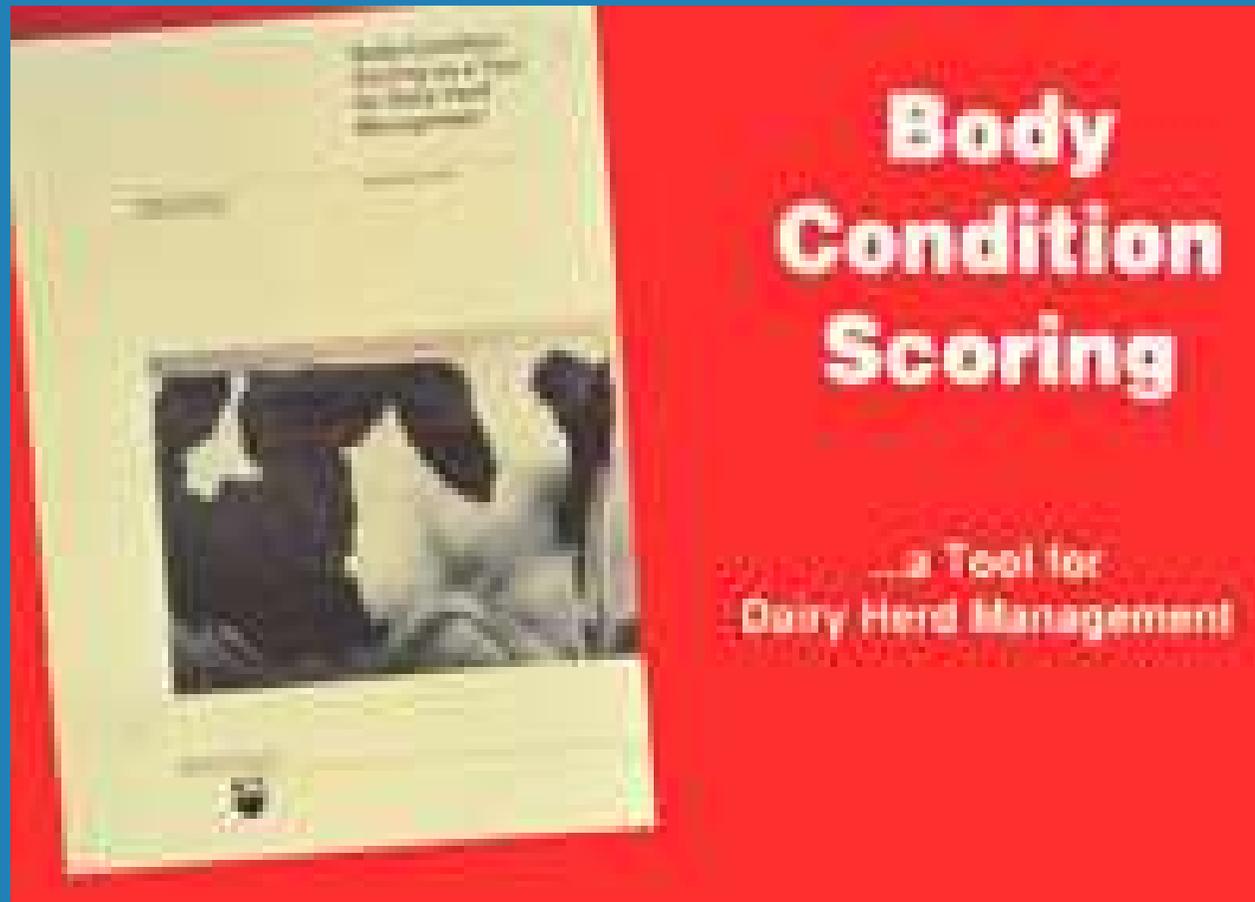
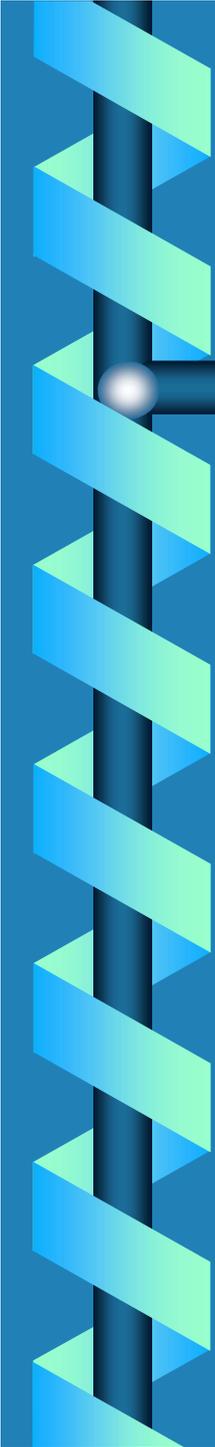


Using body-condition scoring to fine tune herd nutrition and health management has become a widely accepted practice.





