

Recording Cow Condition Score



TIP SHEET

Cow condition scores are an optional measurement that can be collected and submitted alongside mature cow weights. While cow condition scores are not currently included in the BREEDPLAN analysis, they may be used in the calculation of Mature Cow Weight EBVs in the future.

WHEN SHOULD COW CONDITION SCORES BE RECORDED?

Cow condition scores should be collected at the same time as mature cow weights.

BREEDPLAN will only analyse the weight of a mature cow if the cow has a calf with a valid 200 day weight recorded (i.e. calf aged between 80 – 330 days of age), and this 200 day weight was recorded within two weeks of when the mature weight of the cow was taken.

In practice, it is recommended that you collect the mature weight for a cow, and an associated cow condition score, at the same time that you are recording the 200 day weight of her calf.

COW CONDITION SCORING METHOD

Cow condition scores are recorded using a 1-6 scale as per the table below.

Cow Condition Score	Fat Depth	Cow Condition Score Description
1	P8: 0-2 mm 12 th Rib: 0-1 mm	Animal is emaciated. Ribs and short ribs are sharp. There is no fat around the tailhead. Hip bones, tailhead and ribs are prominent.
2	P8: 3-6 mm 12 th Rib: 2-3 mm	No fat beside tailhead. Short ribs and long ribs are easily distinguished. Spines feel rounded rather than sharp. Hip bone and ribs are hard. Ribs are no longer visually obvious.
3	P8: 7-12 mm 12 th Rib: 4-7 mm	Short ribs are prominent, rounded but still easily felt. The ribs are easily felt using firm pressure to distinguish between them. Fat that is easily felt covers either side of the tailhead.
4	P8: 13-22 mm 12 th Rib: 8-12 mm	Short ribs cannot be felt. There is some fat cover around the hip bone. Small mounds of fat which are soft to touch are present around the tailhead. Ribs are hard to feel.
5	P8: 23-32 mm 12 th Rib: 13-18 mm	Short ribs cannot be felt. Tailhead and hip bones are almost buried in fat. Ribs appear 'wavy' due to fat folds. There is fat in the brisket and udder, and squaring-off in the flank area.
6	P8: >32 mm 12 th Rib: >18 mm	Short ribs cannot be seen. Tailhead and hips are completely buried by large 'rounds' of fat. Ribs are 'wavy' due to fat folds. The brisket and udder are heavy. The flank is squared off and has a blocky appearance. The animal's mobility is reduced to a walk.



HOW DO I SUBMIT COW CONDITION SCORES?

Cow condition scores can be submitted to your BREEDPLAN processing centre using any of the following methods:

- The BREEDPLAN paper mature cow weight forms (forms can be requested by contacting staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre).
- The BREEDPLAN compatible Microsoft Excel template (available to download in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website).
- A BREEDPLAN compatible herd recording computer program.

- The web services area offered on some Breed Society/Association websites.

Please see the [Methods of Submitting Data to BREEDPLAN](#) tip sheet, available in the [Help Centre](#) on the BREEDPLAN website, for further information.

For more information regarding how to record cow condition scores, or EBVs in general, please contact staff at your BREEDPLAN processing centre.

