EQUINE FARM MANAGER · FACT SHEET

Body Condition & Weight

Score fat cover with the Henneke 1–9 system across six regions and several assessors, track weight by scale or tape, and tie every feed or turnout change to the trend line.

Version 2.0 · November 2026 Pairs with: BCS tab

01 Why score condition

Body condition score (BCS) estimates fat cover, not frame size, so horses of different sizes at the same score carry similar condition. In the app, the saved score sets each horse's ration target and flows into the forage plan, where it cross-checks the energy math.

02 The six regions

Score each region separately, then the app averages them. Use your hands as well as your eyes; a winter coat, gut fill, and muscle all fool the eye.

1. **Neck:** the crest where it meets the shoulder
2. **Withers:** sharp when thin, buried when fat
3. **Loin:** the topline over the spine; crease or ridge
4. **Tailhead:** base of the tail and pin bones
5. **Ribs:** along the barrel
6. **Behind the shoulder:** the girth area behind the elbow

03 The 1–9 scale

SCORE	NAME	WHAT YOU SEE AND FEEL
1	Poor	Severely emaciated; bones prominent; no fat detectable
2	Very thin	Trace of fat over the spine; ribs, tailhead, and hips prominent
3	Thin	Fat partway up the spine; ribs and tailhead easily seen
4	Moderately thin	Faint rib outline; slight ridge along the back; some fat at the tailhead
5	Moderate	Level back; ribs felt but not seen; withers, shoulder, and neck blend smoothly
6	Moderately fleshy	Spongy fat over ribs; fat starting on withers, behind shoulders, and neck; slight crease possible
7	Fleshy	Fat between ribs; noticeable fat on neck, withers, and behind shoulder; crease down the back
8	Fat	Ribs hard to feel; withers and shoulder filled; fat on inner thighs; clear crease
9	Extremely fat	Bulging, patchy fat; inner thighs may rub; flank filled in

04 Target range by horse type

Choose the horse type on the worksheet to set the target band shown on the score and the trend.

HORSE TYPE	TARGET BCS	WHY
Sport / performance	4.5–5.5	Lean and fit; extra fat adds heat load and soundness risk
General maintenance	4.5–6	Pleasure and light-work horses held steady
Broodmare	5.5–6.5	A little reserve supports conception and milk
Breeding stallion	5–6	Fit, not heavy, through the season
Senior	5–6.5	Cover buffers illness and hard winters; watch teeth if condition drops

> **CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN**
> At or below 3, or at or above 8. Persistently high scores raise the risk of equine metabolic syndrome and laminitis. Rule out dental, parasite, and pain problems before adding feed to a thin horse.

05 Scoring with several assessors

BCS is a judgment call. Two people can differ by a point, and one person drifts over time. The worksheet is built for this.

1. Pick the horse, date, location, recorder, and horse type.
2. Use **+ Add assessor** for each person. Everyone scores all six regions independently, without comparing.
3. Set the flag threshold: 1.5, 2.0, or 2.5 points. Any region where assessors differ by that much is flagged.
4. Re-check flagged regions together, by hand, and adjust.
5. Press **Save / Update** in the horse banner at the top of the tab. The banner stays in view as you scroll, so you always close out the right horse.

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Estimated BCS = average of the six region means, rounded to the nearest half point
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For consistency: same light, horse standing square on level ground, similar time of day, and the same assessors when you can.

06 Body weight

Log scale weight when you have it. Without a scale, enter heart girth and body length and the app estimates weight. Pick the horse first; the trend follows that horse.

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Weight (lb) ≈ heart girth² (in) × body length (in) ÷ 330
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Measure heart girth just behind the elbow and over the withers, after the horse exhales. Measure body length from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock. The formula is for adult horses; it is less

reliable for foals, ponies, and late-gestation mares. A weight tape's real value is the trend, so use the same tape and technique each time.

07 Management notes

Add a dated note whenever you change something, and tag the lever: **feed, turnout, health, exercise,** or **other**. Each note drops a marker on the horse's condition and weight trend, here and on the printed report. Filter by lever later to answer questions like "every feed change and how weight responded."

08 From score to plan

RESULT	RESPONSE
Below target	Rule out teeth, parasites, pain, and workload first. Then add energy: more forage, a better cutting, or added calories.
Within target	Hold the plan. Keep scoring on schedule.
Above target	Reduce energy: limit grazing, feed a lower-energy or low-sugar cutting by weight, add exercise. Do not cut hay below about 1.5% of body weight as dry matter without veterinary guidance.

Re-score monthly, not only when a horse looks off. A trend shows problems earlier than any single score.

Method: Henneke, D.R., Potter, G.D., Kreider, J.L., & Yeates, B.F. (1983). Relationship between condition score, physical measurements and body fat percentage in mares. *Equine Veterinary Journal*, 15(4), 371–372.

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