Goal: To minimize body condition fluctuation throughout lactation

To minimize the number of problem cows (too fat or too thin)



Condition Scoring

1-5 scale

1 = very thin

5 = excessively fat

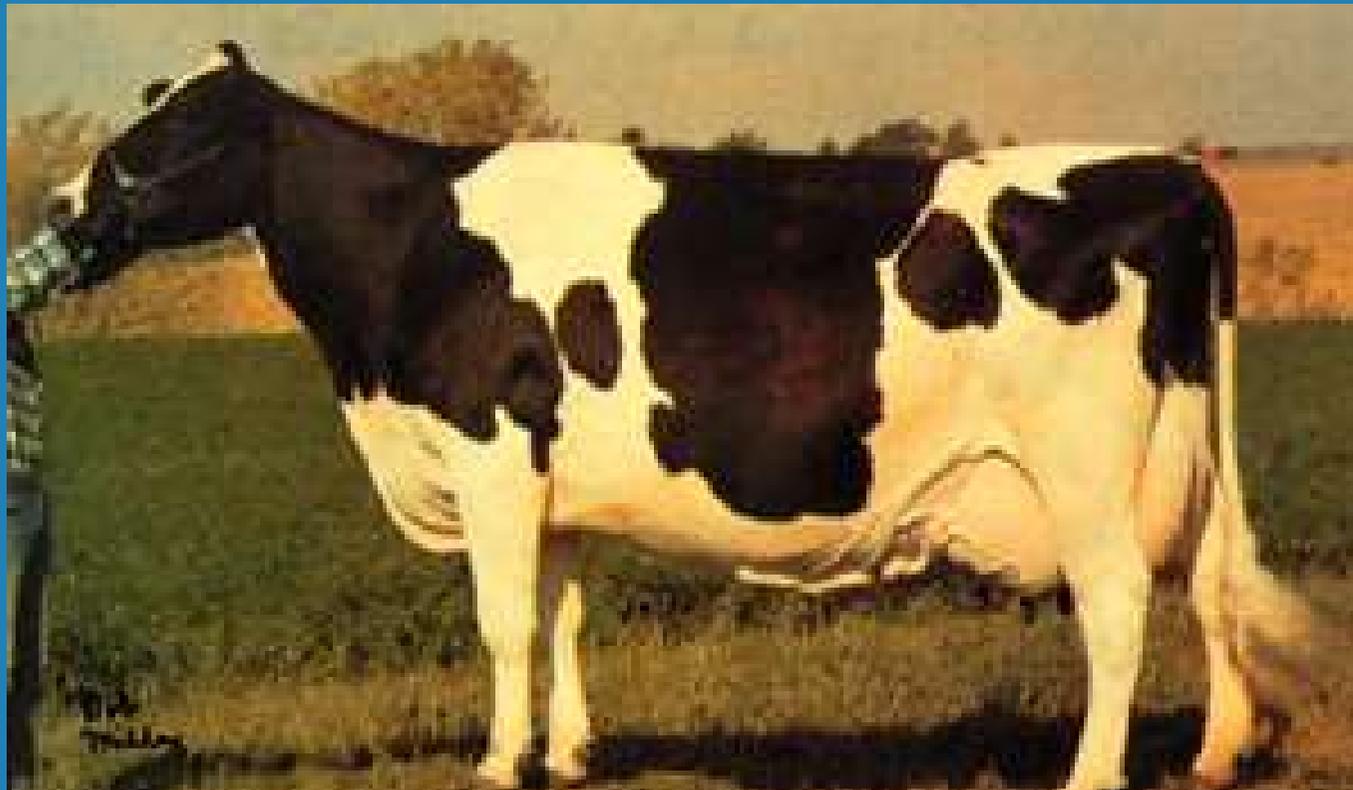


With further use of this system you can add, for example, a 3+ or 2- to refine the scale, however, this is not necessary and may be confusing until you feel confident in scoring animals.

