

# ***Body Condition Scoring***

***UC Davis Sheep Day***

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# *Body Condition Score?*

- An estimate of muscle to fat ratio
- Subjective not actual score
- Correlated to body weight
- Wool prevents visual appraisal



# 5 Point Scale

- 1 = Emaciated or too thin
- 2 = Thin
- 3 = Moderate
- 4 = Fat
- 5 = Obese

Half scores often used

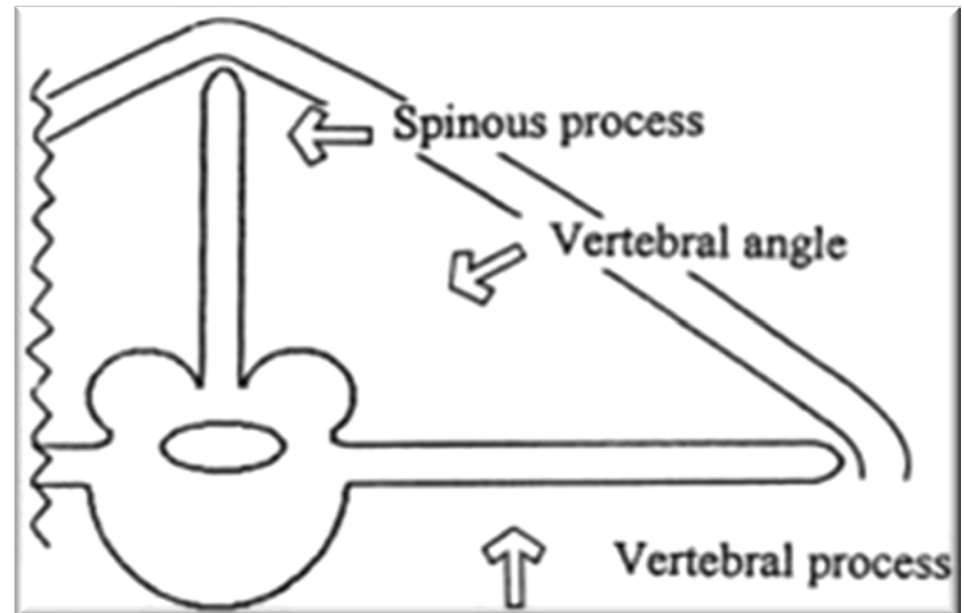
BCS +/- 1 score = 13 % live weight

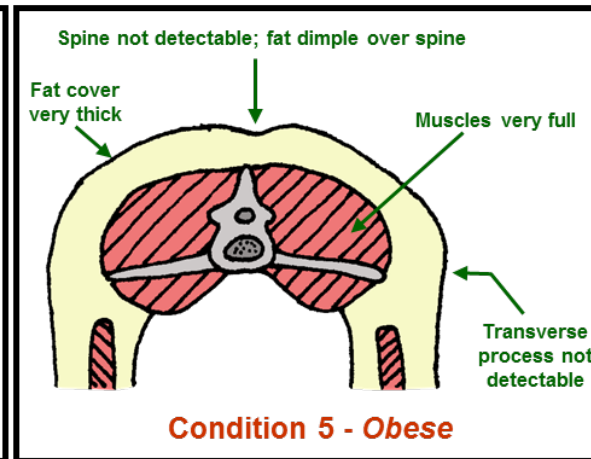
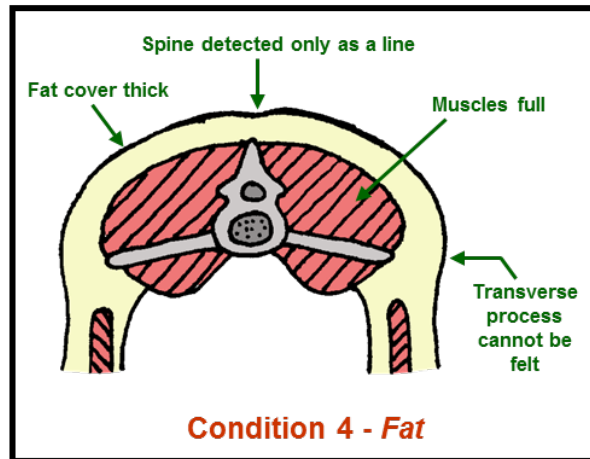
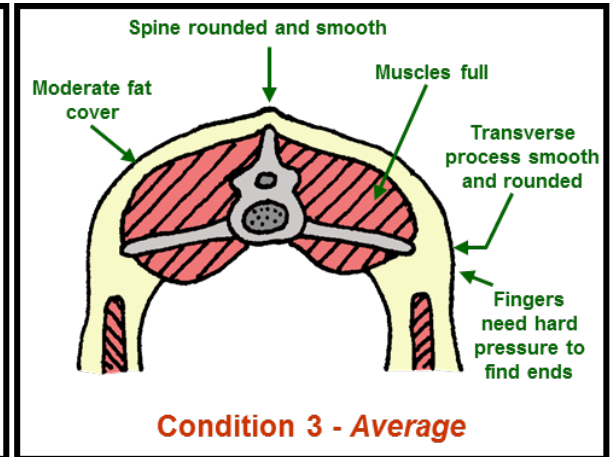
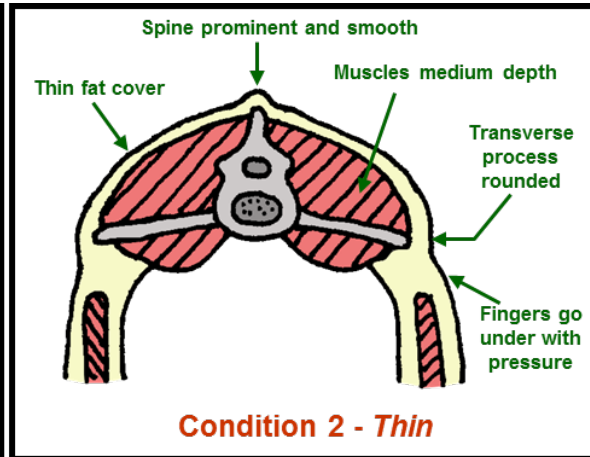
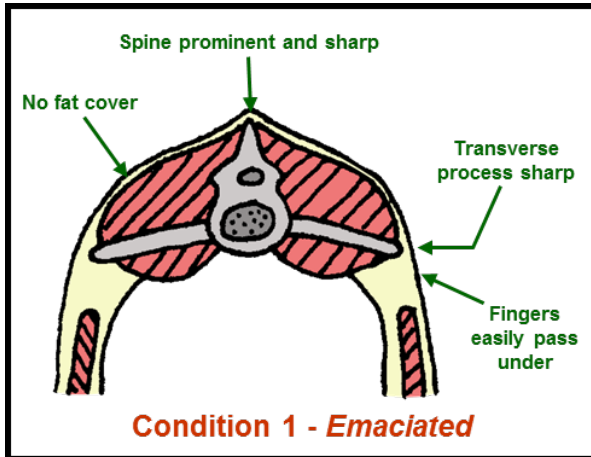


# *Determined by “Feel” in Loin Area*

## Landmarks

- Spinous process
