

# Body Condition Scoring Handbook





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Partners



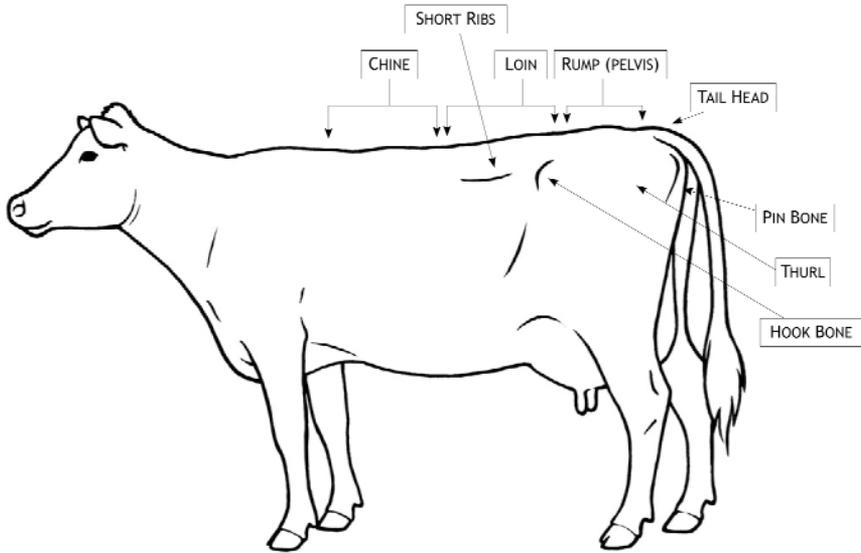
## Introduction

Body condition scoring is an easy-to-learn, inexpensive, hands-on method of determining the amount of fat an animal is carrying. Body condition, or the amount of body fat that an animal is carrying, is one management indicator that can be used to determine feeding programs. A hands-on evaluation of body condition has been proven to be more accurate than visual assessments.

The Canadian system rates livestock from 1 (very thin) to 5 (grossly fat), and the American scale rates from 1 to 10. This handbook uses a scale of 5 for most livestock and a 9-point Henneke scale for horses. A 9-point scale is also used for dogs and cats.

# Beef Cattle

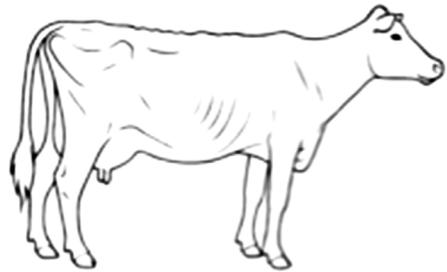
Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle (©2013) have been used with permission from the National Farm Animal Care Council ([www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle](http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/beef-cattle)) and adapted from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



## BCS 1

Entire animal:

- Extremely thin
- No fat in brisket or tail docks
- All skeletal structures are visible
- No muscle tissue evident
- No external fat present
- Dull hair
- Survival during stress doubtful



Back bone:

- Individual vertebrae well defined, sharp
- Can place fingers between each vertebrae

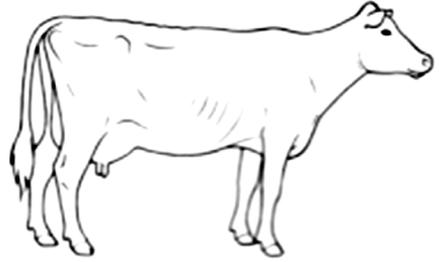
Short ribs:

- Visually prominent
- No fat present
- Very sharp to the touch

## BCS 2

Entire animal:

- Thin
- Upper skeleton prominent (vertebrae, hips, pin bones)
- Muscle tissue evident, but not abundant
- Some tissue cover around the tail dock, over the hip bones and the flank



Back bone:

- Individual vertebrae can be felt, but not as sharp
- Can't place fingers between vertebrae

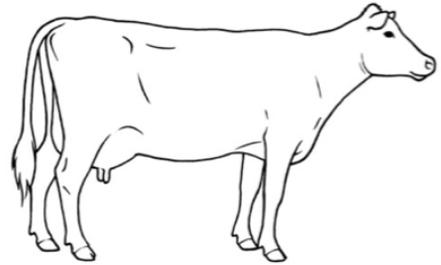
Short ribs:

- Feel individual ribs, sharp rather than very sharp
- Identify individual ribs visually

## BSC 3

Entire animal:

- Ideal flesh for calving
- Ribcage only slightly visible
- Hooks and pins visible, but not prominent
- Muscle tissue nearing maximum
- Fat deposit behind shoulder obvious
- Fat in brisket area
- Tail docks easily felt



Back bone:

- Somewhat defined
- Difficult to feel top of vertebrae

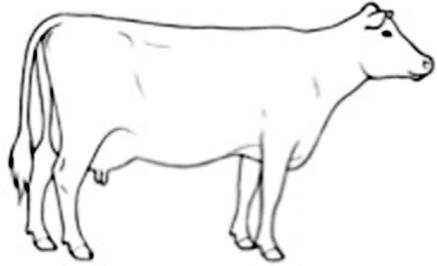
Short ribs:

- Completely covered with fat, beginning to spread over rump
- Individual ribs only felt with firm pressure

## BCS 4

Entire animal:

- Skeletal structure difficult to identify
- Obvious fat deposits behind shoulder, and at tail head
- Fat on brisket and over shoulder



Back bone:

- Flat appearance to the top line
- Can't feel individual vertebrae

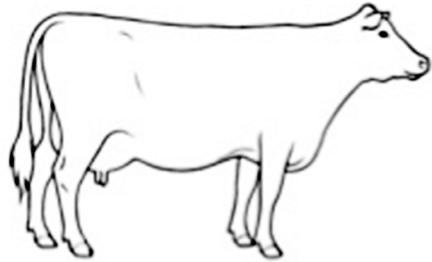
Short ribs:

- Folds of fat beginning to develop over the ribs and thighs
- Can't feel individual ribs, even with firm pressure

## BCS 5

Entire animal:

- Obese
- Flat appearance dominates
- Brisket heavy
- Bone structure not noticeable, "blocky" appearance
- Tail head and hips bones almost completely buried in fat and folds of fat



Back bone:

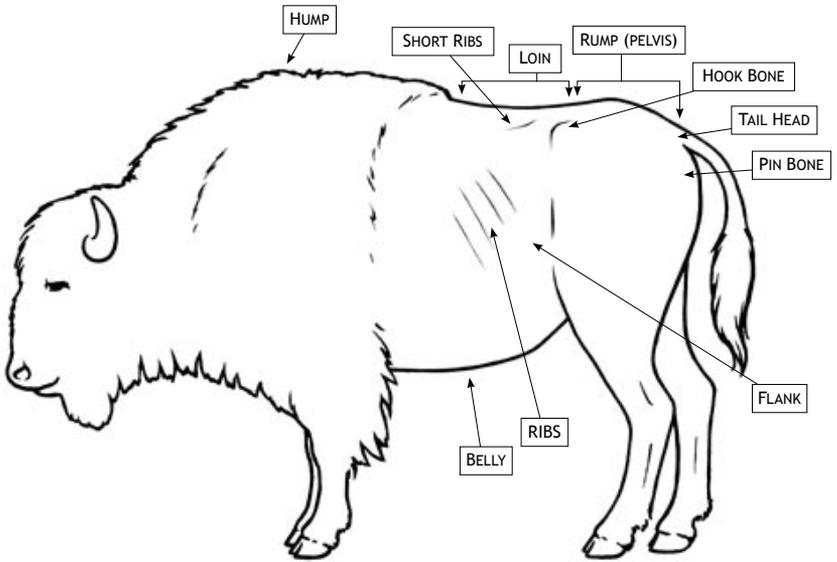
- Flat back
- Can't feel backbone

Short ribs:

