BODY CONDITION SCORING AND WEIGHT ESTIMATION

Body condition ("fatness") is the most reliable indication of the suitability of a horse's diet. To estimate your horse's condition

1. Assess, visually and by feel, the horse's pelvis and rump, back and ribs and neck
2. Give those areas individual scores. Intermediate assessments can be given half scores
3. Using the pelvic and rump assessment as the base, adjust that score by a half point if it differs by one or more points from the neck or ribs score.

Knowing your horse’s weight is important for dietary management, monitoring growth, and correct dosage of worm treatments and other drugs. Most horse owners do not have scales, so have to rely on weight estimation. Accurate estimation of a horse's weight is an art that requires a lot of experience and even experienced horse handlers often make substantial errors. This fact sheet will help you to assess the body condition score of your horse and to estimate its weight.

The target is a body condition of score 3. In most cases, a score within the range 2.5 to 4 is fine.

0 Very Poor
Very sunken rump, deep cavity under tail, skin tight over bones, very prominent backbone & pelvis and marked ewe neck

1 Poor
Sunken rump, cavity under tail, ribs easily visible, prominent backbone & croup, ewe neck - narrow & slack

2 Moderate
Flat rump either side of backbone, ribs just visible, narrow but firm neck & backbone well covered.
A horse's weight can be estimated predicted using its height (in hands) and its condition score. Height measurement should be performed on level ground when the horse is relaxed and standing squarely. Use the highest point of the withers as the measuring site. This chart gives an estimate in kilograms.

**Height in hands** *(1 Hand equals 4 inches or 10.16 cms)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Body condition score</th>
<th>12H</th>
<th>13H</th>
<th>14H</th>
<th>15H</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Horses in poor condition can be a serious animal welfare issue. If you see a skinny horse, please report to DPIPWE on 1300 368 550 or the RSPCA on 1300 139 947

*Body scoring and weight estimation charts courtesy of DPI Victoria.*