Can add plusses and minuses
+ -

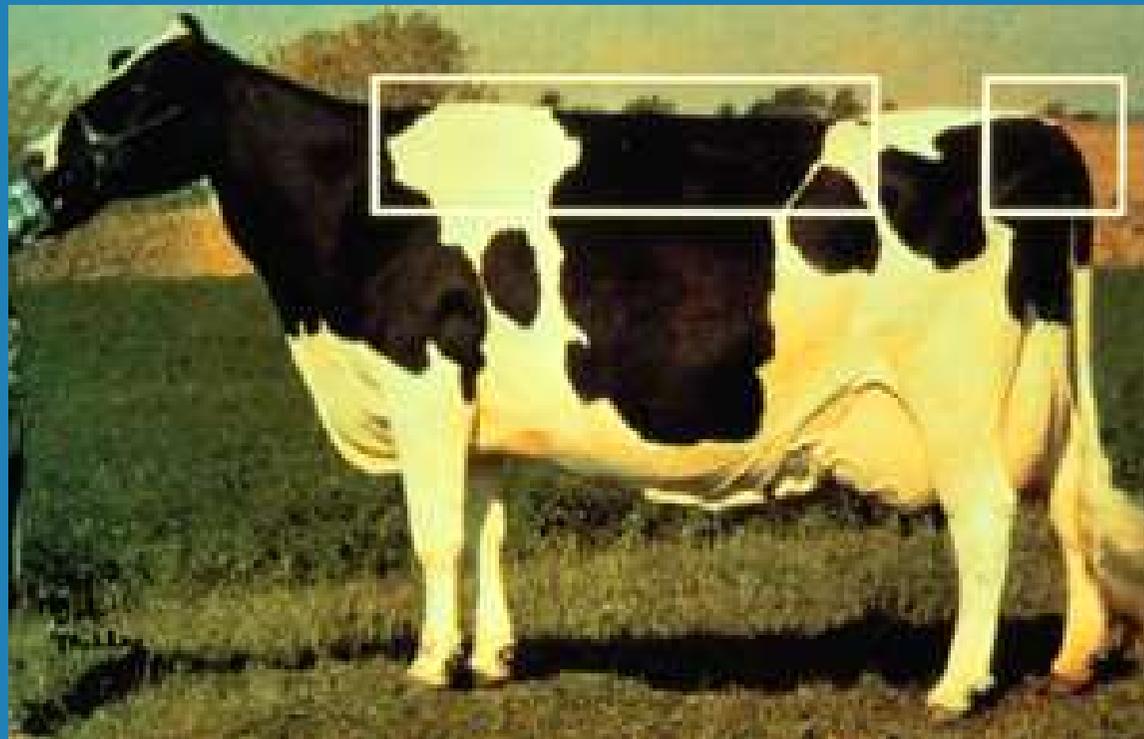


Type scoring, which is used to classify, is different than body-condition scoring and should not be confused with it. Type scoring is used to classify how closely animals meet the criteria of an "excellent animal" based on the "ideal cow." Body-condition scoring, on the other hand, only considers the relative fatness and thinness of an animal.