- Completely covered by fat
- Mobility impaired by large amounts of fat

# Bison

Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Bison (©2017) have been used with permission, Canadian Bison Association and the National Farm Animal Care Council. [http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/bison\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/bison_code_of_practice.pdf)



## BCS 1

Whole body:

- Thin

Ribs

- Prominent, many ribs visible in summer
- Visible but less distinct in winter

Spine

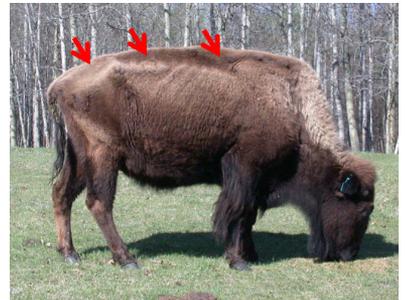
- Backbone very sharp
- Steep angle of muscle

Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone prominent, edges very sharp
- Rump muscles caved in

Tail head

- Devoid of fat
- Deep, sunken depressions on either side of tail head



- No fat palpable if bison in squeeze

## Hump

- Sharp top line
- Narrow with flat sides when viewed from front
- Sharp contrast between hump and shoulder when viewed from side

## BCS 2

### Whole body:

- Moderately thin

### Ribs

- Some ribs visible in summer and winter

### Spine

- Backbone evident, but not sharp
- Steep angle of muscle

### Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone readily seen, edges sharp
- Rump muscles cave in slightly

### Tail head

- Sunken depressions on both sides of tail head
- Small amount of fat palpable if bison in squeeze

## Hump

- Hump is narrow, but not sharp
- Sides flat when viewed from front
- Distinct contrast between hump and shoulder



## BCS 3

### Whole body:

- Moderate

### Ribs

- Edges round, covered in flesh
- May be visible, but not sharp or distinct in summer
- Not visible in winter



## Spine

- Backbone visible, but not prominent
- Angle of muscle has moderate slope, similar to roof of tent



## Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone visible, but not sharp
- Rump muscles flat and angular

## Tail head

- Slight hollowing on either side of tail head
- Some fat palpable if bison in squeeze

## Hump

- Well-developed but not bulging
- Noticeable distinction between hump and shoulder

## BCS 4

### Whole body:

- Moderately fat

### Ribs

- Individual ribs generally not visible in summer
- Not visible in winter

### Spine

- Backbone not readily seen
- Angle of muscle has gentle slope

### Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone barely visible
- Muscles full, but not bulging

### Tail head

- Slight depression in bulls
- No depression in cows

### Hump

- Full hump when viewed from front, but not round and bulging



- Little distinction between hump and shoulder when viewed from side

## BCS 5

### Whole body:

- Fat

### Ribs

- Covered in fat
- Not visible in summer or winter

### Spine

- Buried in fat
- Backbone not visible
- Angle of muscle has little slope, flat

### Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone covered in fat, not visible
- Rump rounded out, full

### Tail head

- In bulls, no depression on either side of tail head
- Either side is bulging with fat in cows

### Hump

- Thick, rounded top when viewed from front
- Blends into the shoulder when viewed from side



# Cats

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Global Nutrition Committee Toolkit provided courtesy of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association Ltd.



WSAVA  
Global Nutrition  
Committee

## Body Condition

## Score





1



3



5



7



9

## UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs visible on short-haired cats. No palpable fat. Severe abdominal tuck. Lumbar vertebrae and wings of ilia easily palpated.
- 2 Ribs easily visible on short-haired cats. Lumbar vertebrae obvious. Pronounced abdominal tuck. No palpable fat.
- 3 Ribs easily palpable with minimal fat covering. Lumbar vertebrae obvious. Obvious waist behind ribs. Minimal abdominal fat.

## IDEAL

- 4 Ribs palpable with minimal fat covering. Noticeable waist behind ribs. Slight abdominal tuck. Abdominal fat pale absent.
- 5 Well-proportioned. Observe waist behind ribs. Ribs palpable with slight fat covering. Abdominal fat pad minimal.

## OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist and abdominal fat pad distinguishable but not obvious. Abdominal tuck absent.
- 7 Ribs not easily palpated with moderate fat covering. Waist poorly discernible. Obvious rounding of abdomen. Moderate abdominal fat pad.
- 8 Ribs not palpable with excess fat covering. Waist absent. Obvious rounding of abdomen with prominent abdominal fat pad. Fat deposits present over lumbar area.
- 9 Ribs not palpable under heavy fat cover. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area, face and limbs. Distention of abdomen with no waist. Extensive abdominal fat deposits.



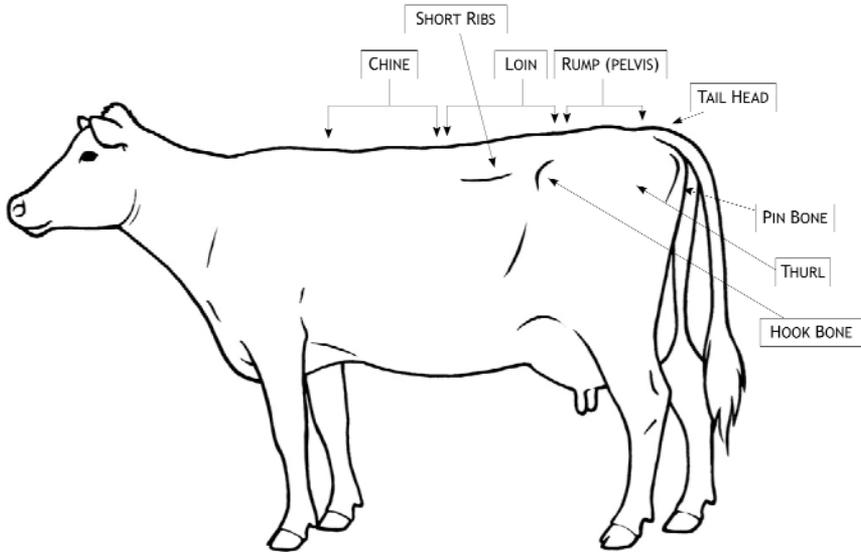
wsava.org

Bjornvad CR, et al. Evaluation of a nine-point body condition scoring system in physically inactive pet cats. *JAVIM* 2011;72:433-437.  
Lafrenie DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for cats. *Archives Ital. Feline Pract* 1997;25:19-18.

