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LANDSAT RANGE RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM

By

W. E. Boyd, Project Manager
J. Clifford Harlan, Principal Investigator

Final Report for Period
October 1979 - January 1981

Prepared for
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058
Contract No. NAS9-15468

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
REMOTE SENSING CENTER
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
Progress Report RSC 3697-6

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A series of test products were developed from data sets for North Central Texas that paralleled the needs of ranchers, technical personnel and the media. These needs are enumerated in RSC 3697-4 (Chilton et al., 1978). The products were mailed to approximately 150 ranchers who had reported an interest in evaluating new information systems. In addition to the rancher group, fourteen media people were sent samples of the products. A thirty-three member group in the agri-business/technical community was also chosen to receive test products. Examples of the test products and associated questionnaires are included for reference in Appendix A.

Ranchers

Of the approximately 150 ranchers queried, 53 returned the questionnaires. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the replies by acreage size class. The ranchers were asked to evaluate two test products. One was a series of three contour maps showing the total accumulated rainfall for periods of 30, 60 and 90 days prior to August 8, 1975. The other was a map showing the increase or decrease in green forage (grass & forbs) in pounds per acre for the period from June 15 to August 8, 1975. Both products referenced the same area in North Central Texas.

Rainfall - The first question asked for a ranking of the value of rainfall information to the rancher's particular operation. Ninety-four percent (48/53) of the replies ranked rainfall information either moderately (23.5%) or highly (40.6%) valuable.
FIGURE 1: Questionnaire replies by acreage class.
Question two inquired for which time period (30, 60, or 90 days) rainfall information would be of most value in forecasting green forage production. The 30 day period drew the highest response (41%) followed by 60 and 90 days (25% each).

Only 22% (12) of the rancher replies came from ranches within the product coverage area. Eighty-two percent of those ranchers thought there were sufficient landmarks to locate their general area. The 17% who found the landmarks insufficient suggested such improvements as adding county seat names, mapping a larger area or adding more major highways.

The 41 ranchers (77%) whose operations were not in the map area were asked if a map of similar style and accuracy for their locations would be of value. Ninety five percent replied in the affirmative.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 dealt specifically with the information content of the maps. Question 5 dealt with the clarity of the material. Ninety-three percent of the ranchers found the material either highly (56%) or moderately (37%) understandable.

In question 6, 91% of the respondents said it was very easy (55%) or moderately easy (37%) to determine the rainfall received in a specific area. When asked to determine the specific amount of rainfall at a specific spot (Stamford), 88% chose the correct amount (2 to 3 inches).

Question 8 inquired about improvements to the map for clarity or value. The responses suggested: adding landmarks, 37%; adding more detailed rainfall, 29%; reducing the area of coverage, 12%; enlarging the area of coverage, 25%. Other suggestions included using color codes, county names and seats, and placing all three maps on the same sheet.
The respondents preferred to receive the information by direct mail (79%, 41/52), radio (31%, 16/52) and magazines (29%, 15/52).

Eighty-six percent of the respondents thought current rainfall information would be either highly (51%) or moderately (35%) valuable.

**Green Forage** - A similar set of questions were asked about the forage maps. Eighty percent of the respondents' operations were not in the area of map coverage. Of the respondents whose area was covered, 83% felt there was sufficient detail on the maps. The modifications most frequently asked for included adding county names and seats and more highways. For those not covered in the map area, 95% (41/43) would like similar format maps for their own areas.

Questions 3 through 5 were concerned specifically with the forage data. Question 3 inquired as to the clarity of the data. Eighty-six percent (44/51) thought the data either moderately (51%) or highly (35%) understandable. Question 4 queried the ease of determining the amount of green forage in a specific location. Eighty-two percent (42/51) said they found the data either moderately (43%) or very easily (39%) determinable. When asked to find the amount of forage at a specific site, 79% checked the proper response. The most common error was a sign change (- for +), where (-) indicated a decrease in forage and (+) indicated an increase.

Questions 6 through 8 concerned the format and availability of the data. When asked about changes in format to improve clarity or accuracy, 40% (21/52) asked for more landmarks and 35% (18/52) asked for more detail. The respondents to question 7 prefer monthly (66%)
or quarterly (16%) data availability and seem to favor direct mail (41/52), magazines (13/52) and newspapers (12/52) as the method of reception.

Eighty-six percent of the respondents to question 9 thought this type of information to be very (38%) or moderately (48%) valuable in managing their respective operations.

