

TIMING AND BCS TARGETS

At Weaning: Management weaning to pre-mating

- Target as many as possible at BCS 3 and none below 2.5 at mating
- Split flock post weaning and 'hold' the good condition ewes (BCS >3) and feed the poorer ewes (BCS <3) better
- Set up regular times to BCS ewes from weaning to mating
- **Ewes below BCS 3** - reduce mob pressure, front of rotation preferentially feed, consider drenching these ewes

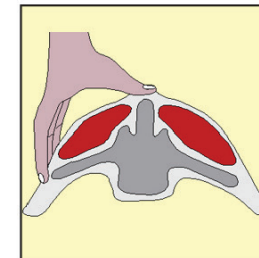
At Scanning: Management scanning to lambing

- Target a BCS of 3 at lambing to maximize lamb survival and lamb weaning weights
- Ewes going into the scanning crate that are below BCS 3 need to be marked and drafted off, especially multiples
- **Ewes below BCS 3** - reduce mob pressure, front of rotation preferentially feed, consider drenching these ewes

Generally, to increase condition score by one unit (i.e. 2.0 to 3.0), ewes need to gain 7-9 kg Live weight.

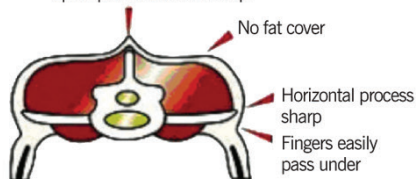
HOW TO BCS SHEEP

Locate the last rib (the 13th) using the balls of the fingers and thumb, try to feel the backbone with the thumb and the end of the short ribs with the finger tips immediately behind the last rib.



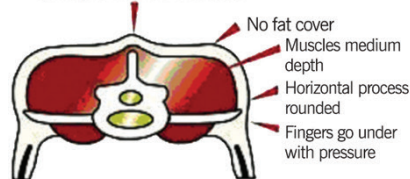
Body condition score 1

Spine prominent and sharp



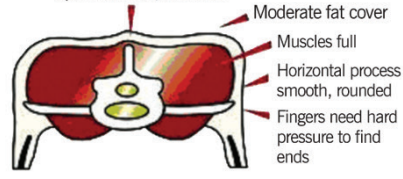
Body condition score 2

Spine prominent and smooth



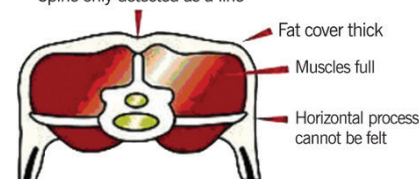
Body condition score 3

Spine smooth, rounded



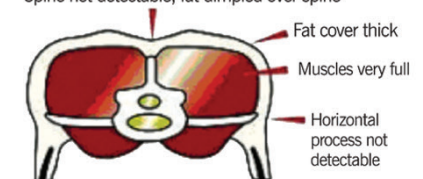
Body condition score 4

Spine only detected as a line







Body condition score 5

Spine not detectable, fat dimpled over spine



Note: It is common to use increments of 0.5 of a BCS; when a ewe is not quite good enough for one category but better than the one below. Don't break it down any more than this though!

BODY CONDITION SCORE - FEELING ACROSS AND UNDER SHORT RIBS		DESCRIPTION - HOW IT FEELS - COMPARED TO AN 'AVERAGE' HAND
1.0		The ends of the short ribs feel like the ends of your fingertips. When you push your fingers under the short ribs, there is no muscle underneath, just skin. Spine is prominent. There is virtually no muscle on the back and it feels concave.
2.0		Muscle depth under short ribs equivalent to distance from first knuckle to finger tip. Can feel spine. Back muscle is slightly concave and not rounded.
2.5		Muscle depth under short ribs about equivalent to distance from second knuckle, to first knuckle when fingers are flexed. Need some pressure to feel short ribs. Some cover on spine, back muscle flat.
3.0		Muscle depth under short ribs about equivalent to distance from 3rd knuckle to 2nd knuckle, when fingers are flexed. Need moderate to strong pressure to feel short ribs. Back muscle rounded.
4.0		'Prime'. Can only feel short ribs with really strong pressure. Back is rounded with plenty of fat cover. Muscle under short ribs deep - nearly the distance from first knuckles to the beginning of your wrist joint.
5.0		Obese. Fat rolls either side of spine. Spine is in a dimple. Impossible to feel short ribs - fat either side of tail head. Almost never see in a commercial flock.

Ewe Body Condition Scoring Made Easy - Courtesy of Totally Vets, Fielding