

Body Condition Scoring for Goats – tatiana Stanton

Body Condition Scoring (BSC) tries to evaluate the fat reserves of a goat rather than the goat's muscle (meat) content. It helps a farmer evaluate their feeding program and adjust rations accordingly. Important times to evaluate body condition in does are 1) prior to breeding and 2) right before the last trimester of pregnancy. It is important to gage the body condition of bucks a month or so before breeding season starts and to keep an eye on kids throughout their growing period. Another very important role of body condition scoring is helping farmers decide if their slaughter goats are properly finished or over-conditioned depending on your customers' specifications.

Score 1 (Body condition is very lean). Animal is emaciated and health is threatened.

- When you put your hand between the goat's front legs you can feel the sternum. The end of it will feel like a sharp pencil with little to no fat covering. As your hand continues along the chest to the goat's "armpit", you'll be able to clearly differentiate the goat's individual ribs.
- Skin drawn tight over pelvis with no tissue detectable in between.
- Pinbones, hips, short ribs and ribs easily seen. Edges of spinal processes feel sharp. Ribs are clearly defined because tissue is sunken in between each rib.
- You can almost put your hand around the lumbar region.

Score 2 (Body condition is lean. Does will benefit from flushing if ready to breed and need more fat cover prior to kidding. Slaughter goats will not dress out as optimally as a Score 3 animal, but may have better feed efficiency)

- There will be a fat pad attached to the sternum but the pad will move easily when grasped.
- No fatty tissue felt between skin and pelvis, but skin is supple.
- Ends of short ribs are sharp to the touch, but individual ribs are no longer clearly defined.
- While pinbones, hips, and spinal processes are less prominent, they are still angular and can be easily distinguished by touch.
- You can still put your hand around lumbar region but your fingers will not be close to meeting under the spine.

Score 3 (Body condition is moderate)

- The sternum is well covered with a fat pad that is difficult to move.
- Ends of short ribs feel rounded but are easily felt with moderate pressure. Slight depression visible in loin area. Long ribs are barely visible but still easy to feel. Hips and pinbones can be felt but have some covering of flesh. Back has lost angularity and appears smooth.
- It is difficult to grasp the lumbar region as your fingers can't get very far under the spine.

Score 4 (Body condition is fat)

- Fat pad covering sternum is very thick and almost immovable.
- Backbone is no longer visible as separate joints and feels almost smooth. Short ribs are difficult or impossible to feel even with firm pressure and their ends feel very rounded. Pelvis is felt only with firm pressure. No depression visible in line between backbone and hipbones. Area between hips and pins appear smooth.
- Patches of fat may be apparent under the skin.
- You can't get your hands under the lumbar region.

Score 5 (Body condition is very fat). Animal's long term health is being compromised. Feed costs to get this heavy were probably pretty high and inefficient although animal may now be easy to maintain. Does may be more susceptible to low birth weights in kids, dystocia, and ketosis.

- Fat pad at sternum is massive and immovable.
- Animal may have saddlebags at elbows and shoulder blades may be separated due to fat. You can not feel ribs.
- Tail head is buried in fatty tissue. Animal may have dimples on rump and a channel along top of backbone. No part of pelvis is felt even with firm pressure.
- Area between pinbones and tailbone rounded with skin distended.

Please view the photos below for examples of body condition scores 1 through 4.

[More information on body condition scoring](#) is available from the American Institute for Goat Research.

Body Condition Scoring



Body Condition Score 1



Body Condition Score 2



Body Condition Score 3



Body Condition Score 4