Technical Personnel

Evaluation of the test products by technical personnel produced trends similar to those of the ranchers. In addition to the rainfall and forage contour maps this group also received a regional vegetation type map.

The group of 33 people who were asked to evaluate the products consisted of two commodities specialists, six lending institution representatives, six SCS personnel, three resource consultants, two ranchers, seven university personnel, a recreational land leasing organization representative, five professional land managers and the Remote Sensing staff of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The level of replies from this group averaged about 55%.

Rainfall - Replies concerning the rainfall maps will be considered first. Rainfall information was considered highly valuable (8/15) or moderately valuable (3/15) by 73% of those replying. The most frequently specified time period for data was 30 days (7/15) with 6 of 14 replies asking for an update biweekly.

Fifty-five percent of those replying to question 4 were not in the area of map coverage. Sixty-three percent of those that were
covered felt that the maps contained sufficient detail. Of those not working in the area, 85% would like to have similar maps for their respective areas.

Questions 5, 6 and 7 dealt with the ability to obtain data from the map. All of the respondents (15) found the map either highly or moderately understandable. Eighty-seven percent could determine the rainfall received in a specific area very or moderately easily. All fifteen respondents read the map correctly for the rainfall amount at Stamford for the period 30 days prior to August 8.

When asked about improvements regarding clarity or value, four asked for more landmarks, three for more rainfall information, five wanted a reduced area of coverage, and five wanted an enlarged area of coverage. Several checked more than one response and other comments requested historical averages for the reporting period and/or year.

Preferred placement of the data, ranked in order of response, were: direct mail 9, newspapers 6, and magazines 2. Other methods suggested were placement at the local SCS and Extension Service offices.

Forty-three percent (7/15) thought current rainfall information to be of moderate or high value.

Green Forage - Fifty-five percent of those replying to the questionnaire were in the map area. Half thought there were sufficient landmarks to locate their general area. Of those not covered by this map, 70% would like a map of similar format and accuracy for their areas. Eighty-five percent found the map forage information either highly or moderately understandable. Seventy-six percent found it very or moderately easy to determine the amount of green forage in a
specific area. When asked to interpret the map, eighty-seven percent checked the proper response.

When queried about improvements concerning value or clarity, six respondents asked for more landmarks, four for more detailed information, six for reduced coverage and three for enlarged coverage. Other comments from respondents asked for more highways and county names and seats.

The most common reporting frequency asked for was monthly, followed by quarterly and biweekly. Most respondents wanted the information by direct mail (9/15) or newspaper (6/15). Other sources for receiving the information included the local SCS or Extension Service. Eight of 13 found the information to be either very or moderately valuable for managing their operation.

Regional Vegetation Map - Seventy-four percent of the respondents did not operate in the area covered in the sample products. Of those covered, most (3/4) found their areas of interest identifiable. For those not covered (14), 70% would like a map of a similar type for their areas. Less than half (44%) thought there was sufficient geographic detail. Suggestions for additional detail included highways and towns (5), larger scale (2) and county seats and lines (2).

Data transmission preferences were direct mailing to: business address (9/13), county SCS office (7/13), and county agent (3/13). Seventy percent would be willing to pay at least $10 for a map of this type.
EVALUATION OF A MAP SHOWING THE CHANGE IN THE AVAILABILITY OF GREEN FORAGE

The attached map for an area in North Central Texas shows the increase or decrease in green forage (grass + forbs) in pounds per acre from June 15 to August 8, 1975. Negative numbers (and dashed lines) mean less green vegetation in August than June. Positive numbers (and solid lines) mean more green vegetation in August than June. 0 indicates no change. The map shows an area approximately 150 miles long and 150 miles wide. Please evaluate the map as if it were current information and complete the questions below. Your response will help us determine the value of this type of information to you and other ranchers in West Texas.

NAME

ADDRESS

TYPE OF OPERATION

SIZE (ACRES)

1. Is the location of your operation covered by the attached map?  
   Yes  No
   If yes, are there sufficient landmarks (highways, lakes, towns) on the map for you to locate your general area?  
   Yes  No
   If the landmarks are insufficient, what others should be added?

