

WAR COMES AGAIN TO THE RANGE



U. S. Forest Service

UNCLE SAM'S great range lands of the West—the national forests, public domain and Indian reservations, as well as the extensive private ranges—are again enlisted in a war for democracy. As in World War I, they again are furnishing a meat, wool and hide supply for the war front and for the vital lines of war production.

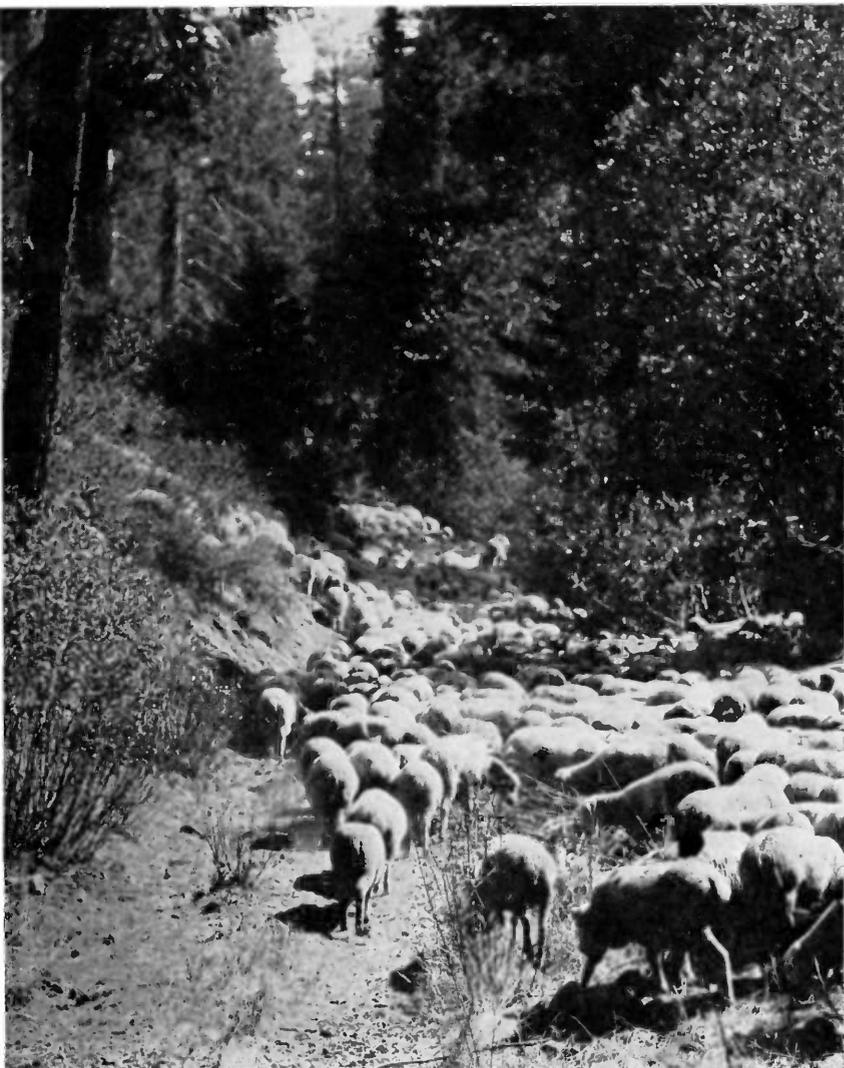
These products—meat, wool and hides—were declared critical early last year and their importance to the winning of the war is increasing daily. Beef consumption per capita increased from sixty-three pounds in 1940 to seventy-one pounds in 1941. An Army and Navy at war strength, along with the tremendous war industry, points to even higher consumption for the duration. At the same time, leasehold requirements of the United Nations must be met.

A billion pounds of apparel wool were used in United States mills during 1941, as compared with a five-year average prior to 1940 of 575,000,000 pounds. Thus the nation's record wool crop of 465,000,000 pounds last year was less than half the amount required. Imports from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and South America, supplied the rest. It is

obvious, therefore, that even with civilian consumption drastically curtailed, the wool situation will become critical before the year is out unless shipping conditions improve.

How to meet this mounting drain on beef and wool resources, as well as on hides, also heavily taxed to meet war demands, is a problem confronting both stockmen and public range administrators. According to W. R. Chapline, chief of the Division of Range Research, Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, stockmen are doing their part. Along with the Forest Service, the Grazing Service and other agencies, they are making every effort to avoid the mistakes of World War I.

During that period, it will be recalled, high meat and wool prices, intensified demand, a liberal loan policy, and the patriotic urge for greater production brought about over expansion without accomplishing the desired increase in essential livestock products. The program fell short because feed supplies failed to match increases in livestock populations. Much of the range depletion and accelerated erosion brought about by World War I is still to be corrected.



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Meat, wool and hides—these are the vital products Uncle Sam's great range lands must contribute to the winning of the war

Today, according to the Department of Agriculture, there are approximately 33,000,000 cattle in the seventeen western states. This is almost equal to the first World War peak. Sheep exceed 1919 numbers, there being more than 41,000,000 sheep and lambs, with 37,000,000 stock sheep. Improved range and herd management, along with more farm pastures and forage, have made these increases possible.