  - Backbone
- Vertebral angle
  - Eye of the loin
- Vertebral process
  - Transverse process
  - Short ribs

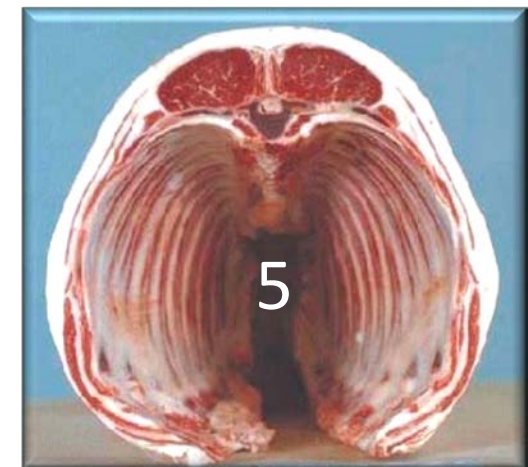
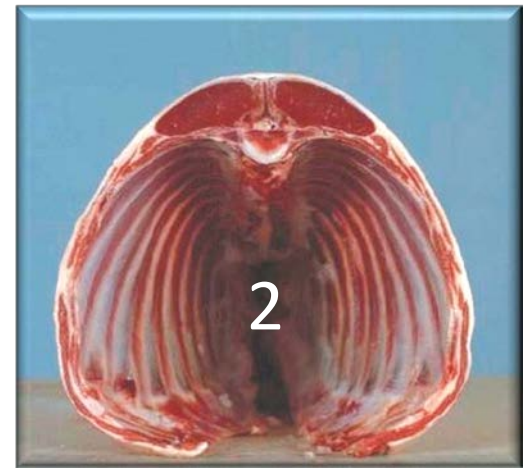




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# *When to Body Condition Score*

- A ewe's body condition score will change throughout her production cycle
- 4 most important times to BCS ewes are:
  - Pre-breeding
  - Late gestation
  - Post Lambing
  - Weaning



# *Pre-breeding Condition Scores:*

- Ewes that are too thin (poor condition) prior to breeding may:
  - Have difficulty conceiving
  - Reduced number of offspring
  - Longer postpartum intervals
- Overly fat ewes may have reduced conception rates.





