CONDITION SCORING (DEGREE OF FATNESS) SYSTEM

Figure 1. Condition Score Card

Score	Back	Ribs	Neck	Shoulder	Withers
1	very prominent vertebrae	very prominent	extremely thin	prominent	prominent
2	prominent vertebra	prominent	very thin	very thin	very thin
3	fat vertebrae- ½ way up	can easily see	thin	thin	thin
4	negative crease	can still see outline	less thin	less thin	less thin
5	level	not seen but easily felt	blends into shoulder	blends smoothly into body	rounded
6	slight crease	not seen can be felt	a little fat	a little fat	a little fat
7	average crease	can barely be felt	average fat	almost level between should and rib cage	fat
8	prominent crease	difficult to feel	fat	level between shoulder and ribcage	fat filled
9	very deep crease	cannot feel (patchy fat)	bulging fat	building fat	bulging fat

1. Observe horses visually. Cautions: long hair will interfere with scoring: therefore, palpation of fat cover (i.e. ribs) will be necessary. Certain conformation characteristics or pregnancy status may influence the degree of fat appearance over certain body parts: therefore, use all locations in accessing a composition score. Be careful not to confuse fat for muscle tone of a physically fit horse.

2. Assign condition scores (CS) and record in whole or half units (i.e. CS = 5.5, CS = 8.0).

Dr. Kathy Anderson
Extension Horse Specialist

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln
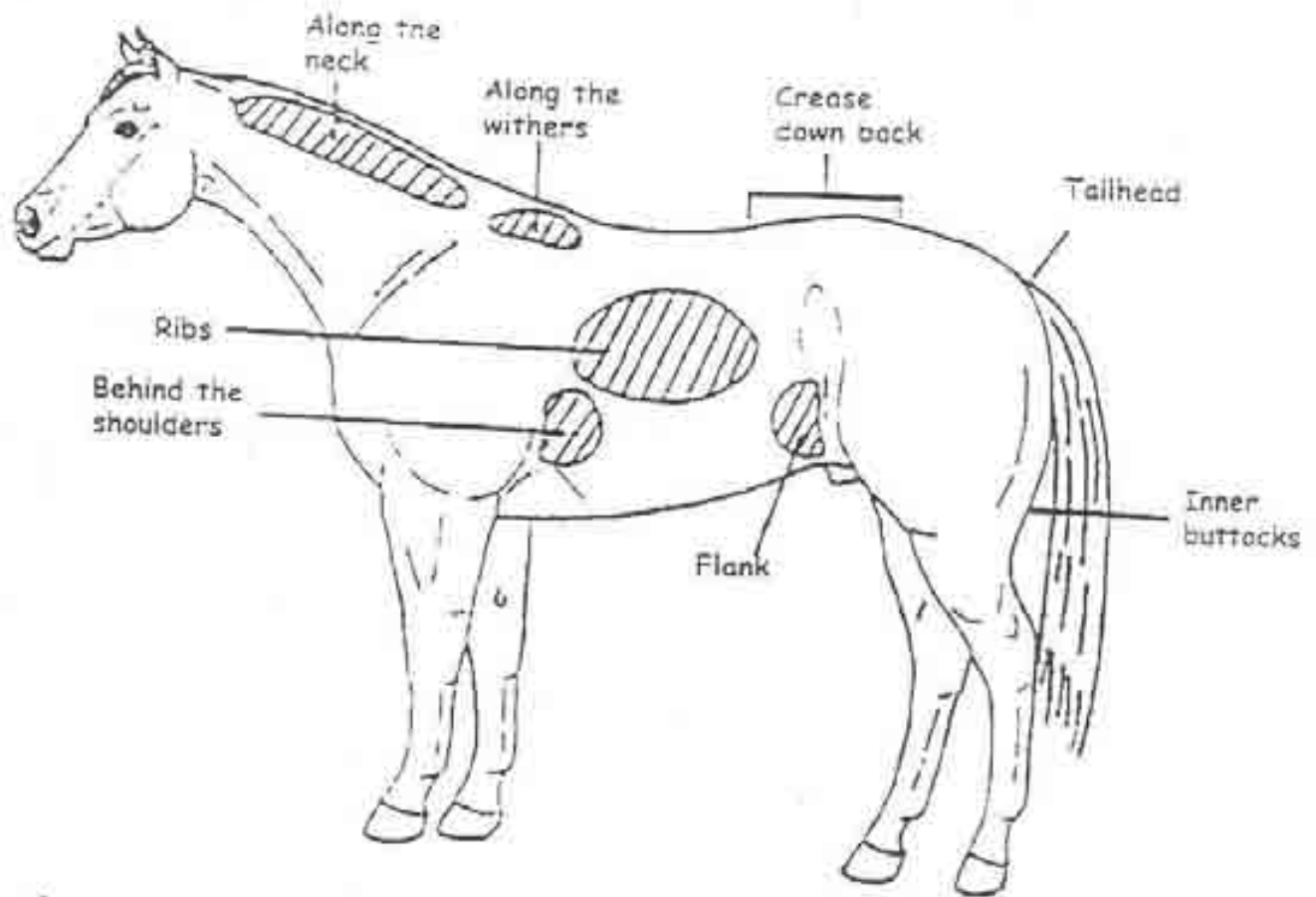
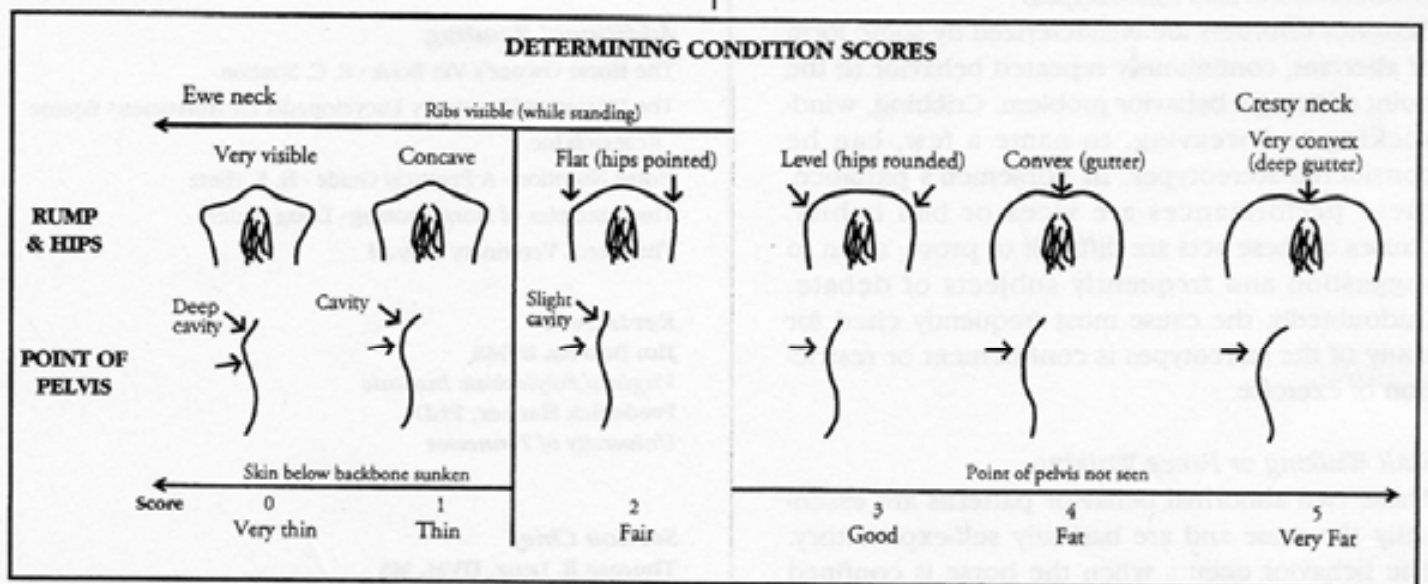Areas emphasized in the condition score

Determining Condition Scores

Figure 3: Body condition scoring system *

(* Rudman, R. and Keiper, R.R. The Body Condition of Feral Ponies on Assateague Island. Equine Veterinary Journal. (1991) 23 (6) 453-456.)