2. If your ranch location is not shown on this map, would a map of the same format and accuracy covering your operation be valuable?  
   Yes  No

3. Is the information on the availability of green forage understandable?  
   Highly  Moderately  Slightly  Not Understandable

4. Can you determine the amount of green forage produced from June to August in a specific area?  
   Very  Easy  Easy  Easy  Not at all

5. Using the data on this map, approximately how much change in green forage was there immediately south of Lake Kemp?  
   0 lbs/acre (no change)
   200-400 lbs/acre more  200-400 lbs/acre less
   400-600 lbs/acre more  400-600 lbs/acre less

6. What improvements should be made to the green forage map to improve the value or clarity? (you may check more than one)  
   More landmarks  More detailed vegetation information  Reduce area of coverage
   Enlarge area of coverage  Other (please specify)

7. How often would you like to have similar vegetation information?  
   Weekly  Biweekly  Monthly  Quarterly  Annually

8. Where would you like to see this information?  
   Newspaper  TV  Direct mail on subscription basis  Magazines  Other (please specify)

9. How valuable would information like this be to you in managing your operation?  
   Very  Moderately  Slightly  Not
   Valuable  Valuable  Valuable  Valuable

Thank you for your assistance. The map is yours to keep. Please place the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self addressed postage paid envelope and place in the mail. You will be receiving a copy of the final report in a few weeks.
Summary

In general, the responses were pleasingly positive. Most respondents felt that they could use the data and could read it fairly easily, and a good number could interpret it correctly without prior instruction. Minor objections were raised about the kind and amount of detail. These problems appear to be easily solvable. Most who reviewed the vegetation maps would pay at least $10 for them.

Specific points which should be emphasized are:

1. Most of those queried were outside the area of map coverage yet were still interested in a similar product.

2. Direct mail to the user is largely preferred. Only for the regional vegetation map was the Extension Service/SCS mentioned.

3. The media repeatedly emphasized rapid, timely transmission by the fastest possible means, with some local interpretation added.

4. Product frequency requested was thirty days for both rainfall and green forage.

5. Product preference broke along two lines: local, meaning very small area (county or less), and regional (several counties at least). At both scales, the amount of detail needed to be increased. At the small scale, more detailed product information and base geography were suggested. At the large scale, more county name and seat locations and major roads were requested.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX A
EVALUATION OF RAINFALL MAPS

The attached maps for an area in North Central Texas show the amount of rainfall in inches that was reported during the periods shown on each map. Map #1 shows the accumulated rainfall for the 30 days prior to August 8, 1975. Map #2 shows the accumulated rainfall for the 60 days prior to August 8, 1975 and Map #3 shows the accumulated rainfall for the 90 days prior to August 8, 1975. The maps show an area approximately 150 miles long and 150 miles wide. Please evaluate the attached maps as if they were current information and complete the questions below. Your response will help us determine the value of this type of information to you and other ranchers in West Texas.

NAME

ADDRESS

TYPE OF OPERATION __________________________ SIZE (ACRES)

1. How valuable is rainfall information to your operation?

   Highly Valuable  
   Moderately Valuable  
   Slightly Valuable  
   Not Valuable

2. The attached maps show accumulated rainfall for a 30, 60 or 90 day period prior to a specific date. Which of these time periods would be most valuable to you in forecasting green forage production?

   Less than 30 days  
   30 days  
   60 days  
   90 days  
   More than 90 days

3. For the period you have checked above, how often would you like to have this information updated? For example, if you wanted a map showing the accumulated rainfall over a 30 day period published every two weeks, you would check (x) 30 days in Question #2 and check (x) biweekly in Question #3.

   Weekly  
   Biweekly  
   Monthly  
   Bimonthly  
   Quarterly

4. Is the location of your operation covered by the enclosed maps? Yes ______ No ______

   If yes, are there sufficient landmarks (highways, lakes, towns) on each of the maps for you to locate the general area of your operation?

   Yes ______ No ______

   If the landmarks are insufficient, what others should be added?

   If your ranch location is not shown on these maps, would a map of the same type format and accuracy covering your operation be valuable?

   Yes ______ No ______

5. Is the rainfall information on the maps understandable?

   Highly Understandable  
   Moderately Understandable  
   Slightly Understandable  
   Not Understandable

6. Can you determine the rainfall received in a specific area?

   Very Easy  
   Moderately Easy  
   Easy  
   Not at all

7. Using the data on this map, approximately how much rain fell during the 30 days prior to August 8 at Stamford?

   0 inches  
   1 to 2 inches  
   2 to 3 inches  
   3 to 4 inches

8. What improvements should be made to the rainfall maps to improve their value or clarity? (you may check more than one)

   More landmarks  
   More detailed rainfall information  
   Reduce area of coverage  
   Enlarge area of coverage  
   Other (please specify)

9. Where would you like to see this information? (you may check more than one)

   Newspaper  
   TV  
   Direct mail on subscription basis  
   Magazines  
   Other (please specify)

   (over)
10. How valuable would current rainfall information be to you if it were presented on similar maps for your area?

