

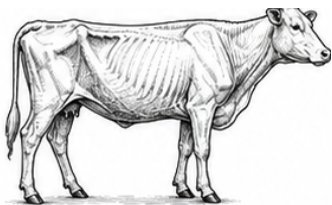
Beef Cow Body Condition Scores: 1-9

Elementary Agriculture / Grades 3-5

A Body Condition Score (BCS) tells how much fat and muscle a beef cow has. The scale goes from 1 (very thin) to 9 (very heavy). Most cows do best near 5 or 6.

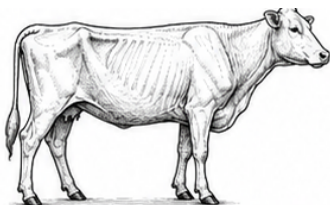
1-3 TOO THIN	4 WATCH	5-6 GOOD RANGE	7-9 TOO HEAVY
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1 Very, Very Thin



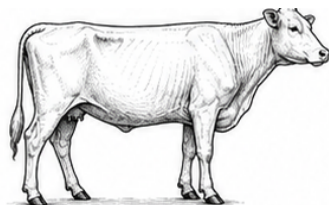
Every rib and hip bone is easy to see. The cow needs care right away.

2 Very Thin



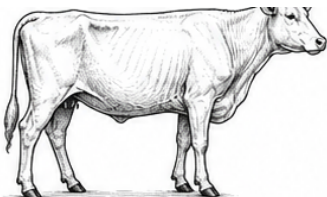
Most ribs and the backbone are easy to see. There is very little fat or muscle.

3 Thin



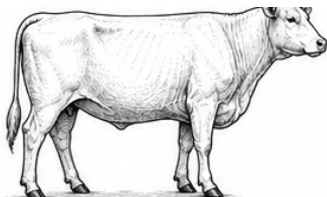
Ribs and backbone still show. The hips look sharp.

4 A Little Thin



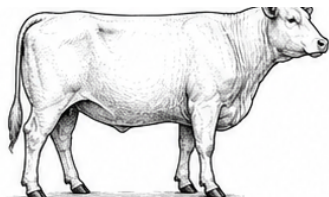
Some ribs show. The hips and tail area still look bony.

5 Good Condition



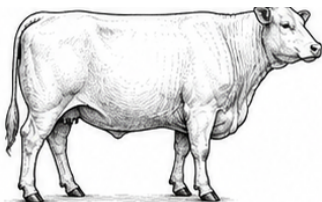
Only the last ribs may show. The back looks smoother.

6 Full and Healthy



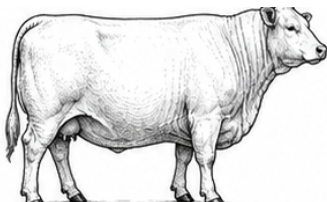
Ribs are hard to see. The body looks smooth and rounded.

7 Heavy



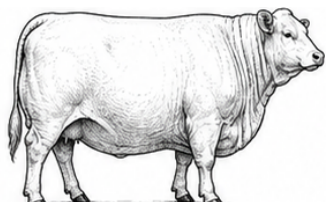
Ribs do not show. Extra fat gathers near the tail and brisket.

8 Very Heavy



The neck and brisket look thick. The body has a lot of fat.

9 Extremely Heavy



Very heavy fat cover. The tail area may look buried.

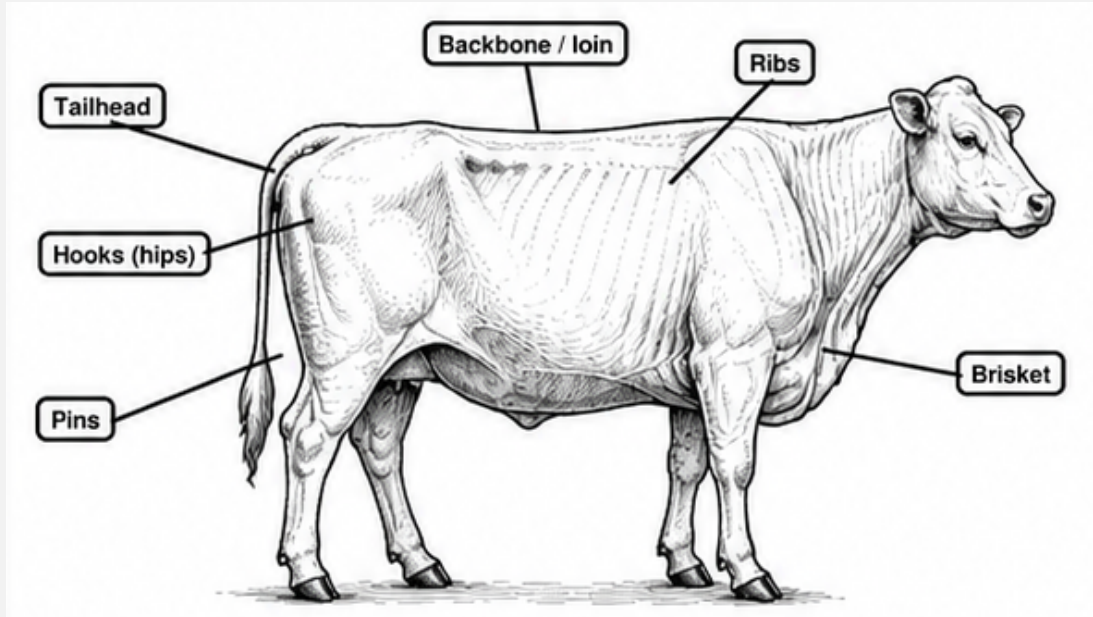
Remember: BCS is not the same as body weight. Look at the whole cow.

How to Score a Beef Cow

Look carefully, stay safe, and use the whole 1-9 scale

Where do we look?

Look at bones, muscle, and fat cover - not just the cow's size.



Five easy steps

- 1 Stay safe**
Stand where your teacher or adult tells you.
- 2 Look from two views**
Look from the side and from behind the cow.
- 3 Check the bones**
Can you see ribs, backbone, hooks, or pins?
- 4 Check the fat**
Look near the tailhead and brisket.
- 5 Choose one score**
Pick the number that best matches the whole cow.

Safety reminder

Never enter a pen or touch cattle without an adult.

Try it! Use page 1 to choose a score.

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| A. Every rib is easy to see, and the hips look sharp. | ☐ | B. Only the last two ribs may show. The body looks smooth. | ☐ |
| C. No ribs show. The tail area and brisket look very full. | ☐ | D. Some ribs show, but the cow still has muscle. | ☐ |

My observation record

Cow or Photo	What I Notice	My Score	Date

Teacher key: A=1, B=5, C=8, D=4. Scores are estimates and may differ slightly between trained scorers.

Sources: Oklahoma State University Extension AFS-3283; University of Nebraska-Lincoln Beef.