



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. J. Alphonso Ortega-Santos

The Texas Section, Society for Range Management would like to recognize Dr. J. Alphonso Ortega-Santos with the 2008 Outstanding Achievement Award. Dr. Ortega received his BS degree at Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico and his MS degree at Universidad Agraria Antonio Narro, in Saltillo, Mexico. He received the Doctor of Philosophy in Agronomy in 1990 at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Following graduation, he served as a Researcher in the Range and Forage Program at National Research Institute of Forestry, Crops and Livestock in Mexico and was National Leader of the Range and Forage Program from 1997 to 2001. In 2001, he came to Department of Wildlife and Animal Sciences and Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville where he serves as an Associate Professor.

Dr. Ortega made significant contributions to the management of rangelands in Mexico before coming to Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He has published 21 papers in peer-reviewed journals including *Rangeland Ecology and Management* and *Agronomy Journal*. As National Leader of the Range and

Forage Program in the National Research Institute of Forestry he worked nationwide with a team of 110 researchers located in 82 experimental stations all over Mexico. Dr. Ortega had a major influence over the direction and development of range management research in Mexico during his tenure as director.

In his role as an assistant professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Dr. Ortega has made contributions to rangeland management working as a liaison with universities in Mexico; teaching and conducting research at Texas A&M University-Kingsville; being active in the Texas Section, Society for Range Management; and authoring significant publications.

Dr. Ortega is an outstanding teacher and is the foundation of the teaching program in rangeland management at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. In addition to teaching, he co-sponsors the Texas A&M University-Kingsville Range Plant Identification Team. His efforts have brought the team numerous awards at Plant Identification contests.

In the past 4 years, he has received almost \$800,000 in grants for research. He is currently working on the influence of deer and nilgai on the spread of fever ticks on Texas rangelands. Part of this work was recently published in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*. Dr. Ortega has also led research on using grazing and prescribed burning to control exotic grasses.

Dr. Ortega has been active in the Texas Section, Society for Range Management. In particular, he has been strongly involved in Plant Identification Contests, both in setting them up and in grading. He led the development of a Plant Identification Contest at Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society meetings, which greatly benefits relationships between the sister organizations.

Dr. Ortega has authored publications of significant value in management of Texas Rangelands. In 2005, he and Dr. Fred Bryant authored *Cattle Management to Enhance Wildlife Habitat*, a bulletin that received a publication award from the Texas Section in 2006. Dr. Ortega coauthored *White-tailed Deer Habitat: Ecology and Management on Rangelands* that was published by Texas A&M University Press in 2006. The book received the Outstanding Book Award from the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society in 2006. Dr. Ortega translated the book into Spanish, and it was published as *Ecología y Manejo de Venado Cola Blanca* by Texas A&M University Press in 2007. This was the first book ever published in Spanish by Texas A&M University Press.

Dr. Ortega's achievements in rangeland management research and education have been truly outstanding. In addition to academic achievements, he also owns a working ranch in Mexico and trains horses in his 'spare time.' There are few people in the range profession that have both the academic and practical expertise in rangeland management possessed by Dr. Ortega. This background enhances his credibility with producers and students, and strengthens his influence on the management of rangelands in Texas and Mexico.

The Texas Section, Society for Range Management is proud to recognize Dr. J. Alphonso Ortega-Santos with the Texas Section's Outstanding Achievement Award.