Very Valuable
Moderately Valuable
Slightly Valuable
Not Valuable
Opinion

Thank you for your assistance. The maps are yours to keep. Please place the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self addressed postage paid envelope and place in the mail. You will be receiving a copy of the final report in a few weeks.
MAP 1
RAINFALL (INCHES) ACCUMULATED DURING
THE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO AUGUST 8
MAP 2
RAINFALL (INCHES) ACCUMULATED DURING THE 60 DAYS PRIOR TO AUGUST 8
MAP 3
RAINFALL (INCHES) ACCUMULATED DURING THE 90 DAYS PRIOR TO AUGUST 8
The attached map for an area in North Central Texas shows the increase or decrease in green forage (grass + forbs) in pounds per acre from June 15 to August 1, 1975. Negative numbers (and dashed lines) mean less green vegetation in August than June. Positive numbers (and solid lines) mean more green vegetation in August than June. 0 indicates no change. The map shows an area approximately 150 miles long and 150 miles wide. Please evaluate the map as if it were current information and complete the questions below. Your response will help us determine the value of this type of information to you and other ranchers in West Texas.

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**TYPE OF OPERATION**

**SIZE (ACRES)**

1. Is the location of your operation covered by the attached map?  Yes  No  
   If yes, are there sufficient landmarks (highways, lakes, towns) on the map for you to locate your general area?  Yes  No  
   If the landmarks are insufficient, what others should be added?  

2. If your ranch location is not shown on this map, would a map of the same format and accuracy covering your operation be valuable?  Yes  No  

3. Is the information on the availability of green forage understandable?  
   Highly Understandable  Moderately Understandable  Slightly Understandable  Not Understandable  

4. Can you determine the amount of green forage produced from June to August in a specific area?  
   Very Easy  Moderately Easy  Easy  Not at all  

5. Using the data on this map, approximately how much change in green forage was there immediately south of Lake Kemp?  
   0 lbs/acre (no change)  
   200-400 lbs/acre more  200-400 lbs/acre less  
   400-600 lbs/acre more  400-600 lbs/acre less  

6. What improvements should be made to the green forage map to improve the value or clarity? (you may check more than one)  
   More landmarks  More detailed vegetation information  Reduce area of coverage  
   Enlarge area of coverage  Other (please specify)  

7. How often would you like to have similar vegetation information?  
   Weekly  Biweekly  Monthly  Quarterly  Annually  

8. Where would you like to see this information?  
   Newspaper  TV  Direct mail on subscription basis  Magazines  Other (please specify)  

9. How valuable would information like this be to you in managing your operation?  
   Very Valuable  Moderately Valuable  Slightly Valuable  Not Valuable  

Thank you for your assistance. The map is yours to keep. Please place the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self addressed postage paid envelope and place in the mail. You will be receiving a copy of the final report in a few weeks.
CHANGE IN GREEN FORAGE IN POUNDS PER ACRE FROM JUNE 15 TO AUGUST 8
The attached is a prototype regional vegetation type map developed at Texas A&M University for an area in north Central Texas. The area covered by the map is approximately 98 miles by 112 miles. A classification by manual image interpretation has been done on a Landsat image from October, 1973. Similar classification can be done and a product generated for almost any area at a variety of scales on a regular interval.

Please review the information presented on the map and legend and evaluate the contents in terms of the value of such a map for your region to your particular business.

You may keep the map. Please complete the product evaluation form, tear on the dotted line and return in the enclosed envelope.

Name ___________________________ Address ___________________________

Type of business ___________________________

Is your area of interest covered by this map? yes____ no____

If yes, is your area of interest identifiable?

easily identifiable____  identifiable____  not identifiable____

If your area is not covered by this map would a similar map covering your area be of value? yes____ no____

Are sufficient geographic features (lakes, towns, roads, etc.) shown for specific reference? yes____ no____

If no, what other features would you suggest?

For your area, how valuable would a vegetation type map be to you?

extremely valuable____  moderately valuable____  valuable____  no value____

If map from vegetation type information is valuable to you, where would you like to have it available?

a. sent directly to your business address____
b. County SCS Office____
c. County Extension Agent____
d. Regional Experiment Station____
e. other (specify)____

Would you be willing to pay at least $10 for a map of this type covering your area(s) of interest? yes____ no____
Media Evaluation of Green Forage Map

The attached contour map for an area in North Central Texas was developed from satellite information to show the change in green forage from June 15 to August 8, 1975.

