

Feeding Level of Gestating Sows

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Why is condition scoring of sows important?

- Prevent the loss of body weight.
- Maintain an adequate level of backfat.
- Observe and record the levels of feeding and nutrition.
- Increase the longevity of the sow herd.
- Decrease problems with farrowing, rebreeding and culling.

What factors affect the body condition score?

- Diet, both quantity and quality.
- Weather and environment.
- Genetics.
- Health.
- Stage of production, e.g., age or gestation vs. lactation.
- Caretaker skills.

When should caretakers score body condition?

- 14 days after weaning.
- Mid-gestation.
- 14 days before farrowing.
- 2 weeks post-farrowing or near weaning.

Who should score the sows?

- The same person for each herd and each time to ensure consistency.

What guidelines are available for scoring?

Photos of sows of different body conditions from one to five, or from very thin to obese.

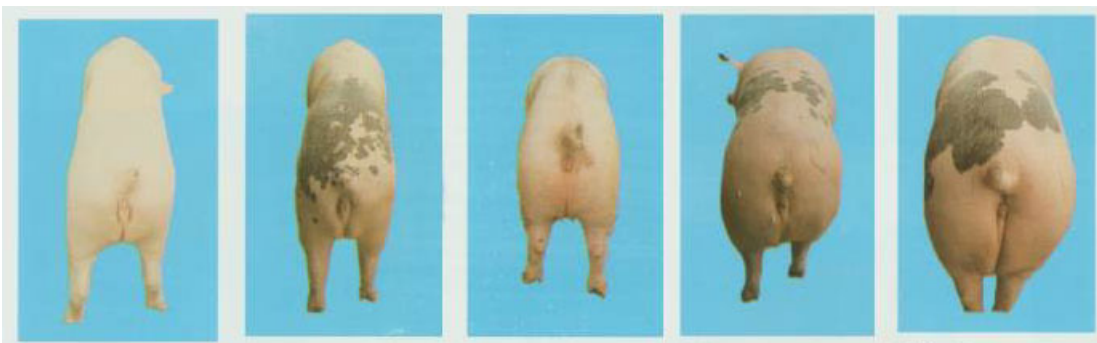


Photo courtesy of Elanco Animal Health.

Backfat depths at the last rib over the loin muscle:

Condition score	Backfat, inches
1	less than 0.6
2	0.6 – 0.7
3	0.7 – 0.8
4	0.8 – 0.9
5	more than 0.9

What condition score should sows have at different stages?

At breeding	2.5 to 3
Middle of gestation	3.0
14 days pre-farrowing	3.0

What is a good scoring record and how should the feeding level be adjusted?

Sow Condition Scores						
Date		Scorer				
Condition Score						
Sow Number	1	2	3	4	5	Change in feeding level/day
201	X					+1.0 lb
253		X				+0.5 lb
361			X			0 lb
225				X		-0.25 lb
333					X	-0.75 lb

For example sow number 201 has a condition score of 1 and needs to have her feed increased by 1.0 lb/day to gradually move her to condition score 3. Sow 333 has a condition score of 5 and needs to have her ration decreased 0.75 lb/day to move her to condition score 3.