



Body Condition Scoring

Assessing Current Body Weight Status in Horses

The equine industry is utilizing a **Body Condition Scoring (BCS)** system, developed by Texas A&M University, as a tool to evaluate the thickness of body fat on a horse. This is based on the amount of calories consumed per day vs needed per day, to maintain desired body weight. The **"green"** indicates optimal, the **"yellow"** indicates caution, and the **"red"** indicates potential health problems, with BCS system.

<u>SCORE</u>	<u>VISUAL DESCRIPTION</u>
1 Poor	Animal extremely emaciated. Spinous processes, ribs, tail head and hips and pelvic bones are projecting prominently. Bone structure of withers, shoulders and neck easily noticeable. No fatty tissues can be felt.
2 Very Thin	Animal emaciated. Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes; transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinous processes, ribs, tail head and hips and pelvic bones are still prominent. Withers, shoulders and neck structures faintly seen.
3 Thin	Transverse processes cannot be felt. Slight fat cover over ribs. Spinous processes and ribs are easily seen. Tail head prominent, but individual vertebrae cannot be easily identified. Hip bones appear rounded, but easily seen. Withers, shoulders and neck accentuated.
4 Moderately Thin	Can see outline of ribs when standing still. Tail head prominence depends on conformation also. Pelvic bones are not discernible. Withers, shoulders and neck not obviously thin.
5 Moderate	Ribs cannot be visually distinguished when standing, but can be easily felt and seen when moving. Shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body.
6 Moderately Fleishy	Fat over ribs feels fleshy-spongy. Fat around tail head is visible & feels soft. Fat is beginning to be deposited behind the shoulder and along the neck and crest.
7 Fleishy	May have a beginning of a crease down back, making it difficult to determine a true back & loin Top Line Evaluation Score. Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable covering with fat. Fat deposits continue to increase around tail head, behind the shoulders and on the crest.
8 Fat	Definite fat crease along top-line: back and loin area filled with fat, making it more difficult to determine a back & loin Top Line Evaluation Score. Difficult to feel ribs. Fat around tail head thicker and very soft. Patchy fat begins to appear behind shoulders, with a noticeable thickening of neck. Fat deposited along inner thighs.
9 Extremely Fat	Extreme fat crease down back making it extremely difficult to determine Top Line Evaluation Score. Patchy fat begins to appear over ribs, around tail head and on the crest. Fat along inner thighs may rub together. Flanks filled with fat.

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