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# Dairy Cattle

Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle (©2009) have been used with permission from the National Farm Animal Care Council ([www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle](http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle)) and adapted from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



## BCS 1

### Short ribs:

- Ends sharp to touch
- Loin prominent, shelf-like appearance
- Obvious scalloping over top and ends

### Back bone:

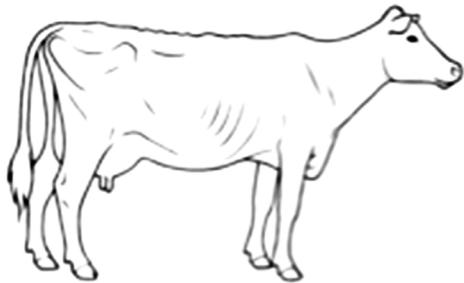
- Vertebrae prominent in chine, loin and rump area
- Individual bones easily visible

### Hook and pin bones:

- Sharply defined, very angular in appearance
- No discernible fat pad

### Thurl (area over pelvis):

- Severe "V shaped" depression without fat cover



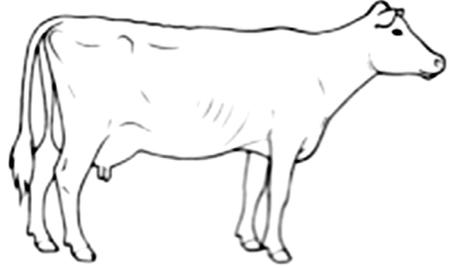
Tail head:

- Sunken and hollow on either side of tail head with obvious folds of skin
- Ligaments connecting pin bones to spine are sharply defined
- Vulva prominent

## BCS 2

Short ribs:

- Ends not as prominent as BCS 1, but can be felt
- Edges easily felt, with slight fat cover, and slightly more rounded appearance
- Overhanging shelf effect less apparent



Back bone:

- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump area, less visually distinct
- Easily feel individual vertebrae

Hook and pin bones:

- Bones still prominent, angular
- No fat pad palpable

Thurl (area over pelvis):

- Less severe "V shaped" depression
- Little tissue cover

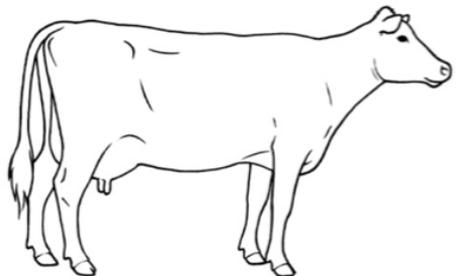
Tail head:

- Both sides of the tail head are sunken and hollow
- Sharply defined ligaments connecting pin bones to spine

## BCS 3

Short ribs:

- Ends can be felt with moderate pressure
- Ribs appear smooth without noticeable scalloping
- Overhanging shelf effect much less apparent



Back bone:

- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump area appear rounded
- Backbone visible, but individual vertebrae not distinct

Hook and pin bones:

- Visible, but smooth, with rounded appearance
- Fat pad palpable

Thurl (area over pelvis):

- Forms "U shaped" depression

Tail head:

- Both sides of tail head somewhat hollow, but skin folds not distinct
- Ligaments connecting pin bones to spine are rounded in appearance

## BCS 4

Short ribs:

- Individual rib ends not visible, only felt with firm pressure
- Overhanging shelf effect slight, barely visible



Back bone:

- Vertebrae in chine rounded, smooth
- Loin and rump areas appear flat

Hook and pin bones:

- Rounded, with obvious fat covering

Thurl (area over pelvis):

- Area between hooks and pins almost flat
- Pelvic bone only felt with firm pressure

Tail head:

- Sides of tail head not hollow, no skin folds
- Some fat deposit palpable

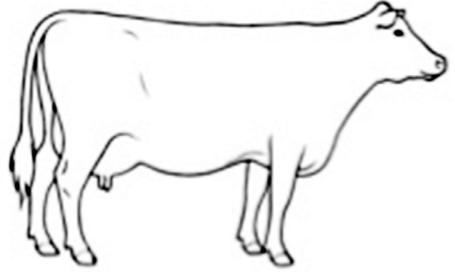
## BCS 5

### Short ribs:

- Ends can't be seen or felt
- No overhanging shelf effect

### Back bone:

- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump not visible
- Difficult to feel individual vertebrae



### Hook and pin bones:

- Very round, buried (almost disappearing) in fat tissue

### Thurl (area over pelvis):

- Appears flat
- Filled in between the hooks and pins

### Tail head:

- Hollow filled in
- Areas on both sides of tail head buried in fat tissue

# Dogs

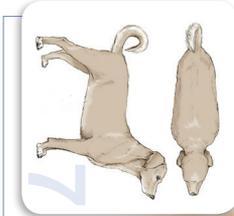
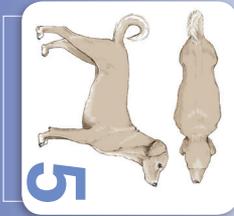
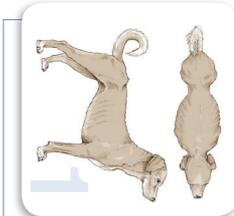
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## Body Condition

## Score



### UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

### IDEAL

- 4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

### OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7 Ribs palpable with difficulty, heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

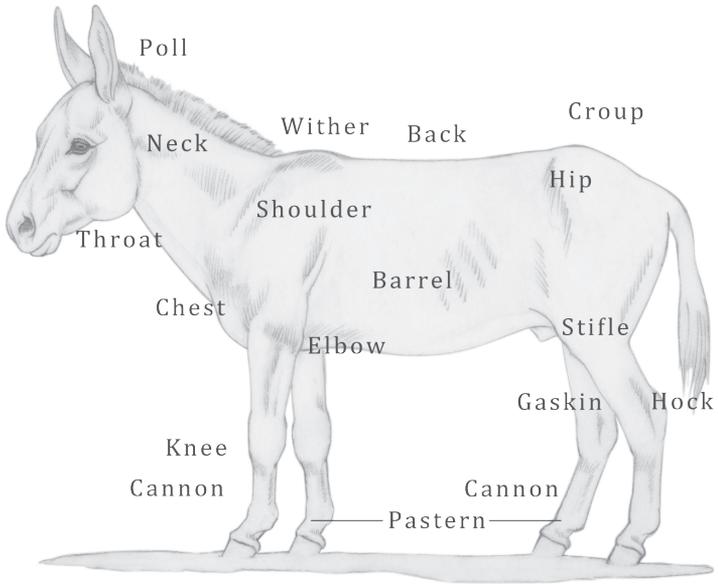


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# Donkeys and Mules

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## BCS 1

Neck and shoulders:

- Neck thin, all bones easily felt
- Neck meets shoulder abruptly, shoulder bones easily felt, angular

Withers:

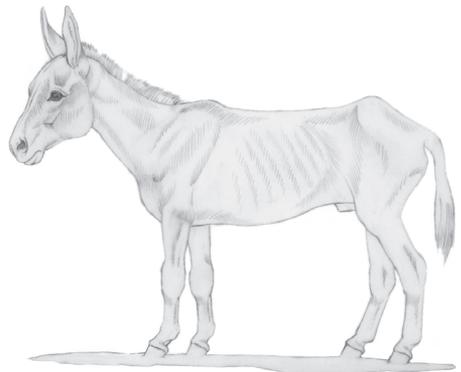
- Dorsal spine of withers prominent and easily felt

Ribs and belly:

- Ribs can be seen from a distance and felt with ease
- Belly tucked up

Back and loins:

- Backbone prominent, can feel dorsal and transverse processes easily



Hindquarters:

- Hip bones visible and felt easily (hock and pin bones)
- Little muscle cover
- May be cavity under tail

## BCS 2

Neck and shoulders:

- Some muscle development overlying bones
- Slight step where neck meets shoulders

Withers:

- Some cover over dorsal withers
- Spinous processes felt but not prominent

Ribs and belly:

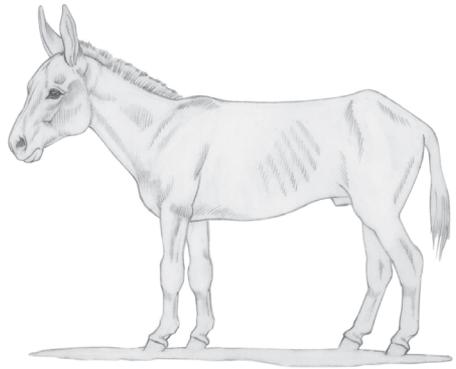
- Ribs not visible but can be felt with ease

Back and loins:

- Dorsal and transverse processes felt with light pressure
- Poor muscle development either side midline

Hindquarters:

- Poor muscle cover on hindquarters, hip bones felt with ease



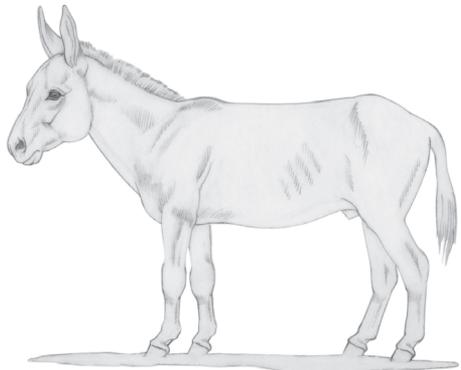
## BCS 3

Neck and shoulders:

- Good muscle development, bones felt under light cover of muscle/fat
- Neck flows smoothly into shoulder, which is rounded

Withers:

- Good cover of muscle/fat over dorsal spinous processes, withers flow smooth into back



**Ribs and belly:**

- Ribs just covered by light layer of fat/muscle, ribs can be felt with light pressure
- Belly firm with good muscle tone and flattish outline

**Back and loins:**

- Cannot feel individual spinous or transverse processes
- Muscle development either side of midline is good

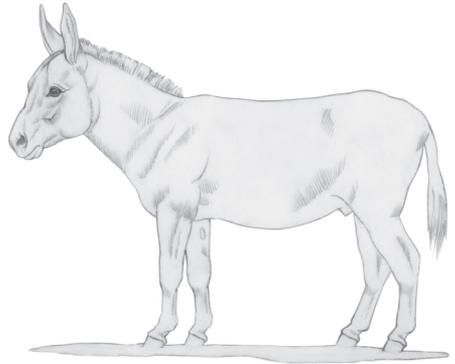
**Hindquarters:**

- Good muscle cover in hindquarters, hip bones rounded in appearance, can be felt with light pressure

**BCS 4**

**Neck and shoulders:**

- Neck thick, crest hard, shoulder covered in even fat layer



**Withers:**

- Withers broad, bones felt with firm pressure

**Ribs and belly:**

- Ribs dorsally only felt with firm pressure, ventral ribs may be felt more easily
- Overdeveloped belly

**Back and loins:**

- Can only feel dorsal and transverse processes with firm pressure

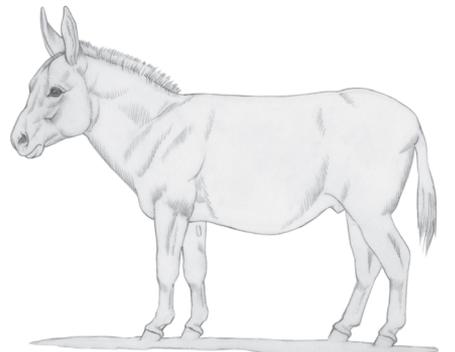
**Hindquarters:**

- Hindquarters rounded, bones felt only with firm pressure
- Fat deposits evenly placed

**BCS 5**

**Neck and shoulders:**

- Neck thick, crest bulging with fat and may fall to one side
- Shoulder rounded and bulging with fat



### Withers:

- Withers broad, unable to feel bones

### Ribs and belly:

- Large, often uneven fat deposits covering dorsal and possible ventral aspect of ribs
- Ribs not palpable
- Belly pendulous in depth and width

### Back and loins:

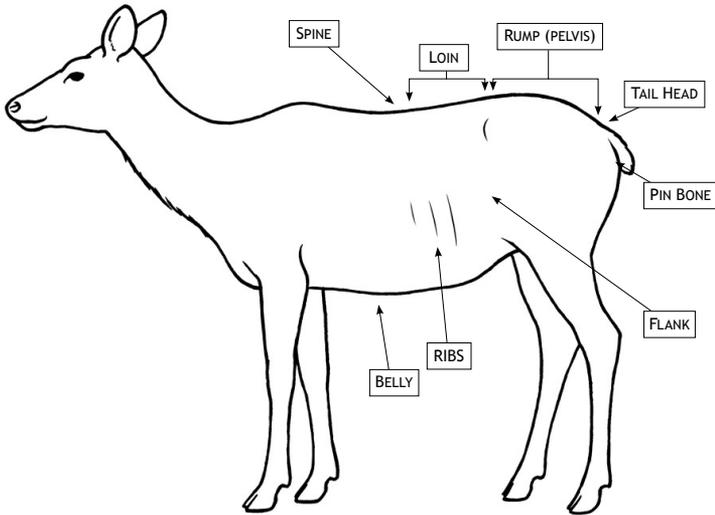
- Back broad, unable to feel spinous or transverse processes
- Deep crease along midline, bulging fat either side

### Hindquarters:

- Cannot feel hip bones, fat may overhang either side of tail head, fat often uneven and bulging

# Elk

Information provided by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



## BCS 1

### Whole body

- Thin

### Ribs

- Many ribs visible and prominent in summer
- Visible, but less distinct in winter

