

## BOOK REVIEW

**Global rangelands: progress and prospects** by A.C. Grice and K.C. Hodgkinson (eds), 2002. CABI Publishing, Oxford. ISBN 0 85199 523 3, 299 pp. Price hardcover A\$179.69 (inc. GST).

This book draws together the main points and significant outcomes of most sessions of the VI International Rangeland Congress held in Townsville, Australia, in July 1999. It identifies what needs to be done and the priority actions to ensure a future for rangeland communities and the resources on which they depend.

The theme of the Congress was “*People and rangelands: building the future*”, and the people dimension is strong in most chapters that sought to address the ecological, economic and social dimensions of contemporary rangeland issues.

Twenty chapters by Session coordinators/chairs cover issues raised by keynote speakers and in discussions in Congress sessions, with scene-setting and synthesis chapters at the beginning and end, respectively. The first three chapters focus on people in rangelands. Then there is a group of five chapters that deal with the current status of knowledge about desertification, plant communities, invasive plants and biodiversity. A group of six chapters then deal with grazing, monitoring, modeling, rehabilitation of mined lands and integrated management of land and water resources. A group of three chapters deal with issues relating to communication, policy and decision-making processes in the rangelands. The last group of three chapters reinforces the people issues in building the future - the challenges, livelihood and human development issues. The last chapter is a synthesis, with the editors providing a commentary on new visions and prospects for the rangelands from the perspective of the needs and aspirations of several stakeholder groups. More could have been made of these valuable insights in the planning for the recent VII International Rangeland Congress.

Books have been written on the subject of many of the chapters, but the real value of this text lies in the concise, thought provoking analyses of contemporary issues and related concepts and theories. In this sense, the editor’s use of italics to highlight the authors’ ‘key messages’ is particularly valuable. The book exudes a sense of optimism at the opportunities in the rangelands, with an appropriately cautionary tone about the enormity of the challenges and some potential threats. This book will entertain scientists and academics, should be a key reading for all graduate students in rangeland management, and has some clear messages for agencies, producers and new rangeland scientists.

This book is an extremely valuable, up-to-date collation and distillation of concepts, findings, discussions and suggestions for further work that deserves to be widely read in conjunction with the two volumes of published proceedings. Unfortunately, the price of the book (A\$179.69) means that this won’t happen very often, at least with this hardcover version. But you might be enticed! For further information and a peek at this excellent book, visit the International Rangeland Congress Secretariat website ([www.rangelandcongress.com](http://www.rangelandcongress.com)) and follow the prompts “Australian Proceedings and Book” on the front page, “Abstracts, Papers and Posters” and then the flashing one “Global Rangelands: Progress and Prospects”. However, you will only be able to read the List of Contributors, the Preface, Acknowledgements and the first chapter. You will have to buy the book if you want to access more of the valuable insights. I think it would be a wise investment for anyone charting a course towards a brighter and more sustainable future for people in the rangelands.

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