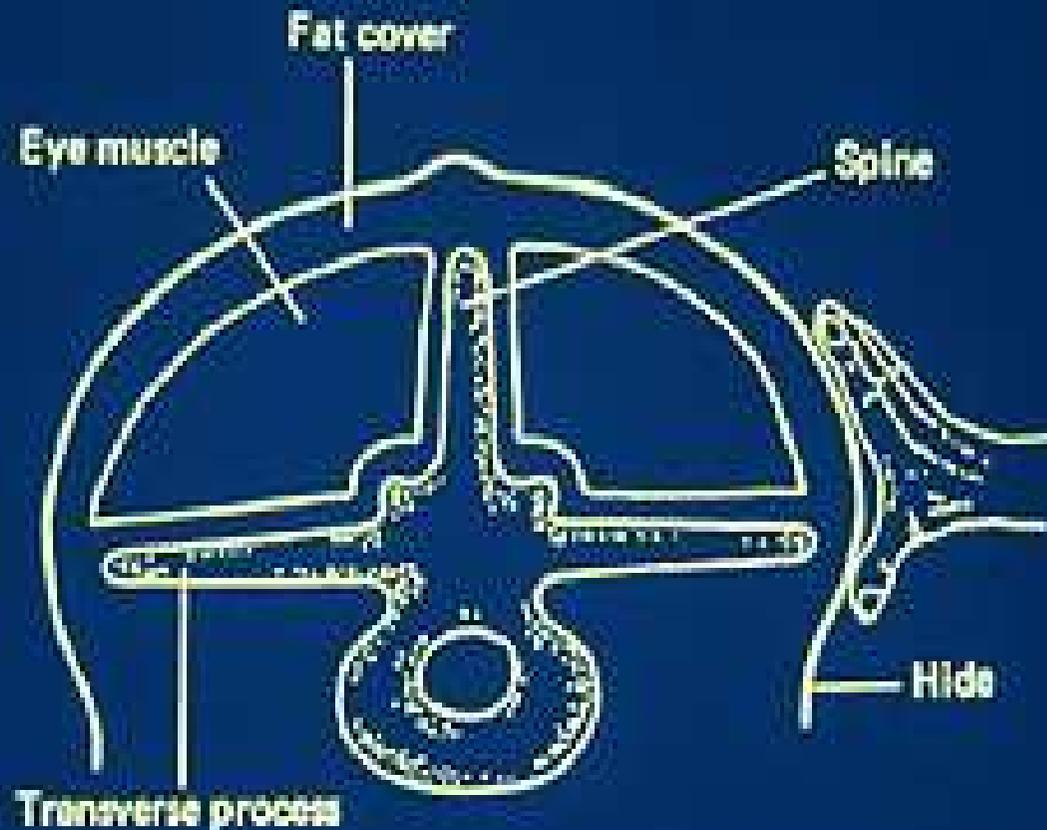


The two most important areas to look at when condition scoring an animal are:

The tailhead area, which covers the pelvis from the pin bones to the top of the tailhead. The loin area, which covers a small section of the back. Evaluating these two locations closely indicates whether an animal is over- or under-conditioned.

