

# IYRP Quick Facts & FAQ Sheet

This handout provides key facts and clear, equitable language to support public understanding of rangelands and the communities who steward them.

## Quick Facts about Rangelands

- Scale: Rangelands cover more than half of Earth's terrestrial surface.
- Livelihoods: They support hundreds of millions of pastoralists, herders, and ranching families who produce meat, milk, fiber, and cultural heritage.
- Biodiversity: Rangelands sustain diverse wildlife—including antelope, bison, migratory birds, pollinators, and endemic species.
- Stewardship: Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and local communities have managed these landscapes for millennia through mobility, rotational grazing, fire, and other knowledge-based practices.
- North America: In the Western U.S., Mexico, Canada, and Hawai'i, rangelands are central to rural economies, Tribal Nations, and ecological resilience.
- Ecosystem services: Healthy rangelands store carbon, regulate water cycles, protect soils, support pollinators, and reduce wildfire risk.
- Urgency: Rangelands face pressures from land conversion, fragmentation, and climate change—but they also hold powerful solutions for sustainability, food systems, and climate resilience.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. What are rangelands?

Rangelands include grasslands, shrublands, savannas, tundra, and deserts—landscapes shaped by grazing wildlife, livestock, and ecological processes. They support water filtration, soil stability, carbon storage, and biodiversity.

### 2. Who are pastoralists?

Pastoralists are people whose livelihoods and cultures center around herding livestock on rangelands. This includes:

- Nomadic and semi-nomadic herders
- Indigenous herding communities
- Transhumant herders (seasonal movement)
- Ranchers in parts of the Americas and Oceania

Pastoralists are not only producers—they are knowledge holders, land stewards, and cultural leaders whose practices contribute to ecological resilience.

### 3. Why are rangelands important?

- Ecological: Home to amazing biodiversity and major carbon stores.
- Economic: Support local and global food systems, rural livelihoods, and fiber economies.
- Cultural: Anchor languages, ceremonies, foodways, art, and community identity for Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and ranchers.
- Climate: Provide adaptive models for living with variability and water scarcity.

#### **4. What threats do rangelands face?**

- Land conversion (cropland, development, energy extraction)
- Climate change (drought, heat, altered seasonality)
- Loss of mobility due to fencing, policy restrictions, or fragmentation
- In some areas, mismanagement from overuse or lack of resources
- Undervaluing of pastoralist rights, voices, and knowledge systems

#### **5. What is the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)?**

The United Nations designated 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists to:

- Raise global awareness of rangelands' ecological and cultural value
- Support policies that strengthen pastoralist and Indigenous land rights and mobility
- Promote sustainable rangeland management
- Celebrate pastoralist cultures and knowledge systems
- Encourage investment, research, education, and collaboration

#### **Learn more:**

<https://iyrp.info>

[Western SARE](#)

#### **6. How can I get involved?**

- Attend or host events: story circles, exhibitions, fiber arts, field days
- Share stories: amplify pastoralist and Indigenous voices
- Partner with local groups: Tribal Nations, grazing associations, conservation districts
- Support youth + women leaders: workshops, mentorship, creative programs
- Policy engagement: promote mobility, land tenure security, and community governance
- Education: integrate rangeland ecology and cultures into schools and libraries

#### **7. Who should use this FAQ?**

- Agencies and policymakers
- NGOs and advocacy groups
- Educators, media, and cultural organizations
- Community partners and grassroots groups
- Libraries, museums, schools, and rangeland practitioners