### Spine

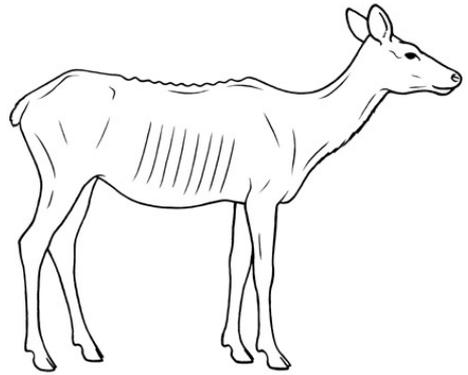
- Backbone very sharp
- Angle of muscle steep
- Prominent sawtooth appearance on side view

### Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone prominent, edges very sharp
- Rump muscles sunken

### Tail head

- Devoid of fat
- Deep, sunken depressions on either side of tail head
- Very sharp pin bones
- No fat palpable



## Belly

- Belly tucked up
- Hollowed out flank, with sharp shelf

## BCS 2

### Whole body

- Moderately thin

### Ribs

- Many ribs visible, but not prominent in summer
- Slightly visible in winter

### Spine

- Backbone evident, but not sharp
- Steep angle of muscle
- Slight sawtooth appearance on side view

### Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone readily seen, edges sharp
- Rump muscles slightly sunken

### Tail head

- Sunken depressions on both sides of tail head
- Sharp pin bones
- Small amount of fat palpable

## Belly

- Slight hollowing of flank
- Prominent shelf

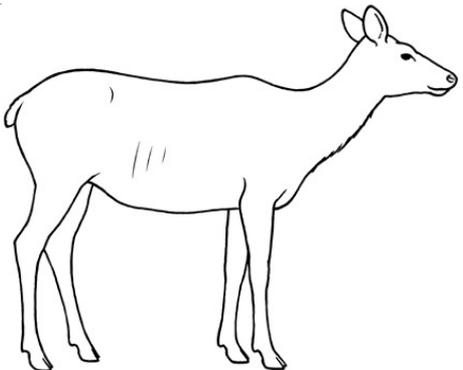
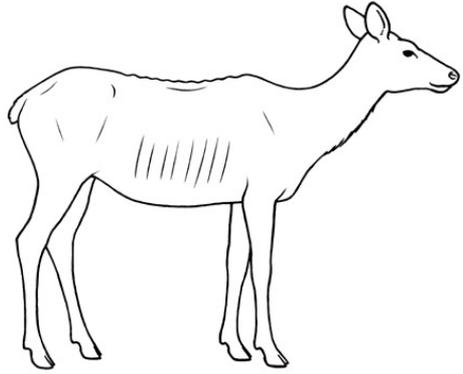
## BCS 3

### Whole body

- Moderate

### Ribs

- Slightly visible in summer, but not sharp or distinct
- Edges round, covered in flesh
- Not visible in winter



## Spine

- Backbone visible, but not prominent
- Angle of muscle has moderate slope similar to roof of tent
- No sawtooth appearance from side view

## Hip bone and rump

- Hip bone visible, but not sharp
- Rump muscles flat and angular

## Tail head

- Slight hollowing on either side
- Rounded pin bones
- Some fat palpable

## Belly

- Flank has slight depression, with slight shelf
- No fat rolls

## BCS 4

### Whole body

- Moderately fat

### Ribs

- Individual ribs generally not visible in summer
- Not visible in winter

### Spine

- Backbone not readily seen
- Angle of muscle has gentle slope

### Hip bone and rump

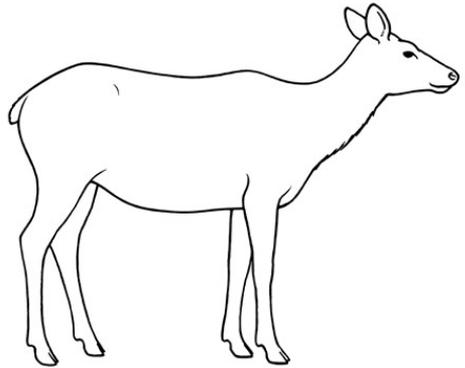
- Hip bone barely visible
- Muscles full, but not bulging

### Tail head

- Tail head filled with fat
- Pin bones rounded and smooth
- Fat easily palpable

### Belly

- Flank full with no shelf
- Slight rolls of fat beginning to develop



## BCS 5

### Whole body

- Fat

### Ribs

- Individual ribs not visible in winter or summer
- Covered in fat

### Spine

- Buried in fat
- Backbone isn't visible
- Angle of muscle rounded, with little slope

### Hip bone and rump

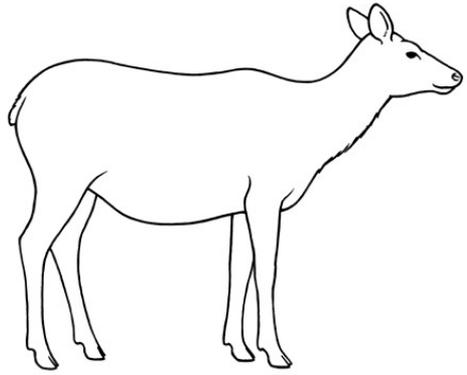
- Hip bone is covered in fat, not visible
- Rump is rounded out, full

### Tail head

- Tailhead bulging with fat
- Pin bones buried in fat and difficult to feel

### Belly

- Distended belly
- Full flank with no shelf
- Rolls of fat evident beside midline

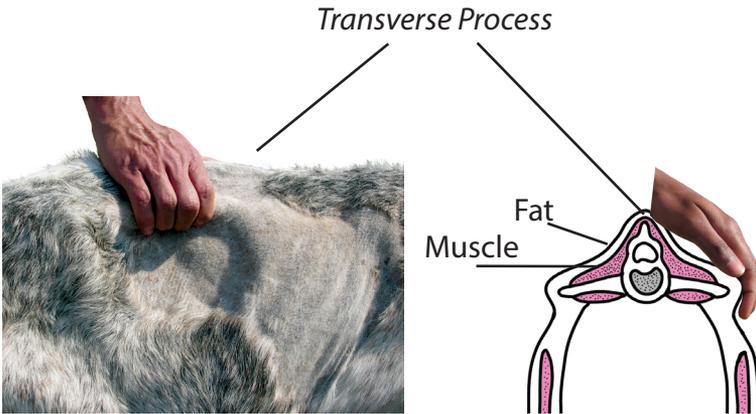
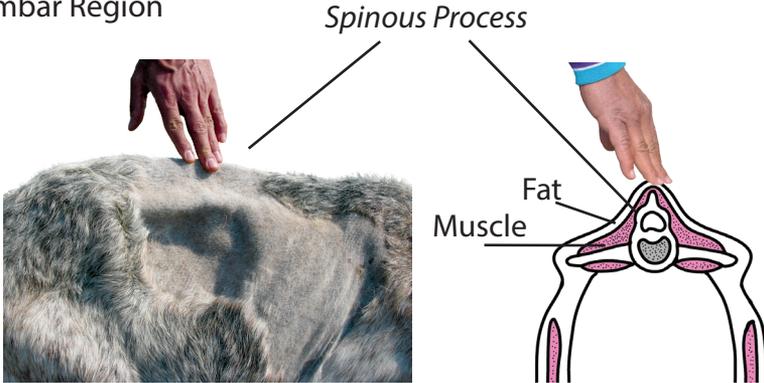


