Body Condition Scoring - Horses and Ponies

LABELLED ILLUSTRATION OF A HORSE

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

1 Adapted from: What’s the Score? Body Condition Scoring for Livestock CD-ROM CD 400/40-1 with permission of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. www.agriculture.alberta.ca Copies of the CD can be ordered on-line at: www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex9622
Body Condition Scoring - Horses and Ponies (continued)

**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
Body Condition Scoring - Horses and Ponies (continued)

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
Body Condition Scoring - Horses and Ponies (continued)

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