Please evaluate the attached map and narrative as if they were current information and complete the appropriate questions below. Your response will help us to determine the value of this data to the media in Texas. If this type of data proves valuable, it could be made available every 9 days depending upon cloud cover. If clouds prevented satellite picture acquisition, then the next available period would be 9 days later.

Name__________________________________________ Address__________________________________________

Media type__________________________________________

Map
1. Is the location of your service area covered by the enclosed map? yes____ no____
   If "yes", are there sufficient landmarks (highways, lakes, towns, etc.) on the map for it to be of value to your audience? yes____ no____
   If landmarks are insufficient, what others should be added?

If your service area is not covered, would a map of the same format and accuracy be of value to your audience? yes____ no____

2. Is forage information on the maps understandable?
   Highly understandable____ Moderately understandable____
   Slightly understandable____ Not understandable____

3. Can you determine green forage levels in a specific area?
   Very easy____ Moderately easy____ Easy____ Not at all____

4. What improvements should be made to green forage maps to improve their value or clarity (you may check more than one)
   More landmarks____ More detailed information____
   Reduce area of coverage____ Enlarge area of coverage____
   Other (specify)____

Narrative
1. Is the narrative detailed enough? yes____ no____
2. Is the terminology in the narrative appropriate to your audience intelligence level?
   Highly appropriate____ Moderately appropriate____
   Slightly appropriate____ Not at all____
3. Is the length of copy sufficient? yes____ no____
   If no, specify appropriate changes:__________________________________________

TV
   Would you prefer to have a - color slide format map and written narrative ____ or a color video tape with voice over ____ delivered to you?

Print Media
   What would be the best map format for us to deliver to you?
      8x10____  5x7____  other(specify)________________________________________
   How would you prefer to receive this data?
      1. Direct mail (map and narrative) from College Station ____
      2. Pick up (map and narrative) from County Extension Agent with his local update ____
      3. Have County Agent deliver map and narrative to you with his local update ____
      4. Other (specify)______________________________________________________

Radio
   Would you prefer receiving a tape recording of the narrative ____ or do you prefer voicing your own material ____?
Media Evaluation of Rainfall Map

The attached rainfall contour map for an area in North Central Texas was developed to show the total accumulated rainfall in inches for the 30 days prior to August 8, 1975.

Please evaluate the attached map and narrative as if they were current information and complete the appropriate questions below. Your response will help us to determine the value of this data to the media in Texas. If this type of data proves valuable, it could be made available every 9 days.

Name__________________________________________ Address__________________________________________

Media Type__________________________________________

Map
1. Is the location of your service area covered by the enclosed map?
   yes___ ___no____
   If "yes", are there sufficient landmarks (highways, lakes, towns, etc.) on the map for it to be of value to your audience? yes___ ___no____
   If landmarks are insufficient, what others should be added?

   __________________________________________________________________________

   If your service area is not covered, would a map of the same format and accuracy be of value to your audience? yes___ ___no____

2. Is rainfall information on the maps understandable?
   Highly understandable___  Moderately understandable___
   Slightly understandable___  Not understandable___

3. Can you determine rainfall received in a specific area?
   very easy___  moderately easy___  easy___  not at all___

4. What improvements should be made to rainfall maps to improve their value or clarity (you may check more than one)?
   More landmarks___  More detailed information___
   Reduce area of coverage___  Enlarge area of coverage___
   Other (specify) ________________________________________________
Narrative
1. Is the narrative detailed enough? Yes____ no____
2. Is the terminology in the narrative appropriate to your audience intelligence level?
   Highly appropriate____ Slightly appropriate____
   Moderately appropriate____ Not appropriate____
3. Is the length of copy sufficient? yes____ no____
   If no, specify appropriate changes___________________________

TV
Would you prefer to have a - color slide format map and written narrative____ or a color video tape with voice over____ delivered to you?

Print Media
What would be the best map format for us to deliver to you?
   8x10____ 5x7____ other(specify)____
How would you prefer to receive this data?
   1. Direct mail (map and narrative) from College Station____
   2. Pick up (map and narrative) from County Extension Agent with his local update____
   3. Have County Agent deliver map and narrative to you with his local update____
   4. Other (specify)_______________________________________

Radio
Would you prefer receiving a tape recording of the narrative____ or do you prefer voicing your own material?