# Goats

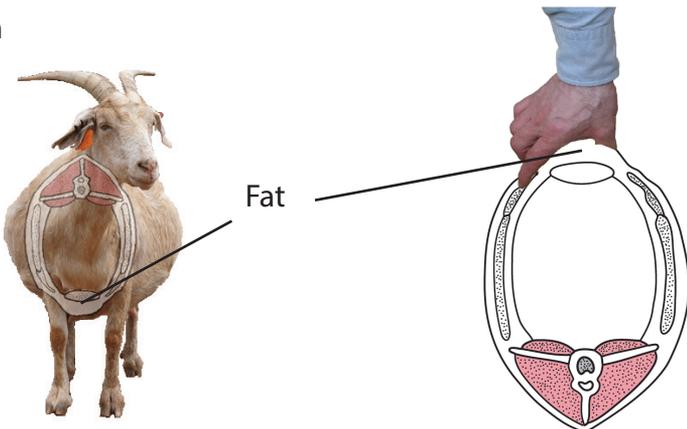
Information provided by Langston University.

Detweiler, G., T. Gipson, R. C. Merkel, A. Goetsch, and T. Sahl. 2008. Body Condition Scores in Goats. Pages 127-133 in Proc. 23rd Ann. Goat Field Day, Langston University, Langston, OK.

## Lumbar Region



## Sternum



## BCS 1

### Whole body:

- Emaciated and weak animal, the backbone is highly visible and forms a continuous ridge
- The flank is hollow. Ribs are clearly visible
- There is no fat cover and fingers easily penetrate into intercostal spaces (between ribs)



### Spinous process:

- The spinous process of the lumbar vertebrae can be grasped easily between the thumb and forefinger
- Is rough, prominent and distinct, giving it a saw-tooth appearance
- Very little muscle and no fat can be felt between the skin and bone
- There is a deep depression in the transition from the spinous to transverse process

### Transverse process:

- The hand can easily grasp the transverse processes of the lumbar vertebrae, which are very prominent
- Half of the length of the transverse process is clearly discernible

### Sternum:

- Sternal fat can be easily grasped between thumb and fingers and moved from side to side
- The cartilage and joints joining ribs and sternum are easily felt

## BCS 2

### Whole body:

- Slightly raw-boned, the backbone is still visible with a continuous ridge
- Some ribs can be seen and there is a small amount of fat cover
- Ribs are still felt
- Intercostal spaces are smooth but can still be penetrated

### Spinious process:

- The spinous process of the lumbar vertebrae is evident and can still be grasped between the thumb and forefinger
- A muscle mass can be felt between the skin and bone
- There is an obvious depression in the transition from the spinous to transverse process



### Transverse process:

- The hand can grasp the transverse process but the outline of the transverse process is difficult to see.
- About one-third to one-half of the length of the transverse process is discernible

### Sternum:

- Sternal fat is wider and thicker but can still be grasped and lifted by the thumb and forefinger
- The fat layer can still be moved slightly from side to side
- Joints are less evident

## BCS 3

### Whole body:

- The backbone is not prominent
- Ribs are barely discernible; an even layer of fat covers them
- Intercostal spaces are felt using pressure



### Spinious process:

- The spinous process of the lumbar vertebrae cannot be easily grasped because the tissue layer covering the vertebrae is thick
- When running a finger over the spinous process, a slight hollow is felt

- There is a smooth slope in the transition from the spinous to transverse process

Transverse process:

- The outline of the transverse process of the lumbar vertebrae is slightly discernible
- Less than one-quarter of the length of the transverse process is discernible

Sternum:

- Sternal fat is wide and thick
- It can still be grasped but has very little movement
- Joints joining cartilage and ribs are barely felt

## BCS 4

Whole body:

- The backbone cannot be seen
- Ribs are not seen
- The side of the animal is sleek in appearance



Spinous process:

- It is impossible to grasp the spinous process of the lumbar vertebrae, which is wrapped in a thick layer of muscle and fat
- The spinous process forms a continuous line
- There is a rounded transition from the spinous to transverse process

Transverse process:

- The outline of the transverse process of the lumbar vertebrae is no longer discernible
- The transverse process forms a smooth, rounded edge, with no individual vertebrae discernible

Sternum:

- Sternal fat is difficult to grasp because of its width and depth
- It cannot be moved from side to side

## BCS 5

### Whole body:

- The backbone is buried in fat
- Ribs are not visible
- The rib cage is covered with excessive fat

### Spinous process:

- The thickness of the muscle and fat is so great that reference marks on the spinous process are lost
- The spinous process forms a depression along the backbone and there is a bulging transition from the spinous to transverse process.

### Transverse process:

- The thickness of the muscle and fat is so great that reference marks on the transverse process are also lost
- It is impossible to grasp the transverse process

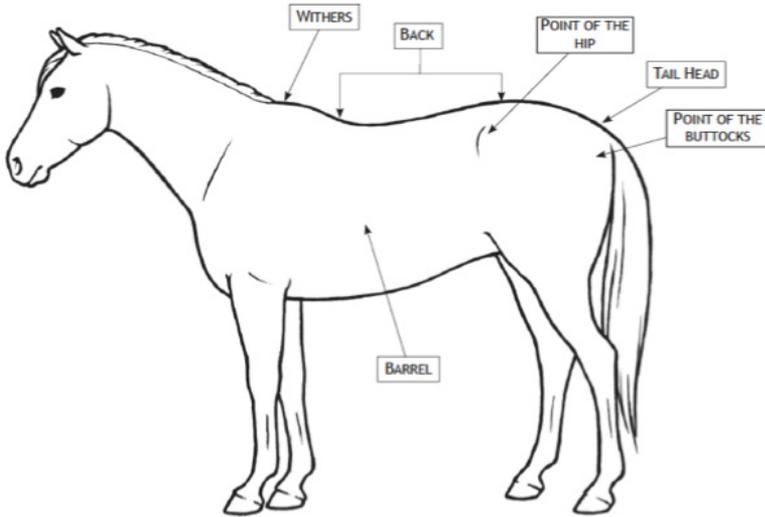
### Sternum:

- The sternal fat now extends and covers the sternum, joining fat covering cartilage and ribs
- It cannot be grasped



# Horses and Ponies

Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equine (©2013) have been used with permission from the National Farm Animal Care Council ([www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/equine](http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/equine)) and adapted from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



## BCS 1

Whole body:

- Poor condition
- Extremely emaciated
- No fat tissue felt

Neck:

- Bone structure visible

Withers:

- Bone structure easily visible

Back:

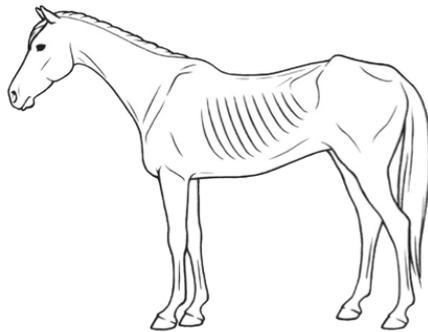
- Spinous processes project prominently

Tail head:

