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Body Condition Score

Source: *Guidelines for Uniform Beef Improvement Programs*, Ninth Edition, March 2018, p11-14. Beef Improvement Federation

Cow body condition score. A cow's current body condition is determined by her maintenance requirement, her past nutrient intake, and her past production. Current body condition influences subsequent growth, reproduction, milk production, and life span. The relationships between body condition and these economically important traits brought about interest in a subjective scoring system for estimating cow condition.

Body condition scores are numerical values that reflect fatness or condition of the beef cow. Scores are subjectively assigned, ranging from 1 = Severely emaciated to 9 = Very obese. Body condition scoring is generally done by visual appraisal, but palpation of the animal's condition may be beneficial when it has a thick hair coat. Areas generally considered include the last half of the ribs, edge of the loin, spinous processes, and the hooks and pins, as well as tail-head, brisket, and shoulder area.

It is generally accepted that a change of one body condition score on this system equates to 75 to 80 lb. change in body weight on a 1050 to 1100 lb. cow.

Body Condition Scoring System (BCS) for Beef Cattle

(Richards et al., 1986. *J. Anim. Sci.* 62:300.)

Condition	BCS	Description
Thin	1	Emaciated – Cow is extremely emaciated with no palpable fat detectable over spinous processes, transverse processes, hip bones, or ribs. Tail-head and ribs project quite prominently.
	2	Poor – Cow still appears somewhat emaciated but tail-head and ribs are less prominent. Individual spinous processes are still rather sharp to the touch, but some tissue cover over dorsal portion of ribs.
	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.

Borderline

- 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

- 5 **Moderate** – Cow has generally good overall appearance. On 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.

Fat

- 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.
- 8 **Fat** – Cow very fleshy and over-conditioned. Spinous processes almost impossible to palpate. Cow has large fat deposits over ribs and 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 might even be impaired by large fatty deposits.

Further Reference:

Rasby, Richard J., Aaron Stalker and Richard N. Funston, 2014, *Body Condition Scoring Beef Cows: A Tool for Managing the Nutrition Program for Beef Herds*, University of Nebraska IANR, EC281:

<http://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/ec281.pdf>

Temperament Score

Source: *Guidelines for Uniform Beef Improvement Programs*, Ninth Edition, March 2018, p32-34. Beef Improvement Federation

Behavioral traits. Important behaviors to beef cattle production include reactions to processing through a squeeze chute, maternal instincts at calving, newborn calf vigor, bull serving capacity, and foraging behavior. Because these are distinctly different behaviors, different strategies are necessary to quantify differences among animals.

Among the most important of behavioral traits, temperament reflects the ease with which animals respond to handling, treatment, and routine management. Animals with disposition problems are a safety risk to handlers, themselves, and other animals in the herd. Disposition affects handling equipment requirements, operation liability exposure, Beef Quality Assurance, and performance.

The docility score (**Chute Score**) provided below is designed to subjectively evaluate differences in disposition when animals are processed through the squeeze chute. Because an animal's behavior can be influenced by past experiences, scoring should be conducted at weaning or yearling ages. This will reduce the extent to which current behavior has been influenced by prior handling experiences. Scores should be collected while calves are restrained with headgates but without having motion restricted by squeeze.

Score 1 - Docile. Mild disposition. Gentle and easily handled. Stands and moves slowly during processing. Undisturbed, settled, somewhat dull. Does not pull on headgate when in chute. Exits chute calmly.

Score 2 - Restless. Quieter than average, but may be stubborn during processing. May try to back out of chute or pull back on headgate. Some flicking of tail. Exits chute promptly.

Score 3 - Nervous. Typical temperament is manageable, but nervous and impatient. A moderate amount of struggling, movement and tail flicking. Repeated pushing and pulling on headgate. Exits chute briskly.

Score 4 - Flighty (Wild). Jumpy and out of control, quivers and struggles violently. May bellow and froth at the mouth. Continuous tail flicking. Defecates and urinates during processing. Frantically runs fence line and may jump when penned individually. Exhibits long flight distance and exits chute wildly.

Score 5 - Aggressive. May be similar to Score 4, but with added aggressive behavior, fearfulness, extreme agitation, and continuous movement which may include jumping and bellowing while in chute. Exits chute frantically and may exhibit attack behavior when handled alone.

Score 6 - Very Aggressive. Extremely aggressive temperament. Thrashes about or attacks wildly when confined in small, tight places. Pronounced attack behavior.

