CARRYING CAPACITY OF NATIVE RANGE GRASSES IN NORTH DAKOTA.¹

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For many years the writer has believed that a large area of land in the western half of North Dakota should be kept in native prairie sod for pasturing live stock and has held that it will produce vastly more return in that way than can be obtained from the same land if plowed and cropped.

The 1908 report of the field operations of the Bureau of Soils of the United States Department of Agriculture, covering a survey of the portion of North Dakota lying west of the hundredth meridian, confirms this view and in its statement lists 6,645 square miles of land which I interpret from their description is adapted only for grazing. The land west of the hundredth meridian in North Dakota constitutes about three-fifths of the area of the State. The rough or grazing land constitutes about 17 percent of the area, and is equivalent to 184 townships of land.

In 1913 an active campaign on the part of the writer resulted in an arrangement for a trial to determine the carrying capacity of a native range pasture of wild grasses to be conducted cooperatively by the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station and the United States Department of Agriculture on the Northern Great Plains Field Station at Mandan, N. Dak. John T. Sarvis and the writer, representing

¹ Contribution from the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, Agricultural College, N. Dak., being a report of work conducted cooperatively by that station and the United States Department of Agriculture. Presented at the eleventh annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, Baltimore, Md., January 6, 1919.