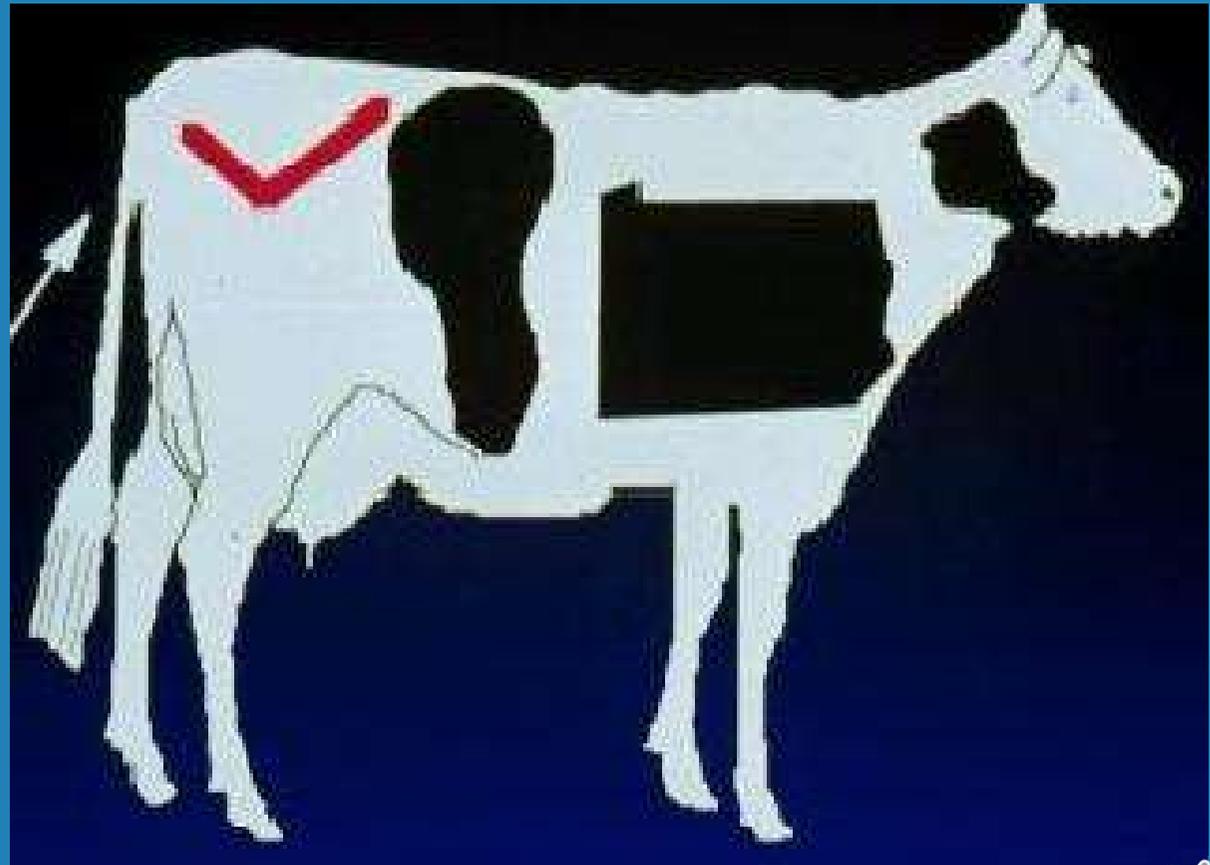


Scoring involves visual and tactile appraisal. If an animal is grossly fat, the pelvis cannot be felt through the fat, and the bone structure cannot be felt at the tailhead or loin area. In thin animals, the bone structures are very prominent.

