

Fredric G. Renner Award Recipient

Dr. James Tom O'Rourke

Dr. James T. O' Rourke has devoted his life to good management of rangelands in a variety of ways and truly exemplifies the purpose of SRM's highest award. Jim has been an active member of SRM for over 40 years. His service was recognized with the Fellow Award in 1998. He managed SRM's first joint Annual Meeting with the American Forage and Grassland Council (Omaha 1999), the most profitable meeting to that time. As 2nd Vice President (1999), he took the lead in reviewing and revising the SRM's strategic and financial plans, including improved procedures for management of annual meetings, and began a dialogue with key committee chairs and others about their plans and vision for SRM. As President (2001) he emphasized SRM's partnerships with other professional groups and worked hard to increase SRM's interaction with other societies, elected officials, and federal agencies in Washington, as well as developing liaison positions with NRCS and BLM in the Denver office.



Jim worked in over 18 countries helping to set up training, research and development projects, and used this experience in teaching international range courses. He served for 13 years on the Continuing Committee of the International Rangeland Congress (IRC) and as President from 2003-2008. He was co-chair of the 8th IRC (China- 2008) which set a record for attendance and financial success. He continues to work with contacts in Argentina to host the next IRC and in Mongolia to form their own range society.

Jim, his wife Lora, and their children live on his family's ranch near Chadron, Nebraska, where they put good range management into practice. He has been a leader in local conservation efforts, and has been recognized for his contributions to the community.

Jim's most lasting contribution over more than 20 years may be in teaching and working with students, from grade school through graduate school; not only in formal classes but other types of student activities such as plant identification teams and youth camps. He started the range management program at Chadron State College, now one of the larger undergraduate programs in the U.S. He has won awards and recognition for his teaching from Utah State University, Chadron State College, the Society for Range Management and the State of Nebraska. He has imparted the ability and desire to further the improvement of rangeland management to a large number of students who will carry his legacy into the future.

It is with great honor that we hereby present Dr. James T. O'Rourke with the Society for Range Management's most esteemed Fredric G. Renner Award.