



CLEMSON BEEF CATTLE INFORMATION DATABASE
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System of Body Condition Scoring (BCS) for Beef Cattle

Richards, M.W., J.C. Spitzer and M.B. Warner. 1986. J. Anim. Sci. 62:300.

Group	BCS	Description
Thin Condition	1	EMACIATED - Cow is extremely emaciated with no palpable fat detectable over spinous processes, transverse processes, hip bone or ribs. Tail-head and ribs project quite prominently.
	2	POOR - Cow still appears somewhat emaciated but tail-head and ribs less prominent. Individual spinous processes are still rather sharp to the touch but some tissue cover exists along the spine.
Borderline Condition	3	THIN - Ribs are still individually identifiable but not quite as sharp to the touch. There is obvious palpable fat along spine and over tail-head with some tissue cover over dorsal portion of ribs.
	4	BORDERLINE - Individual ribs are no longer visually obvious. The spinous processes can be identified individually on palpation but feel rounded rather than sharp. Some fat cover over ribs, transverse processes and hip bones.
Optimum Moderate Condition	5	MODERATE - Cow has generally good overall appearance. Upon palpation, fat cover over ribs feels spongy and areas on either side of tail-head now have palpable fat cover.
	6	HIGH MODERATE - Firm pressure now needs to be applied to feel spinous processes. A high degree of fat is palpable over ribs and around tail-head.
	7	GOOD - Cow appears fleshy and obviously carries considerable fat. Very spongy fat cover over ribs and around tail-head. In fact, "rounds" or "pones" beginning to be obvious. Some fat around vulva and in crotch.
Fat Condition	8	FAT - Cow very fleshy and over-conditioned. Spinous processes almost impossible to palpate. Cow has large fat deposits over ribs, around tail-head and below vulva. "Rounds" or "pones" are obvious.
	9	EXTREMELY FAT - Cow obviously extremely wasty and patchy and looks blocky. Tail-head and hips buried in fatty tissue and "rounds" or "pones" of fat are protruding. Bone structure no longer visible and barely palpable. Animal's mobility may even be impaired by large fatty deposits.

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