Rotational Grazing on Rangelands

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In the synthesis paper, ‘Rotational Grazing on Rangelands: Reconciliation of Perception and Experimental Evidence’, the goal of the authors is to identify the extent of complexities and assumptions that are associated with rotational grazing in comparison to continuous grazing. They have also provided reasonable explanations and recommendations for effective economic and ecological management (Briske et al., 2008). The grazing systems were given importance in order to improve the production of plants and growth of the livestock by ensuring sufficient forage during a specific period.

Though previous studies have reported that rotational grazing has similar affects as continuous grazing, yet rotational grazing is promoted and implemented as a better grazing system. This study adopts the evidence-based approach by incorporating comparative studies and literature reviews. They used a comprehensive assessment between two variables that are plant production and animal production. These results were evaluated using published studies, data from the AGRICOLA, grazing systems information, and articles from the Journal of Range Management. The factors that were included in the evaluation are geographical location, type of ecosystem, stocking rate, and area of pastures. The results showed that the plant production was almost equal or a little greater in continuous grazing rather than rotational grazing. Likewise, the animal production per head and per unit area was also equal or greater in continuous grazing.

Thus proved that rotational grazing does not have any better results than continuous grazing in rangelands from different ecological and geographical locations. However, the stocking rate and environmental conditions may affect the animal or plant production in several cases. The recommendations in the past have been made based upon the perceptions that have been proved wrong time and over and this study has also demonstrated similar results. Thus, there is a need to devise strategies that raise awareness among rangeland owners and managers about the viability of continuous and rotational grazing.

References

Briske, D. D., Derner, J. D., Brown, J. R., Fuhlendorf, S. D., Teague, W. R., Havstad, K. M., … Willms, W. D. (2008). Rotational grazing on rangelands: Reconciliation of perception and experimental evidence. *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, *61*(1), 3–17.