Temperament traits have been shown to be moderately heritable, with magnitudes similar to heritability of growth traits. These procedures should be treated as separate traits. The heritability is increased considerably by averaging 2 or 3 flight speed scores. Positive correlations between chute scores, pen scores, and exit velocity have been reported. In addition to docility scores, researchers have evaluated flight speed or exit velocity (EV), the velocity at which an animal leaves a restraining device such as a squeeze chute. EV can either be measured objectively in seconds using a photo electronic device or subjectively by visual appraisal using a six point categorical scale from 1 = slow to 6 = very fast. In using electronic equipment the first timing trigger is often placed 6 feet beyond the headgate and the second timing trigger is often placed 12 feet from the headgate (6 feet between start and stop trigger). Elapsed times are converted to velocity by dividing the distance by the elapsed time.

Another method of temperament measurement is **Pen Score**. Animals are penned in a small lot (approximately 12 feet X 24 feet) in small groups (n~5) and approached by two observers. The individual animal's response to human approach is scored on a scale from 1 to 5 as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 = Non-aggressive (docile) | Walks slowly, can be approached closely by humans, not excited by humans or facilities |
| 2 = Slightly Aggressive | Runs along fences, will stand in corner if humans stay away, may pace fence |
| 3 = Moderately Aggressive | Runs along fences, head up and will run if humans move closer, stops before hitting gates and fences, avoids humans |
| 4 = Aggressive | Runs, stays in back of group, head high and Very aware of humans, may run into fences and gates even with some distance, will likely run into fences if alone in pen |
| 5 = Very Aggressive | Excited, runs into fences, runs over humans And anything else in path, "crazy" |

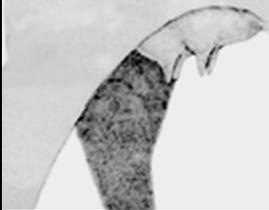
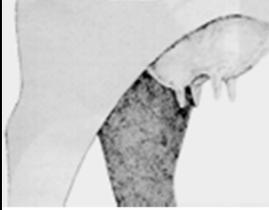
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Udder Score

Source: *Guidelines for Uniform Beef Improvement Programs*, Ninth Edition, March 2018, p11-14. Beef Improvement Federation

Udder Suspension and Teat Size Scores. Udder and teat quality are among the most important functional traits of beef females. Unsound udders and teats are associated with reduced productive life and inferior calf performance, and poor udder and teat conformation is a major reason why cows are culled from the breeding herd. The scoring system described below is designed to help producers evaluate differences in udder and teat quality of beef cows.

Udder suspension and teat size scores are numerical values that reflect differences in udder and teat quality. Udder suspension scores are subjective assessments of udder support and range from 9 (very tight) to 1 (very pendulous). Teat size scores are subjective assessments of teat length and circumference and range from 9 (very small) to 1 (very large). Udder and teat scores should be taken within 24 hours after calving, preferably by one person and on the weakest quarter.

Score	Udder Suspension		Teat Size	
	Description		Description	
9	Very tight		Very small	
7	Tight		Small	
5	Intermediate /moderate		Intermediate/ moderate	
3	Pendulous		Large	
1	Very pendulous, broken floor		Very large, balloon-shaped	

Organizations

Please contact Midwest MicroSystems for additions to this list!

Organization Type	Organization Name	Code
Breed association	American Akaushi Association	AKU
Breed association	American Angus Association	AAA
Breed association	American Black Hereford Association	ABHA
Breed association	American Blonde d'Aquitaine Association	ABAA
Breed association	American Brahman Breeders Association	ABBA
Breed association	American British White Park Association	ABWP
Breed association	American Chianina Association	ACA
Breed association	American Devon Cattle Association	ADA
Breed association	American Dexter Cattle Association	ADCA
Breed association	American Galloway Breeders Association	AGBA
Breed association	American Gelbvieh Association	AGA
Breed association	American Guernsey Association	AGUA
Breed association	American Hereford Association	AHA
Breed association	American Highland Cattle Association	AHCA
Breed association	American International Charolais Association	AICA
Breed association	American Jersey Cattle Association	AJCA
Breed association	American Maine Anjou Association	AMAA
Breed association	American Murray Grey Association	AMGA
Breed association	American Pinzgauer Association	APA
Breed association	American Red Brangus Association	ARBA
Breed association	American Red Poll Association	ARPA
Breed association	American Salers Association	ASLRA
Breed association	American Shorthorn Association	ASHA
Breed association	American Simmental Association	ASA
Breed association	American Tarentaise Association	ATA
Breed association	American Wagyu Association	AWA
Breed association	Amerifax Cattle Association	AFX
Breed association	Angus Mexicana Association	MXAA
Breed association	Angus Society of Australia	AUSSA
Breed association	Australian Brahman Breeders Association	AUBBA
Breed association	Australian Senepol Cattle Breeders Association	ASCBA
Breed association	Australian Simmental Association	AUSSM

