

Body condition score for beef cattle

It is generally accepted that there is a strong link between the body condition of an animal and its health, productivity and reproductive performance. Using a numeric score to estimate the amount of muscle and fat covering the bones, body condition scoring is a useful, easy-to-use management tool to determine the nutritional needs of beef cattle.

The following photographs and descriptions explain the standard 1-5 body condition score (BCS) system for beef cattle.

Body condition score 1 – Poor

A very low level of musculature, and no evidence of any fat. Skeletal structure is very pronounced.





Body condition score 2 – Backward

Backbone, shoulder bones and hips are visible. Tail head is slightly recessed. Ribs faintly visible.



Body condition score 3 - Moderate

Hip bones are faintly visible, ribs are usually not visible. Tail head is not recessed. Body outline is almost smooth.





Body condition score 4 - Forward

Ribs are well covered and hip bones are not visible. Tail head is slightly bumpy. The overall body shape is rounded.



Body condition score 5 - Fat

Hip bones show fat deposits. Tail head has large lumps of fat. Rib bones are very well covered. Overall shape is bulging due to fatness.

