

HORSES

BODY CONDITION SCORING AND WEIGHT ESTIMATION

Body condition ("fatness") is the most reliable indication of the suitability of a horse's diet. To estimate your horse's condition:

1. Assess, visually and by feel, the horse's pelvis and rump, back and ribs and neck.
2. Give those areas individual scores. Intermediate assessments can be given half scores.
3. Using the pelvic and rump assessment as the base, adjust that score by a half point if it differs by one or more points from the neck or ribs score.

Knowing your horse's weight is important for dietary management, monitoring growth, and correct dosage of worm treatments and other drugs. Most horse owners do not have scales, so have to rely on weight estimation. Accurate estimation of a horse's weight is an art that requires a lot of experience and even experienced horse handlers often make substantial errors. This fact sheet will help you to assess the body condition score of your horse and to estimate its weight.

The target is a body condition of score 3. In most cases, a score within the range 2.5 to 4 is fine.



0 Very Poor

Very sunken rump, deep cavity under tail, skin tight over bones, very prominent backbone & pelvis and marked ewe neck.



1 Poor

Sunken rump, cavity under tail, ribs easily visible, prominent backbone & croup, ewe neck - narrow & slack.



2 Moderate

Flat rump either side of backbone, ribs just visible, narrow but firm neck & backbone well covered.



3 Good
Rounded rump, ribs just covered but easily felt and no crest, firm neck.



4 Fat
Rump well rounded, gutter along back, ribs and pelvis hard to feel and slight crest.



5 Very Fat
Very bulging rump, deep gutter along back, ribs buried, marked crest fold and lumps of fat.

A horse's weight can be estimated predicted using its height (in hands) and its condition score. Height measurement should be performed on level ground when the horse is relaxed and standing squarely. Use the highest point of the withers as the measuring site. This chart gives an estimate in kilograms.

Height in hands (*1 Hand equals 4 inches or 10.16 cms*)

		12H	13H	14H	15H	16H
Body condition score	1	190	240	310	390	420
	2	210	285	330	420	470
	3	250	345	395	460	505
	4	300	370	460	535	570
	5	360	460	540	610	670

Horses in poor condition can be a serious animal welfare issue. If you see a skinny horse, please report to NRE on 1300 368 550 or the RSPCA on 1300 139 947.

Body scoring and weight estimation charts courtesy of Agriculture Victoria.