- Tail head, point of the buttocks and point of the hip project prominently

Ribs:

- Project prominently



Shoulder:

- Bone structure easily noticeable

## BCS 2

Whole body:

- Very thin
- Emaciated

Neck:

- Bone faintly discernible

Withers:

- Bone structure faintly noticeable

Back

- Spinous processes prominent
- Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes
- Transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded

Tail head:

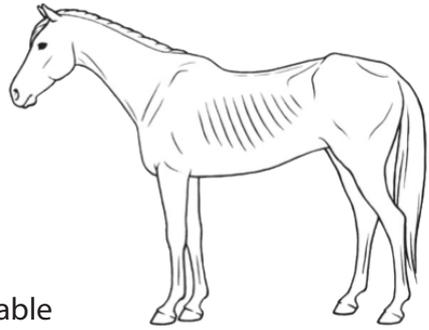
- Prominent

Ribs:

- Prominent

Shoulder:

- Faintly discernible



## BCS 3

Whole body:

- Thin

Neck:

- Accentuated

Withers:

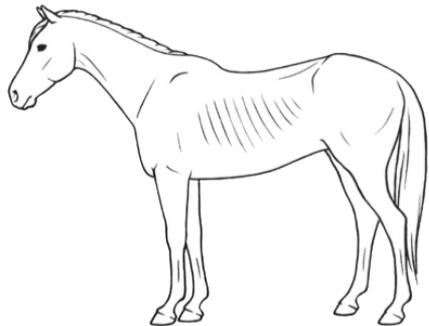
- Accentuated

Back:

- Fat build up halfway on spinous processes, but easily discernible
- Can't feel transverse processes

Tail head:

- Prominent but individual vertebrae can't be visually identified
- Point of the hip rounded, but easily discernible
- Point of the buttocks not distinguishable



Ribs:

- Slight fat cover
- Individual ribs discernible

Shoulder:

- Accentuated

## BCS 4

Whole body:

- Moderately thin

Neck:

- Not obviously thin

Withers:

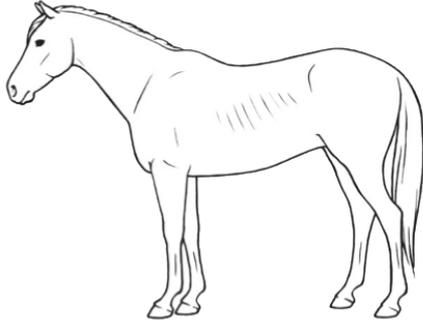
- Not obviously thin

Back:

- Negative crease along back

Tail head:

- Prominence depends on conformation
- Fat palpable
- Point of the hip not discernible



Ribs:

- Faint outline discernible

Shoulder:

- Not obviously thin

## BCS 5

Whole body:

- Moderate condition

Neck:

- Blends smoothly into body

Withers:

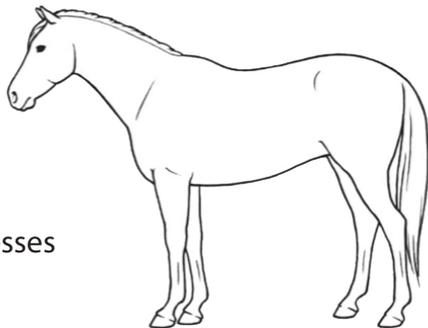
- Rounded over spinous processes

Back:

- Back is level

Tail head:

- Fat around tail head beginning to feel spongy



Ribs:

- Individual ribs can be felt, but not visually distinguished

Shoulder:

- Blends smoothly into body

## BCS 6

Whole body:

- Moderately fleshy

Neck:

- Fat beginning to be deposited

Withers:

- Fat beginning to be deposited

Back:

- May have slight positive crease down back

Tail head:

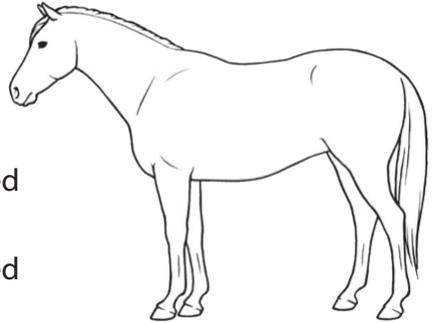
- Fat around tail head feels soft

Ribs:

- Fat over ribs feels spongy

Shoulder:

- Fat beginning to be deposited
- Point-of-shoulder not discernible



## BCS 7

Whole body:

- Fleshy

Neck:

- Fat deposited along neck

Withers:

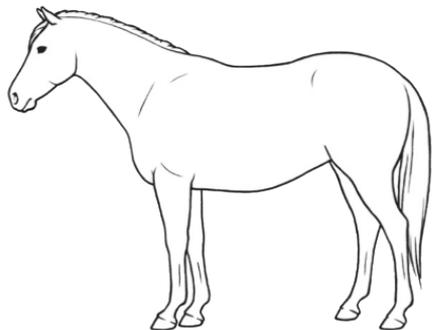
- Fat deposited along withers

Back:

- May have positive crease down back, behind shoulder

Tail head:

- Fat around tail head is soft



Ribs:

- Individual ribs can be felt
- Noticeable fat fillings between ribs

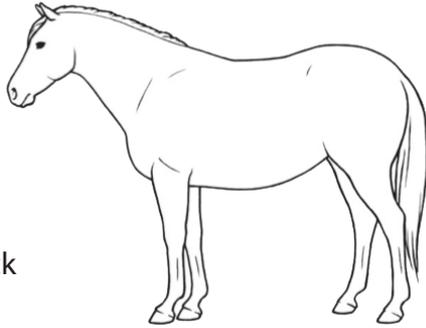
Shoulder:

- Fat deposited behind shoulder

## BCS 8

Whole body:

- Fat
- Fat deposited along inner buttocks



Neck:

- Noticeable thickening of neck

Withers:

- Area along withers filled with fat

Back:

- Positive crease down back

Tail head:

- Tail head fat very soft

Ribs:

- Difficult to feel individual ribs

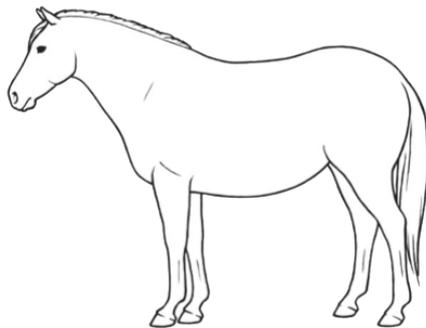
Shoulder:

- Area behind shoulder filled in, flush with body

## BCS 9

Whole body:

- Extremely fat
- Fat along inner buttocks may rub together
- Flank filled in flush



Neck:

- Bulging fat

Withers:

- Bulging fat

Back:

- Obvious positive crease down back

Tail head:

- Building fat around tail head

Ribs:

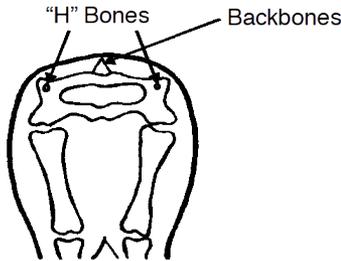
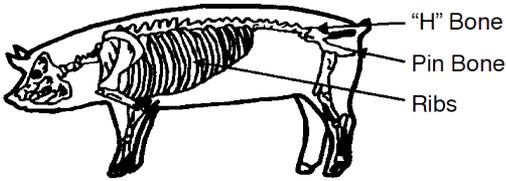
- Patchy fat appearing over ribs

Shoulder:

- Bulging fat

# Sows

Excerpts from the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs (©2014) have been used with permission from the National Farm Animal Care Council ([www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/pigs](http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/pigs)) and adapted from <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/asc/asc158/asc158.pdf>.



