

Table 1
Body Condition Scoring System

Body condition, or the measure of fat cover, can be evaluated by visual appraisal and palpation. A scoring system in horses uses six areas of the body to assign scores of 1 (extremely emaciated) to 9 (obese). The six areas are: (A) along the neck; (B) withers; (C) crease down back; (D) tailhead; (E) ribs; and (F) behind the shoulder.

A score between 5 and 7 is considered ideal for healthy horses. Horses scoring in the 1 and 2 category should be evaluated further for causes such as medical conditions, dental problems, or the lack of proper nutrition.

Description of Individual Condition Scores (1–9)

(1) **Poor.** Animal extremely emaciated; spinous processes, ribs, tailhead, hip joints and lower pelvic bones projecting prominently; bone structure of withers, shoulders and back easily noticeable; no fatty tissue can be felt.

(2) **Very Thin.** Animal emaciated; slight fat covering over base of spinous processes; transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded; spinous processes, ribs, tailhead, hip joints and lower pelvic bones prominent; withers, shoulders and back structure faintly discernible.

(3) **Thin.** Fat buildup about halfway on spinous processes; transverse processes cannot be felt; slight fat cover over ribs; spinous processes and ribs easily discernible; tailhead prominent, but individual vertebrae cannot be identified visually; hip joints appear rounded but easily discernible; lower pelvic bones not distinguishable; withers, shoulders and neck accentuated.

(4) **Moderately Thin.** Slight ridge along back; faint outline of ribs discernible; tailhead prominence depends on conformation, fat can be felt around it; hip joints not discernible; withers, shoulders and neck not obviously thin.

(5) **Moderate.** Back is flat (no crease or ridge); ribs not visually distinguishable but easily felt; fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy; withers appear rounded over spinous processes; shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body.

(6) **Moderately Fleshy.** May have slight crease down back; fat over ribs spongy; fat around tailhead soft; fat beginning to be deposited along the side of withers, behind shoulders and along sides of neck.

(7) **Fleshy.** May have crease down back; individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat; fat around tailhead soft; fat deposited along withers, behind shoulders and along neck.

(8) **Fat.** Crease down back; difficult to feel ribs; fat around tailhead very soft; area along withers filled with fat; area behind shoulder filled with fat; noticeable thickening of neck; fat deposited along inner thighs.

(9) **Extremely Fat.** Obvious crease down back; patchy fat appearing over ribs; bulging fat around tailhead, along withers, behind shoulders and along neck; fat along inner thighs may rub together; flank filled with fat.

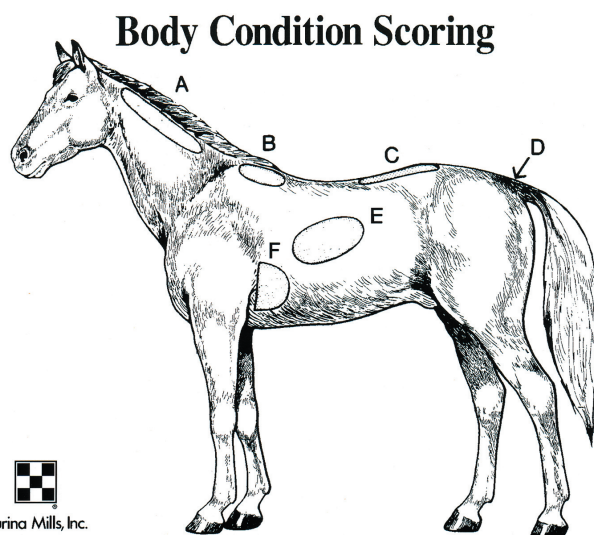


Table 2
Recommended Nutrient Intake of Diets* for Horses
During Different Production Stages or Work Level

	Digestible Energy (Mcal/lb)	Crude Protein (%)	Calcium (%)	Phosphorous (%)
Maintenance	0.90	8.0	0.24	0.17
Pregnancy (9–11 months)	1.00–1.10	10.0–10.6	0.43–0.45	0.32–0.34
Lactation	1.15–1.20	11.0–13.2	0.36–0.52	0.22–0.34
Growing				
Weanling	1.4	14.5	0.56–0.68	0.31–0.38
Yearling	1.3	11.3–12.6	0.34–0.45	0.19–0.25
2-Year-old	1.2	10.4–11.3	0.31–0.34	0.17–0.20
Work	1.15–1.30	9.8–11.4	0.30–0.35	0.22–0.25

* Dry matter basis. National Research Council, 1989.