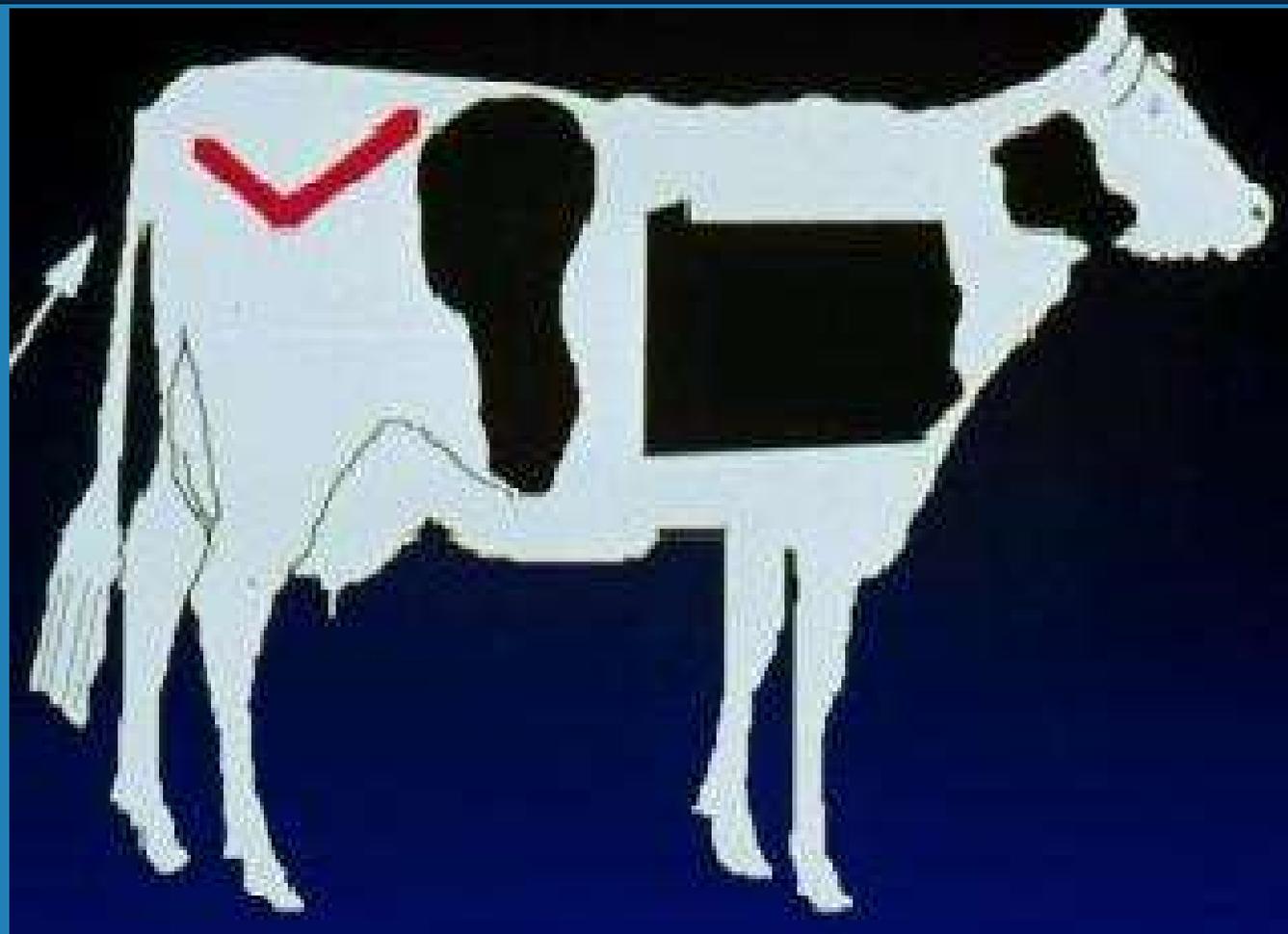


V

Below 3.25



U3.25 and above



Score 1 is used for an animal that is severely underconditioned.

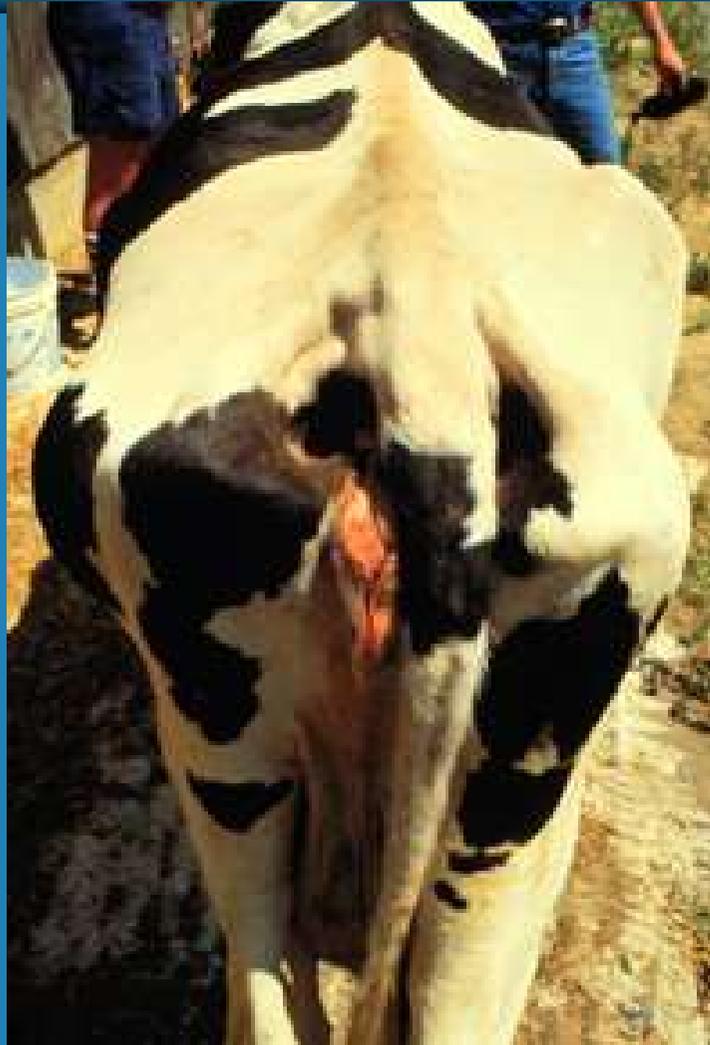
Score 1



Notice the prominent backbone and the deep depression in the loin area. The back legs are also thin. While difficult to see, she is concave-shaped around the hook bones. Also, the short ribs have limited skin cover.

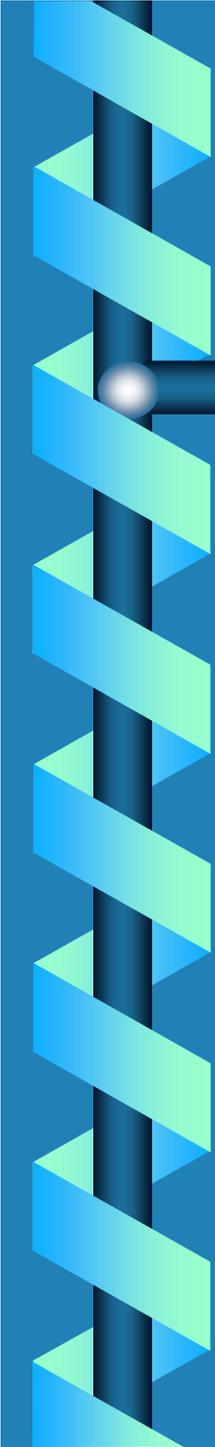


There is a deep cavity present around the tailhead area. There are deep depressions between the hook and pin bones. Her legs are thin and lack good muscle condition. She is very hollow between the pin bones and below the tailhead.



