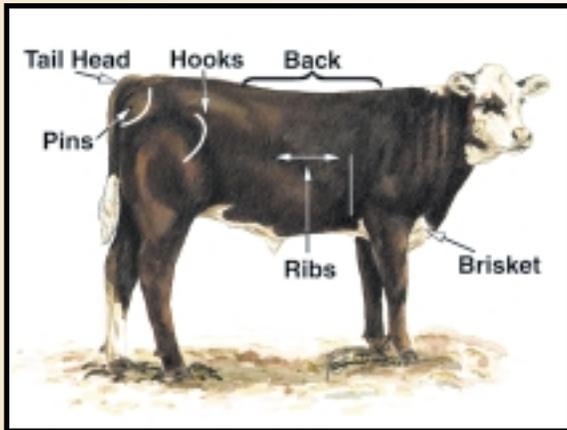




# Body Condition Scoring Beef Cows



**The most inefficient cow is the one that fails to cycle and breed**  
**Impacting Reproductive Performance**

1. Cows scoring BCS 4 or lower normally experience 60 percent or lower pregnancy rate. The ideal range BCS is 5 through 7 for top reproductive performance. The ideal body condition for heifers is BCS 6.
2. Cows scoring BCS 8 or 9 exhibit lower reproductive performance and higher maintenance cost.
3. Cows must have a positive energy balance to cycle and breed successfully. Cows in a negative energy balance (losing weight) simply will not cycle and breed. A negative energy balance may be a result of poor quality forages or low dry matter intakes.
4. Feeds containing high levels of molds can reduce reproductive performance. Always provide fresh feeds during breeding season.
5. Always provide clean, fresh water to assure proper hydration and dry matter intakes.
6. A balanced, complete mineral program will help assure a strong immune system and healthy reproductive track for optimum reproductive performance.

1



**Emaciated - (BCS 1)** Bone structure of shoulder, ribs, back, hooks and pins sharp to touch and easily visible. Little evidence of fat deposits or muscling.

2



**Very Thin - (BCS 2)** Little evidence of fat deposits but some muscling in hindquarters. The spinous processes feel sharp to the touch and are easily seen, with space between them.

3



**Thin - (BCS 3)** Beginning of fat cover over the loin, back and foreribs. Backbone still highly visible. Processes of the spine can be identified individually by touch and may still be visible. Spaces between the processes are less pronounced.



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4



**Borderline - (BCS 4)** Foreribs not noticeable; 12th and 13th ribs still noticeable to the eye, particularly in cattle with a big spring of rib and ribs wide apart. The transverse spinous processes can be identified only by palpation (with slight pressure) to feel rounded rather than sharp. Full but straightness of muscling in the hindquarters.

5



**Moderate - (BCS 5)** 12th and 13th ribs not visible to the eye unless animal has been shrunk. The transverse spinous processes can only be felt with firm pressure to feel rounded - not noticeable to the eye. Spaces between the processes not visible and only distinguishable with firm pressure. Areas on each side of the tail head are fairly well filled but not rounded.

6



**Good - (BCS 6)** Ribs fully covered, not noticeable to the eye. Hindquarters plump and full. Noticeable sponginess to covering of foreribs and on each side of the tail head. Firm pressure now required to feel transverse processes.

7



**Very Good - (BCS 7)** Ends of the spinous processes can only be felt with very firm pressure. Spaces between processes can barely be distinguished at all. Abundant fat cover on either side of tail head with some patchiness evident.

8



**Fat - (BCS 8)** Animal taking on a smooth, blocky appearance; bone structure disappearing from sight. Fat cover thick and spongy with patchiness likely.

9



**Very Fat - (BCS 9)** Bone structure not seen or easily felt. Tail head buried in fat. Animal's mobility may actually be impaired by excess amount of fat.

For more information on beef systems  
visit us at our Website [www.beeflinks.com](http://www.beeflinks.com)

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