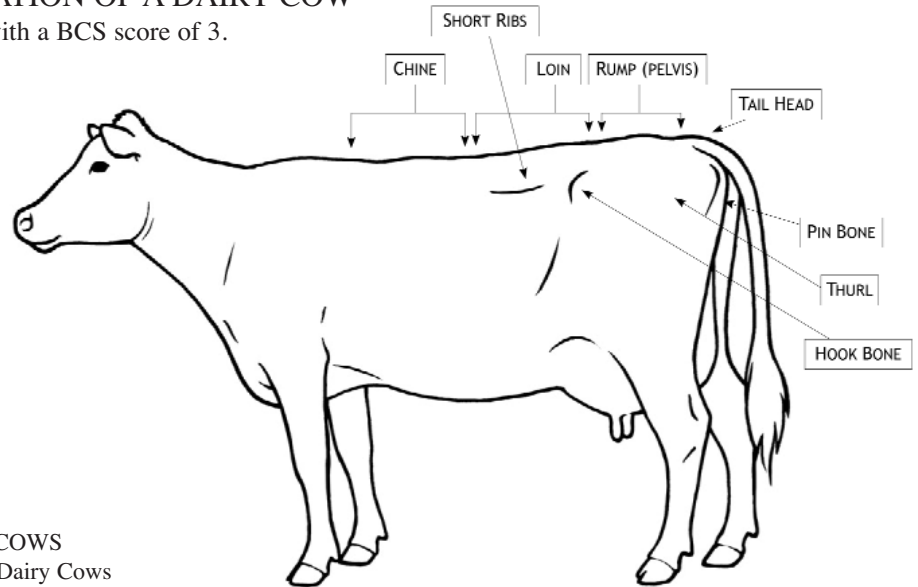




Body Condition Scoring Chart

LABELLED ILLUSTRATION OF A DAIRY COW

Illustration of a Dairy Cow with a BCS score of 3.



BODY CONDITION SCORES FOR DAIRY COWS

Overview of all the body condition scores for Dairy Cows

BCS 1:

SHORT RIBS:

- Ends sharp to touch
- Loin prominent, shelf-like appearance
- Obvious scalloping over top and ends

BACKBONE:

- Vertebrae prominent in chine, loin and rump area
- Individual bones easily visible

HOOK AND PIN BONES:

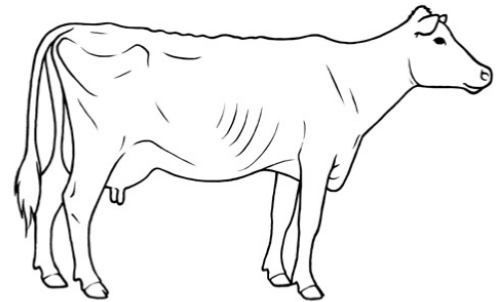
- Sharply defined, very angular in appearance
- No discernable fat pad

THURL (area over pelvis):

- Severe “V shaped” depression without fat cover

TAIL HEAD:

- Sunken and hollow on either side of tail head with obvious folds of skin
- Ligaments connecting pin bones to spine are sharply defined
- Vulva prominent.



BCS 2

SHORT RIBS:

- Ends not as prominent as BCS 1, but can be felt
- Edges easily felt, with slight fat cover, and slightly more rounded appearance
- Overhanging shelf effect less apparent

BACKBONE:

- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump area, less visually distinct
- Easily feel individual vertebrae

HOOK AND PIN BONES:

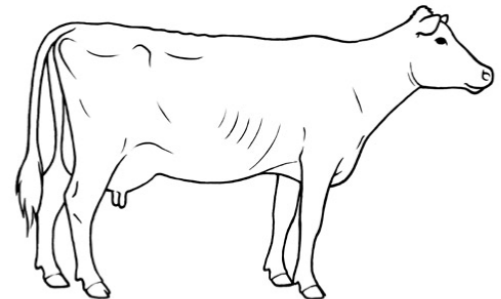
- Bones still prominent, angular
- No fat pad palpable

THURL (area over pelvis):

- Less severe “V shaped” depression
- Little tissue cover

TAIL HEAD:

- Both sides of the tail head are sunken and hollow
- Sharply defined ligaments connecting pin bones to spine





Body Condition Scoring Chart

BODY CONDITION SCORES FOR DAIRY COWS

Overview of all the body condition scores for Dairy Cows

BCS 3

SHORT RIBS:

- Ends can be felt with moderate pressure
- Ribs appear smooth without noticeable scalloping
- Overhanging shelf effect much less apparent

BACKBONE:

- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump area appear rounded
- Backbone visible, but individual vertebrae not distinct

HOOK AND PIN BONES:

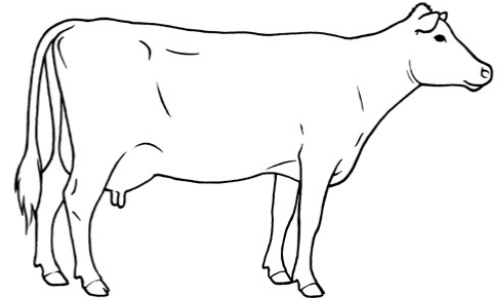
- Visible, but smooth, with rounded appearance
- Fat pad palpable

THURL (area over pelvis):

- Forms "U shaped" depression

TAIL HEAD:

- Both sides of tail head somewhat hollow, but skin folds not distinct
- Ligaments connecting pin bones to spine are rounded in appearance



BCS 4

SHORT RIBS:

- Individual rib ends not visible, only felt with firm pressure
- Overhanging shelf effect slight, barely visible

BACKBONE:

- Vertebrae in chine rounded, smooth
- Loin and rump areas appear flat

HOOK AND PIN BONES:

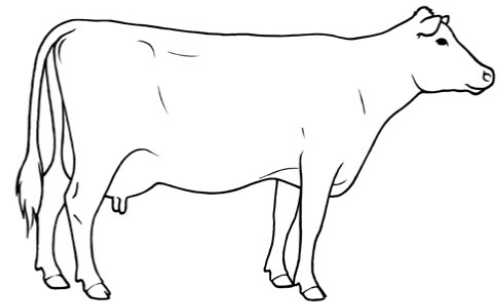
- Rounded, with obvious fat covering

THURL (area over pelvis):

- Area between hooks and pins almost flat
- Pelvic bone only felt with firm pressure

TAIL HEAD:

- Sides of tail head not hollow, no skin folds
- Some fat deposit palpable



BCS 5

SHORT RIBS:

- Ends can't be seen or felt
- No overhanging shelf effect

BACKBONE:

- Vertebrae in chine, loin and rump not visible
- Difficult to feel individual vertebrae

HOOK AND PIN BONES:

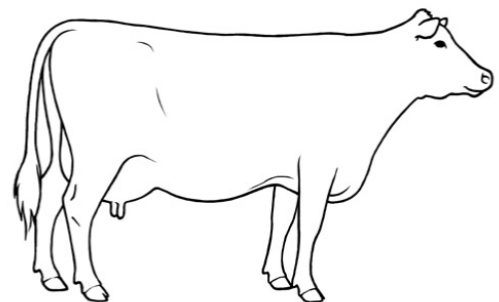
- Very round, buried (almost disappearing) in fat tissue

THURL (area over pelvis):

- Appears flat
- Filled in between the hooks and pins

TAIL HEAD:

- Hollow filled in
- Areas on both sides of tail head buried in fat tissue



Adapted from *What's the Score? Body Condition Scoring for Livestock* CD-ROM
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