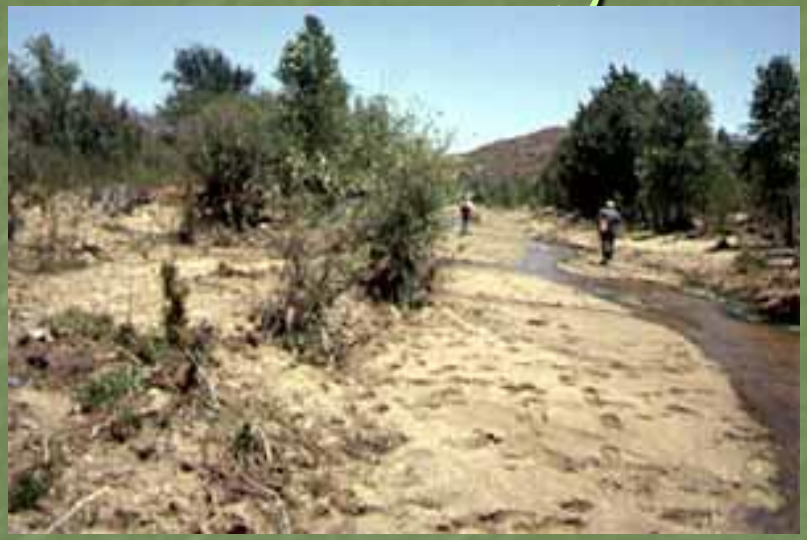
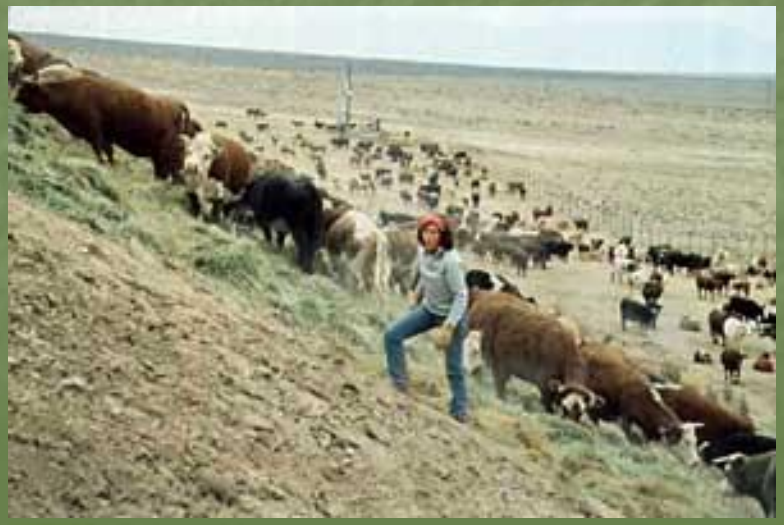
Overgrazing!

What is the Issue?

- Overgrazing is allowing animals to graze to the point of damaging vegetation cover.
- Overgrazing occurs when plants are exposed to livestock grazing for extended periods of time without sufficient recovery periods.
- It reduces the usefulness of the land and is one cause of desertification and erosion.
  - Desertification is the process of turning once fertile areas into deserts.

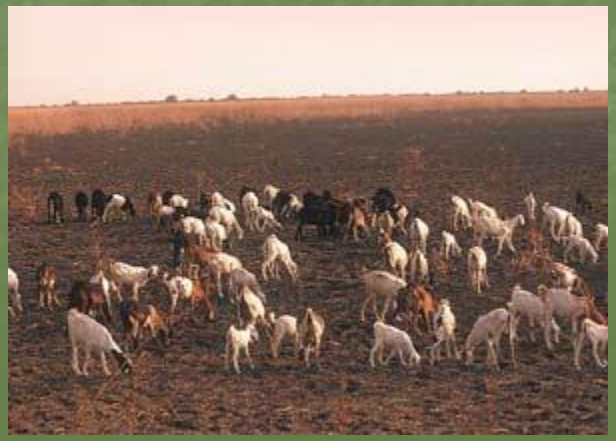
Before and After Overgrazing





Who is causing it?

- Ranchers graze their livestock on public range lands.
  - Too many ranchers sharing the same area leads to overgrazing.
  - Overgrazing can also occur if ranchers leave their livestock in one area for too long.



FACTS

- Desertification is devouring more than 20,000 square miles of land worldwide every year
- Creates conditions that intensify wildfires and stirring winds
- Reduced root length makes the plants more susceptible to death during dry weather

What is being affected?

- Reduced ground cover.
- Increased or accelerated erosion
- Loss of vegetation.
- Bush encroachment (invasion or intrusion)
- Weed invasion, or an increase in undesirable (including exotic) plant species

What is Being Done to Help?

- Rotational grazing is a process of planned grazing that encourages pasture growth
- Use No-till When Renovating Pasture
- Shortening the time period during which the plant is exposed to grazing
- Reduce the number of animals on the land

Overgrazing Station 1

Before: San Pedro River in 1984, from the Hereford Bridge, before the removal of cattle in 1988.

After: A photo from the same location in 1998, after 10 years of rest from livestock grazing.

Natural Capital Restoration: San Pedro River in Arizona – 10 year difference

Fig. 10-21, p. 235

Rate your understanding of overgrazing including the issue, causes, and effects:

- 0 = I don't understand any of this
- 1 = I understand some of it.
- 2 = I understand most of it.
- 3 = I understand this stuff!
- 4 = I really get this and could help an absent peer!

Talk to your tablemates & share your understanding!