

newsletter

JANUARY 2017

BLENDING NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY



in this month's issue

1. What would your horse score?

WHAT WOULD YOUR HORSE SCORE?



So, January is already almost over and you may have decided on your new year's resolutions, but what about your horse? Do you plan to alter his diet for better performance, plan to help him gain or lose weight, or simply ensure he is in good health?

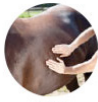
The first step in choosing a feed for your horse or assessing his overall health is to look at his body condition. This can be quite subjective as different people have different ideas on how fat or thin a horse is.

It is for this reason that several body condition score charts have been devised to provide guidance for this type of assessment. Although there are several charts, we at Equus Feeds prefer the American 9 score chart, as this provides a bigger range of variances and provides more detail.

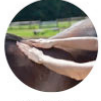
Before assessing your horses condition it is important to remember that a horse's breed, as well as his workload, will influence how he should look. For example, a fit racehorse may need to carry less condition than a TB used for show jumping. Warmbloods may naturally carry more condition than Arabs and this needs to be borne in mind. Despite this, however, there is no need for any horse to be excessively thin or obese.



NECK



RIBS



WITHERS



LOIN



BEHIND SHOULDER



TAILHEAD

So, what are you looking at?

Condition scoring looks at the amount of fat coverage a horse has over the shoulder and elbow region, the ribs, the withers, the loin and tail head, and the crest of the neck.

(Picture taken from <http://blog.smartpakequine.com/2014/10/under-over-or-ideal>)

Some discrepancies may be present simply due to the horse's conformation, state of training or development so a horse may appear to have moderate looking hind quarters but a thin looking neck. It is important thus to provide an average score for the horse and to understand where improvements can be made so that the diet can be altered accordingly.

Areas to consider

Topline: Whilst feeding can help to balance this area by providing the "building blocks" of muscle, it is vital to note that only correct training and work will help build the right topline thus giving the horse a more pleasing shape. Feeding without correct work will not produce topline.

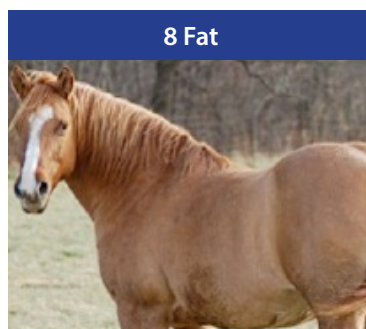
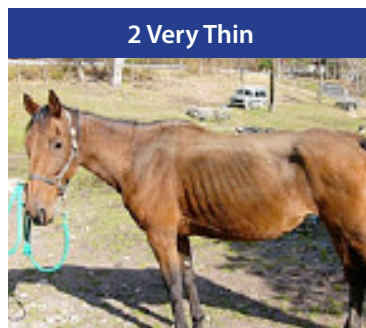
Fat thickness: If additional coverage behind the shoulder, over the ribs and around the tailhead area is required, then providing more calories in the horse's diet is necessary. If these areas need reducing, then calories may need to be reduced.

Distended belly: If this is larger than normal for a horse and his breed - this could be from

- a) eating indigestible forage causing a hay belly. Stalky, very mature hay can be quite indigestible and feeding more leafy, younger cut hay can help with this.
- b) lack of physical fitness
- c) worm burden (more likely to be seen when scoring young horses)

Scores 1-9

Below are pictures showing an indication of the different scores. The average horse should be around a 5. Extremely fit horses may score 4 and some competition horses may be even reach a 6. However, no horse should fall below a 3 and the same applies for the opposite end of the scale. Even retired horses should not be overweight.



One step further

Researchers in Virginia have established a similar subjective scoring system for the neck region, as horses with a so-called “cresty neck” appear to be more prone to metabolic dysfunctions such as insulin resistance, laminitis and Cushings. The cresty neck scores (CNS) range from 0 to 5, where 0 indicates no visible appearance of a crest (no fleshy region along the mane) and 5 signifies a crest so large it droops to one side. Most horses will have some tissue coverage along the crest (in the 1–2 range), and horses with more fat coverage will be in the 3–4 range. A score of 3 or higher would be considered a “cresty neck” (Carter et al., 2009a). It is rare to see horses with a score of 5 and a drooping neck, though it is fairly common in miniature donkeys. Ideally horses should have a cresty neck score of around 2.



Score of 2



Score of 3



Score of 4



Score of 5



Drooping of the neck due to large crest



TESTIMONIALS



Solitaire and Julia Davies

Dear Equus,

I started using Equus products just under a year ago now and thought it time to let you know how my horse is doing.

My horse Solitaire takes part in Trec events and prior to feeding Equus, he didn't have the energy to work, went very hollow all the time and if ridden lightly became terrible to ride.

Since changing to Equus, he can do regular work, carries himself well and his entire disposition has improved hugely.

He only gets a small amount of feed which consists of 500g **Equus Safe 'n lite**, 200g **Equus All Time Balancer** and 200ml oil.

I love the fact that he doesn't need a lot of food to remain happy and healthy.

Thank you Equus

Yours Sincerely

Julia Davies

Conclusion:

Although these scoring systems can be subjective, they do facilitate an overall condition and health assessment which aids in selecting not only the right diet but the correct exercise regime for each individual horse.



Pictures courtesy of

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/30/Neglected_horse_\(5884905373\).jpg/](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/30/Neglected_horse_(5884905373).jpg/)

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c5/BCS_2_a_\(5843250974\).jpg/220px-BCS_2_a_\(5843250974\).jpg220px-Neglected_horse_\(5884905373\).jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c5/BCS_2_a_(5843250974).jpg/220px-BCS_2_a_(5843250974).jpg220px-Neglected_horse_(5884905373).jpg)

<http://blog.smartpakequine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/DaVinci.png>

http://www.blythestables.co.uk/blythestables-co-uk/_img/owning-page/OwnYRH2.JPG

<http://www.thehorse.com/articles/24740/determining-horses-body-weight-and-ideal-condition>

<http://www.slideshare.net/susantuller/understanding-equine-metabolic-syndrome-by-smartpak-equine>



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For an absolutely free consultation with no further obligation contact our professional consultants to schedule a visit to your yard.

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