# *Late-gestation Condition Scores:*

- During gestation ewes must eat enough feed to support fetal growth and build up body reserves to support lactation
- Ewes too thin at late-gestation may:
  - Give birth to small, weak offspring
  - Have reduced milk production during lactation
  - Lose too much body condition during lactation
- Overly fat ewes may have reduced lactation intakes



# *Post Lambing Condition Scores:*

- Ewes in poor condition after lambing may:
  - Have reduced milk production during lactation
  - Wean light weight offspring
  - Have increased weaning-to-estrus intervals
  - Fail to return to estrus
  - Have reduced conception rates
- Overly fat ewes may consume less feed during lactation.



# *Weaning Condition Scores:*

- Ewes often draw upon body reserves during lactation to produce milk.
  - Often results in loss of body condition
- Ewes in poor condition at weaning may:
  - Have prolonged weaning-to-estrus intervals
  - Fail to return to estrus
  - Have reduced conception rates



# *Desired Body Condition Scores*

<b>Period</b>	<b>Number of Days in Period</b>	<b>Desired Condition Score</b>
Open (not lactating)	134*	2
Flushing	28	2+
Gestation	147	3
Lambing (lactation)	56	3+ (at lambing)

\*Adjusted by length of lactation

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# *Don't Forget the Guys!*

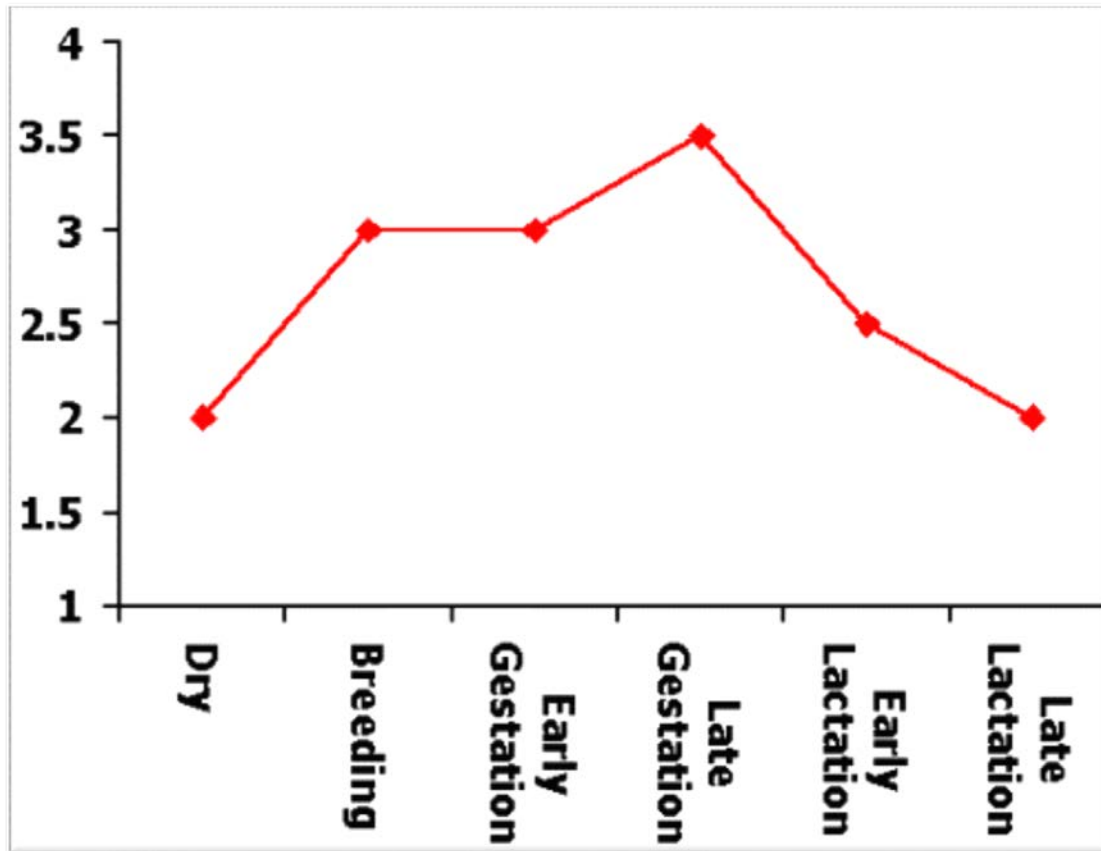
- *Prior to breeding*
  - *3.5 to 4*
- *Post breeding*
  - *Expect 2's*



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