## BCS 1

Whole body:

- Visually thin
- Hips and back bone very prominent, with no fat cover

Pelvic bones:

- Very prominent
- Deep cavity around tail head

Loin:

- Vertebrae are prominent and sharp
- Very narrow
- Hollow flank

Ribs:

- Individual ribs are very prominent



## BCS2

Whole body:

- Hip bones and back bone are easily felt without any pressure on the palms

Pelvic bones:



- Obvious with slight cover

Loin:

- Narrow
- Flank rather hollow
- Slight cover on spine, but prominent vertebrae

Ribs:

- Rib cage less apparent, but individual ribs easily detected with slight pressure

### BCS 3

Whole body:

- Firm pressure with the palm is needed to feel the hip bones and back bone

Pelvic bones:

- Covered but felt with pressure

Loin:

- Spine covered and rounded

Ribs:

- Ribs are covered but can be felt with pressure



### BCS 4

Whole body:

- Impossible to feel the bones, even with pressure on the palms of the hands

Pelvic bones:

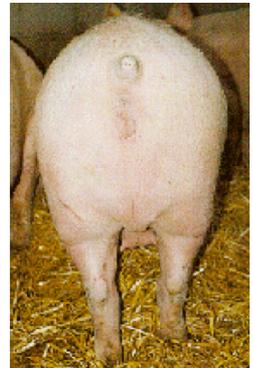
- Only felt with firm pressure
- No cavity around tail

Loin:

- Difficult to feel vertebrae
- Flank filled

Ribs:

- Rib cage not visible
- Ribs are difficult to feel



## BCS 5

### Whole body:

- So much fat that it is impossible to feel the hip bones and back bone, even when pushing down with one finger

### Pelvic bones:

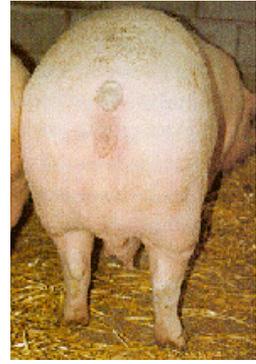
- Impossible to feel
- Huge fat deposits (hanging skin and fat)

### Loin:

- Thick fat cover
- Impossible to feel bones
- Flank full and rounded

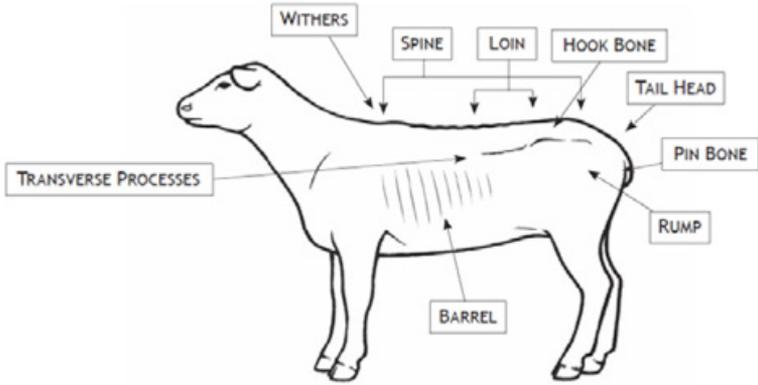
### Ribs:

- Thick fat cover
- Not possible to feel ribs



# Sheep

Information provided by National Farm Animal Care Council and adapted from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.



## BCS 1

Whole body:

- Emaciated
- Boney processes can be easily felt

Spine:

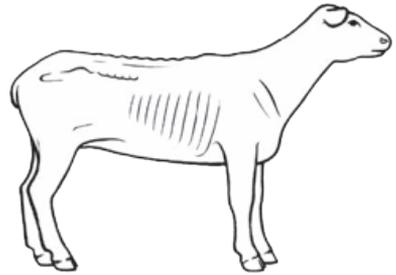
- Dorsal spinous processes are sharp and prominent
- Easily felt through skin

Loin:

- No fat cover
- Loin muscles very shallow

Transverse processes:

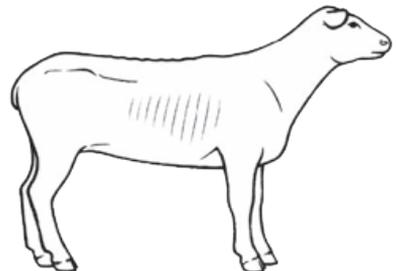
- Transverse processes sharp
- Easy to pass fingers underneath them



## BCS 2

Whole body:

- Thin
- More difficult to feel between each process



Spine:

- Dorsal spinous processes still prominent, but not as sharp

Loin:

- Loin eye muscle fuller
- Virtually no fat cover

Transverse processes:

- Transverse processes rounder on edges
- Slight pressure needed to push underneath them

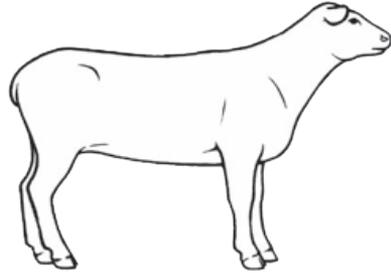
### BCS 3

Whole body:

- Average

Spine:

- Spinous processes smoother and less prominent
- Some pressure required to feel between them



Loin:

- Loin muscle full, some fat cover

Transverse processes:

- Transverse processes smooth
- Firm pressure needed to push fingers under edge

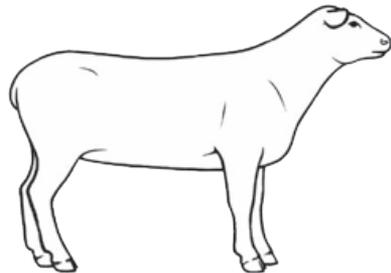
### BCS 4

Whole body:

- Fat
- Fat accumulations over tail head

Spine:

- Considerable pressure needed to feel dorsal spinous



Loin:

- Loin eye muscle full with discernible fat cover

Transverse processes:

- Transverse processes can't be felt

## BCS 5

Whole body:

- Obese
- Fat pad over tail head

Spine:

- Dorsal spinous processes can't be felt
- Depression often present where they would normally be felt

Loin:

- Loin eye muscle very full
- Thick covering of fat

Transverse processes:

- Transverse processes can't be felt

