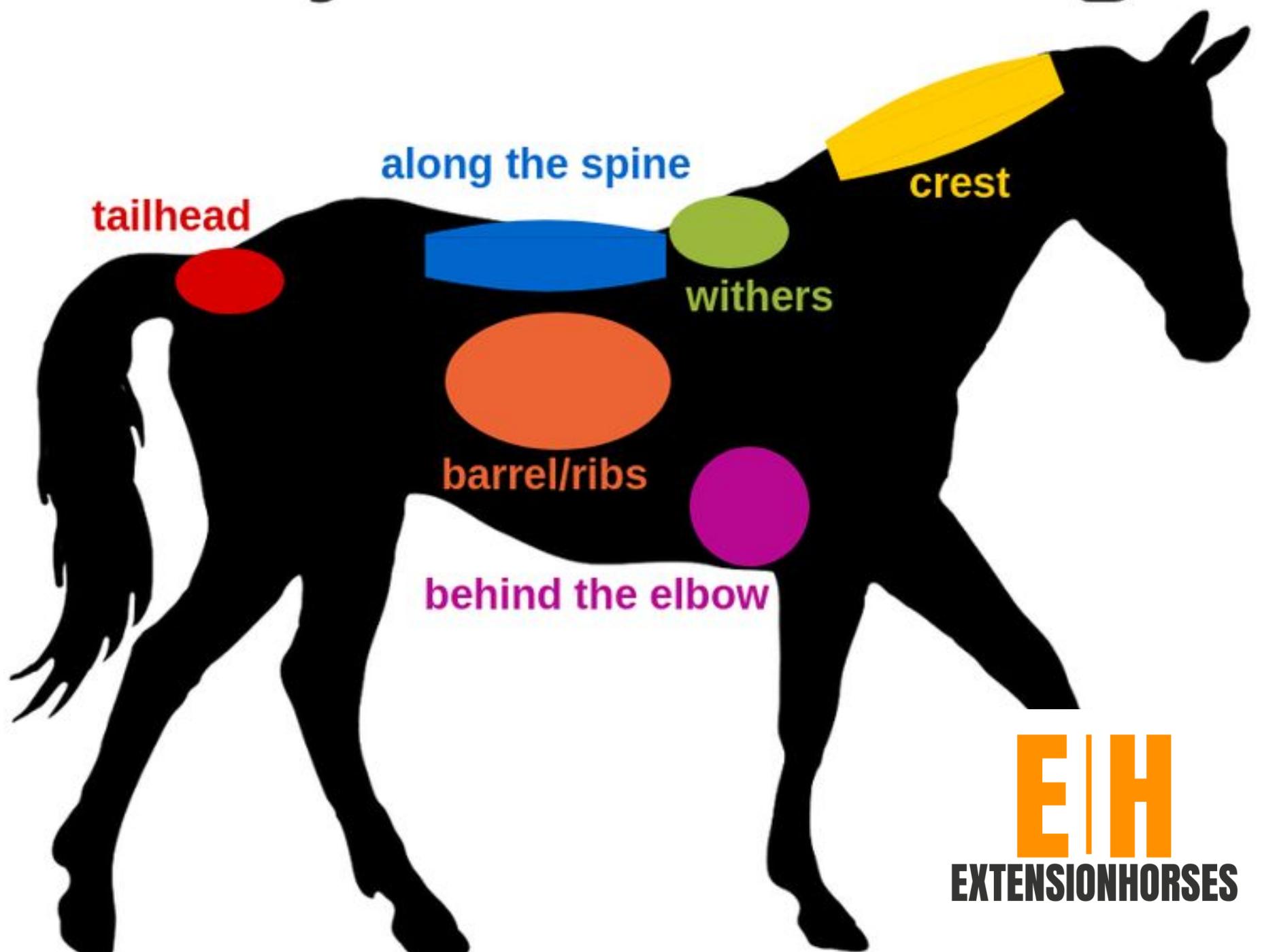


# Body Condition Scoring Horses

## Six Areas of Focus for Equine Body Condition Scoring



In order to accurately assess a horse's Body Condition Score (BCS), you must visually assess and touch the animal. A correct BCS is very difficult without physically touching the animal (i.e. winter haircoat, muscle vs. fat, etc.).

- 1 **Poor:** Animal extremely emaciated; spine and bone structure noticeable, no fatty tissue can be felt.
- 2 **Very thin:** Bony structures of the neck, shoulders and withers are faint. Spine, ribs, point of hip and buttock are prominent.
- 3 **Thin:** Slight fat cover over ribs; spine and ribs easily seen, but individual vertebrae cannot be identified visually. Tailhead is prominent but hips rounded.
- 4 **Moderately thin:** Neck, withers and shoulders are not obviously thin. Ribs are faint. Fat can be felt around tailhead.
- 5 **Moderate:** Back is flat; ribs felt but not easily seen; fat around tail head beginning to feel spongy; shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body.
- 6 **Moderately fleshy:** Slight crease down back; fat over ribs and tail head spongy; slight fat along the side of withers, behind shoulders and along sides of neck.
- 7 **Fleshy:** Slight crease down back; ribs can be felt but not seen, noticeable filling between ribs; fat around tail head, along withers, behind shoulders and along neck.
- 8 **Fat:** Crease down back; difficult to feel ribs; fat around tail head very soft; noticeable thickening of neck; fat deposited along inner thighs.
- 9 **Extremely fat:** Obvious crease down back; patchy fat appearing over ribs: bulging fat around tail head, withers, behind shoulders, and along neck; flank filled with fat.

## References:

- [https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/body\\_condition\\_scoring\\_in\\_horses](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/body_condition_scoring_in_horses)
- Henneke, DR, Potter, GD, Kreider, JL, Yeates, BF. 1983. *Equine Vet. J.* 15 (4): 371-2. doi:10.1111/j.2042-3306.1983.tb01826.x.

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