Organization Type	Organization Name	Code
Breed association	Barzona Breeders Association of America	BBAA
Breed association	Beef Improvement Records (AAA)	BIR
Breed association	Beefmaster Breeders United	BBU
Breed association	Braunvieh Association of America	BAA
Breed association	Brown Swiss Association	BSA
Breed association	Canadian Angus Association	CAA
Breed association	Canadian Gelbvieh Association	CGA
Breed association	Canadian Hereford Association	CHA
Breed association	Canadian Simmental Association	CSA
Breed association	Charolais Breeders New Zealand	NZCH
Breed association	Charolais Society of Australia	AUSCH
Breed association	German Gelbvieh Association	GGA
Breed association	Holstein Association USA	HAUSA
Breed association	International Brangus Breeders Association	IBBA
Breed association	International Red Brangus Breeders Association	IRBBA
Breed association	New Zealand Angus Association	NZAA
Breed association	North American Limousin Foundation	NALF
Breed association	North American Piedmontese Cattle Association	NAPA
Breed association	North American South Devon Association	NASDA
Breed association	North American Tuli Association	NATA
Breed association	Piedmontese Associaton of the U.S.	PAUS
Breed association	Purebred Dexter Cattle Association	PDCA
Breed association	Red Angus Association of America	RAAA
Breed association	Red Angus Society of Australia	RANG
Breed association	Santa Gertrudis Breeders International	SGBI
Breed association	Senepol Cattle Breeders Association	SCBA
Breed association	Simmental Cattle Breeders Society of New Zealand	NZSM
Breed association	South Devon Cattle Society of New Zealand	NZDS
Breed association	South Devon Herd Book Society	SDHBS
Breed association	South Devon Society of Australia	AUSSD
Breed association	South Poll Grass Cattle Association	SPGCA
Breed association	Texas Longhorn Breeders Assoc of America	TLBA
Breed association	UK Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society	AACAS
Breed association	UK Salers Cattle Society	UKSCS

Organization Type	Organization Name	Code
Composite	RX3 Hybrid	RX3
Genomics company	Neogen Corporation	IGENITY
Genomics company	Zoetis	ZOETIS
Production system	ABS Global	ABS
Production system	Leachman Cattle Company	LCC
Production system	Leachman Cattle of Colorado	LCoC
Production system	MFA Incorporated	MFA
Production system	Powerline Beef Genetics	PBG
Unregistered	RAAA recorded, non-registered animal	RAAX

Breed Codes

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Breed Name	Code
American Akaushi	AA
Amerifax	AM
Angus	AN
Angus Plus	NP
Aubrac	AB
Barzona	BA
Beef Crossbreeds	XB
Beefalo	BE
Beefmaster	BM
Belgian Blue	BB
Bonsmara	NS
Braford	BO
Brahman	BR
Brangus	BN
Braunvieh	BV
British White	BW
Buffalo (Bison)	BU
Charbray	CB
Charolais	CH
Chiangus	CG
Chianina	CA
Chiford	CF
Chimaine	CM
Crossbreeds (Twiner)	XT
Dairy X Beef Crossbreeds	XX
Devon	DE
Dexter	DR
Droughtmaster	DM
Fleckvieh	FL
Galloway	GA
Gelbvieh	GV
Hays Converter	HC

Breed Name	Code
Hereford (Black)	HB
Hereford (Horned)	HH
Hereford (Polled)	HP
Highland (Scotch)	SH
Holstein	HO
Hotlander	XH
Irish Black	IK
Jersey	JE
Limousin	LM
Maine-Anjou	MA
Marchigiana	MR
Mexican Corriente	MC
Mixed Breeds	MX
Murray Grey	MG
Nellore	NE
Nelore	NL
Piedmontese	PI
Pinzgauer	PZ
Red Angus	AR
Red Brahman	RR
Red Brangus	RB
Salers	SA
Santa Gertrudis	SG
Senepol	SE
Shorthorn (Beef Scotch)	SS
Shorthorn (Illwara)	IS
Shorthorn (Milking)	MS
Shorthorn (Polled)	SP
Simbrah	SI
Simmental	SM
South Devon	DS
South Poll	OP
Stabilizer	XS
Sussex	SX

Breed Name	Code
Tarentaise	TA
Texas Longhorn	TL
Tuli	TI
Unknown	UN
Wagyu (Kobe)	KB
White Park	WP
Zebu	ZE