But the range as a whole is fully stocked. No further increases are desired in livestock population in the West, nor can they adequately be cared for. How, then, will increased demands for range products be met? The answer is still better range management and more intense management of existing livestock. The increased supplies of meat, particularly beef, along with wool and hides, will be met for the duration, it is hoped, by further balancing numbers of livestock with forage and feed supplies, producing more calves and lambs, developing more pounds per animal, and increased marketing.

That these hopes are justified is clearly shown by research and experience, says Mr. Chapline. In the northern Great Plains, conservative grazing and other desirable management have produced a twelve per cent greater calf crop and thirty-five pounds more of calf weight. Wintering a herd of sheep on a conservatively grazed Utah range gave a pound of wool more per animal and a five per cent greater lamb crop.

War production plans of the Department of





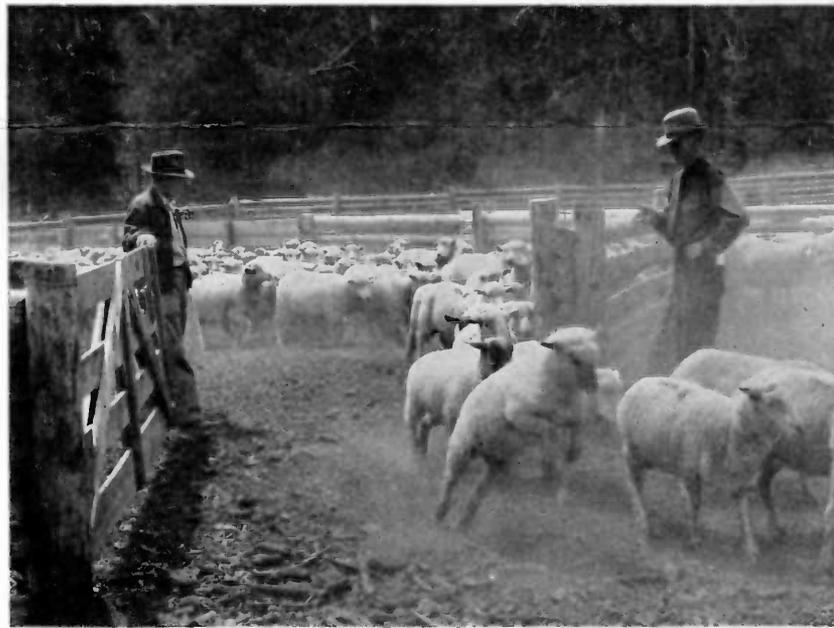
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For the duration, corrals will be busier places at branding time. Increased marketing to meet war demands for beef will be balanced by producing more calves

Agriculture call for the marketing of 28,000,000 cattle and calves in 1942. In the West, this is an increase of seventeen per cent over 1940; in the six Plains States the marketing increase is approximately forty per cent. This is a double-barrelled effort to furnish needed supplies of meat and hides for the nation's war emergency and at the same time afford a practical means of keeping numbers of livestock in reasonable balance with forage and feed supplies.

Expected marketing of 23,000,000 sheep and lambs during 1942 is slightly above 1941. Wool production goals call for shearing 51,000,000 sheep, or an increase of about five per cent over 1941. Seventy-five per cent of the nation's wool crop is produced in the West.

Stockmen and public range administrators face the challenge the war has brought to the range with confidence and with determination to avoid the mistakes of World War I. Their greatest concern is the weather. Says Mr. Chapline: "With present heavy stocking of range lands, or with an unwise increase in



With wool imports drastically reduced, Uncle Sam's range lands may be severely taxed to supply military requirements unless shipping conditions improve. Above, counting sheep on national forest range.

Below, shearers at work



Photos by Forest Service

livestock populations, one dry year with short forage would seriously decrease calf and lamb crops and reduce the growth of animals and wool. Obviously, this would be an extremely serious blow to our war effort and to the future needs of the nation."

Stockmen and public range administrators know they can do nothing to forestall a dry and lean year. Nor can they gamble on having a very favorable year. But given a break in the weather, they know that sound range and herd management is the only way to provide the livestock products needed for the winning of the war, as well as the peace. They know that better animals on full feed under the best care and management will assure maximum production. They know that effective balance between range forage, supplemental feed, and numbers of animals is vital. They know that high prices and ready taking of poor quality animals offer an excellent opportunity to closely cull herds and thereby assure maximum production in meat and wool.

They know that in this manner, and only in this manner, the great western range can contribute its maximum in the present crisis.

To avoid the mistakes of the first World War, stockmen and public range administrators are balancing numbers of livestock with forage and feed supplies. A well managed range (above) will produce much more meat and wool per animal than a depleted, overcrowded range (below)

Rounding up some of the 28,000,000 cattle needed this year for the war effort. Sound range and livestock management will assure beef and hides for 1943

Grazing Service

