource evaluation is based on examination of resource cycle function, understanding all the tools available for use to manage these processes, a set of guidelines for testing decisions and making management choices, as well as use of new planning procedures and monitoring methods.

Letting: The practice of moving and positioning a rider or handler so livestock will want to do what the handler is asking. Letting stock do something—such as go through a gate, into a trailer, etc.—involves a substantial understanding of livestock behavior, how they make decisions and learn, and what position and attitude from the handler will prompt stock to do what they want them to do.

Livestock: Cattle, sheep, horses, and bison that are owned by private individuals, companies, or associations.

Mothered-up: When mother cows are traveling with their calves by their sides. Pairs can also be considered satisfactorily mothered-up when they can allow their calves to be at a distance from them when traveling, and aren't concerned, anxious or stressed about it. This usually only happens when they have a high degree of comfort with handling. Cows not moving with their calves can become very anxious and stressed and will often attempt to leave the herd and return to the last place the calf suckled to look for it. Calves being driven with a herd that are suddenly turned away from the herd may bolt to where they last suckled or otherwise experienced being with their mothers. Heifers are sometimes worse about keeping track of calves than older cows.

Pairs: A cow and her calf; rarely, a cow and twin calves.

Peak Discharge: The highest value or stage of a flood or precipitation event coming from a given area.

Permittee: A person that has a permit from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or other federal or state management agency that allows the use of range or grazing lands by their livestock. Permits usually state the conditions of how grazing will be conducted.

Placing cattle: Settling or positioning a herd of cattle so they want to stay very near to where they are settled by the handler for a day or longer. Well-placed cattle want to stay where you take the movement out of them and have a great affinity for the spot they are placed on and the herd they are with. Well-placed cattle will leave the herd to drink and return promptly to the place where the herd is.

Planned grazing: A grazing plan that develops the pathway to creation of the landscape conditions described in the holistic goal. Planned grazing integrates many resource considerations and factors simultaneously.

Pressure: When a rider or handler positions him or herself near enough to livestock to motivate them to do something. Proper pressure motivates livestock to do what the handler wishes the stock to do without the creation of anxiety, stress or panic in the livestock. Basic types of proper pressure are also described as proper techniques.

Range: Land on which the natural and potential climax (most diverse and usually most desired) potential plant community is dominated by grasses, forbs and shrubs, and is managed in its natural condition. Range (or rangelands) is also usually characterized by seasonal precipitation patterns whereby most of the precipitation falls outside the growing season.

Rider: A person hired by a rancher or grazing association who is charged with moving cattle on the range according to a grazing plan and who takes daily care of the needs of the stock. Riders are usually seasonally hired hands or contracted labor and provide their own horses and the equipment needed to do the basic job.

Riparian area: Land situated along the banks of a creek, river, or body of water. Riparian areas have become a high priority resource for protection and enhancement and are the focus of much time and effort by range managers in many parts of the West.

Sorting: Moving one animal from a herd or removing only select animals from a main group, such as sick cows, cattle in a certain weight class, etc. Sorting out individuals from a herd, calmly, is a more advanced skill than some other handling tasks.

Stockmanship: A manner of handling and operating around livestock that produces calm and highly responsive animals and does not produce long lasting anxiety, stress, or panic. Knowledge of how animals learn, what bothers and stresses them, and how to move around animals to achieve high control is required. Handling of livestock which involves no force, limits loud noises and fast movements and creates calmer, more responsive animals. Good techniques are consistently used 100% of the time. The traits of cattle and the principles of how animals learn are the basis for all handler movements. Handlers move and position themselves in a manner and place that allows the stock to always see them. Handlers always position and re-position themselves based upon where the stock show them they need to be and how they need to operate to let them do what is desired.

Stress: A state of condition in livestock that produces strain or intense strain that can lead to panic, undesirable behavior, and disease. Handling stress occurs when it creates strain upon the animal and it can't satisfactorily adapt and failure to meet that demand has undesirable consequences (real or perceived).

Stubble height: The standing height of vegetation that is left ungrazed at the end of the growing season or grazing period, often indicated by taking the median of various measurements along a transect or streambank. Stubble height is often relied on as a surrogate measure of perennial grass or sedge health, vigor, and an indicator of the level of impacts from livestock to streambanks and other riparian resources.

Trigger height: A specified median or mean height of certain specified grasses or sedges that when reached, initiate the movement of livestock to another grazing area so that livestock and range managers can be more confident in meeting required end-of-season stubble heights. Trigger heights are usually measured along the edge of creek banks and are used as a management tool to help ranchers or permittees meet riparian area stubble heights.

Utilization: The percentage of annual production of forage consumed (removed) by animals during a grazing season or sometimes during a grazing period. Utilization is expressed as a percentage by weight of total annual forage production and should be measured at the end of a grazing season or grazing period.