

# Integrating rangeland and pastureland assessment methods into a national grazingland assessment approach

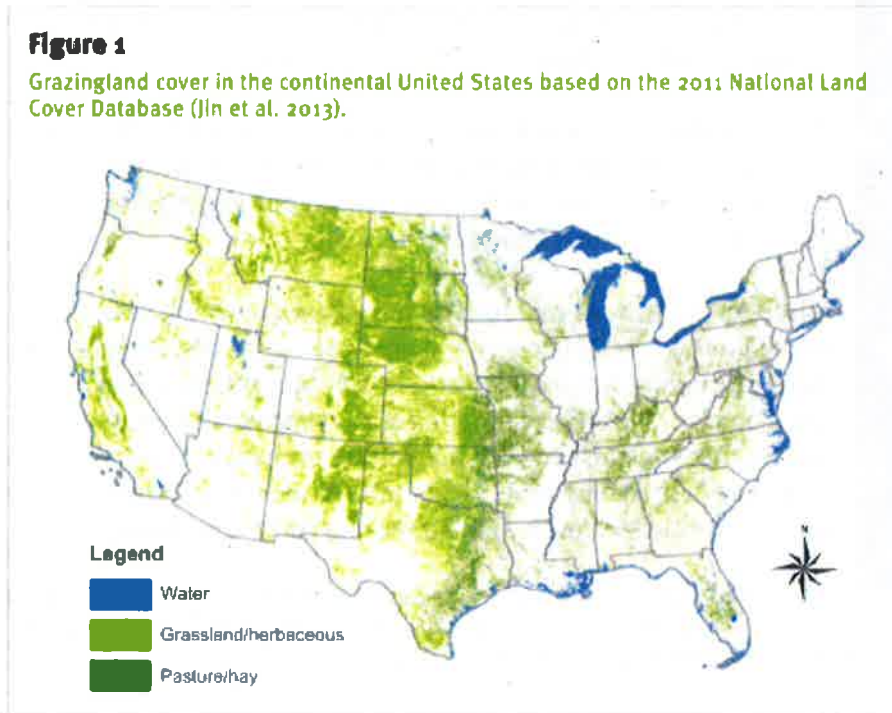
David Toledo, ARS

Grazingland resource allocation and decision making at the national scale need to be based on comparable metrics. However, in the USA, rangelands and pasturelands have traditionally been assessed using different methods and indicators. These differences in assessment methods limit the ability to consistently apply land

evaluations to land management across geographic boundaries and in areas undergoing land use/land cover change.

**Figure 1**

Grazingland cover in the continental United States based on the 2011 National Land Cover Database (Jin et al. 2013).



Our work shows an almost complete consensus among a group of method users that (1) an improved pastureland assessment tool is needed, and (2) both Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health and the Pasture Condition Scoring methods play different and yet important roles in grazingland assessments.

The Interpreting Indicators for Rangeland Health protocol provides a way to assess and interpret soil and site stability, biotic integrity, and hydrologic function attributes based on ecological potential.

The Pasture Condition Scoring protocol provides a framework that could be used to formalize management interpretations based on ecological potential and land use practices that could allow the ecological potential to be exceeded for some indicators.

We present a Grazingland Assessment Approach that uses the Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health protocol for ecological assessments relative to site potential and a management interpretation protocol that can be used to target management inputs to where they will have the greatest impact. This improved approach will provide consistent assessments at the national scale while allowing the information to also be used to guide management at pasture to watershed scales.

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[http://www.researchgate.net/publication/262512565\\_Rangeland\\_health\\_assessments\\_The\\_key\\_to\\_understanding\\_and\\_assessing\\_rangeland\\_soil\\_health\\_in\\_the\\_Northern\\_Great\\_Plains](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/262512565_Rangeland_health_assessments_The_key_to_understanding_and_assessing_rangeland_soil_health_in_the_Northern_Great_Plains)