

# BODY CONDITION SCORING OF SHEEP OR CATTLE

Body condition scoring provides an assessment of the nutritional status of an animal, flock or herd. It provides information on how nutritious the diet has been in the last month or two. For this purpose, it is more useful than weighing an animal because an animal may be heavy but in poor condition, or vice versa. This information can be used for management purposes such as deciding on stock movements, supplementary feeding etc.

A system that is most easily used to condition score animals is that based on a scale of 1 to 5. The 5 scores are as seen below. Initially a person may score their animals using whole numbers as below. Upon becoming familiar with this, the person may choose to progress to half or quarter scores.

	<p><b>Condition 1 (Emaciated)</b> Spinous processes are sharp and prominent. Loin eye muscle is shallow with no fat cover. Transverse processes are sharp; one can pass fingers under ends. It is possible to feel between each process.</p>
	<p><b>Condition 2 (Thin)</b> Spinous processes are sharp and prominent. Loin eye muscle has little fat cover but is full. Transverse processes are smooth and slightly rounded. It is possible to pass fingers under the ends of the transverse processes with a little pressure.</p>
	<p><b>Condition 3 (Average)</b> Spinous processes are smooth and rounded and one can feel individual processes only with pressure. Transverse processes are smooth and well covered, and firm pressure is needed to feel over the ends. Loin eye muscle is full with some fat cover.</p>
	<p><b>Condition 4 (Fat)</b> Spinous processes can be detected only with pressure as a hard line. Transverse processes cannot be felt. Loin eye muscle is full with a thick fat cover.</p>
	<p><b>Condition 5 (Obese)</b> Spinous processes cannot be detected. There is a depression between fat where spine would normally be felt. Transverse processes cannot be detected. Loin eye muscle is very full with a very thick fat cover.</p>