Score 2





Score 2 represents a cow that is in severe negative energy balance. Negative energy balance is common for high-producing cows in early lactation, and it is not unusual for Holsteins to lose 100 to 150 pounds or more during the first 10 to 12 weeks of lactation. Our goal should be to minimize weight loss by encouraging animals to eat sufficient quantities of high quality, highly palatable forage dry matter at 1.8 to 2.0% of body weight daily. They should also eat sufficient grain, the quantity being gradually increased over the first few weeks of lactation, to minimize weight loss.

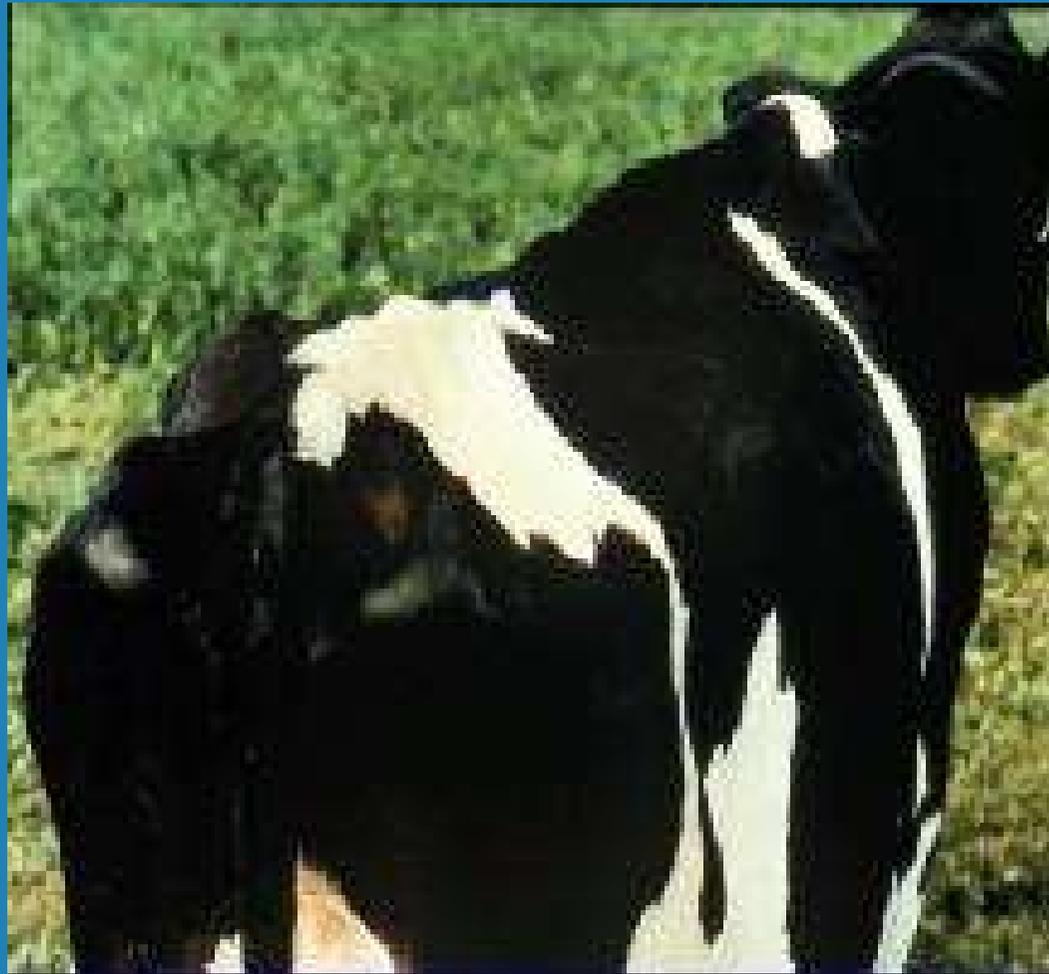


This animal has more flesh covering her hook and pin bones. She also has a mild depression over her loin area. She is thin, but still maintains some of her muscle condition through her leg and rump area.

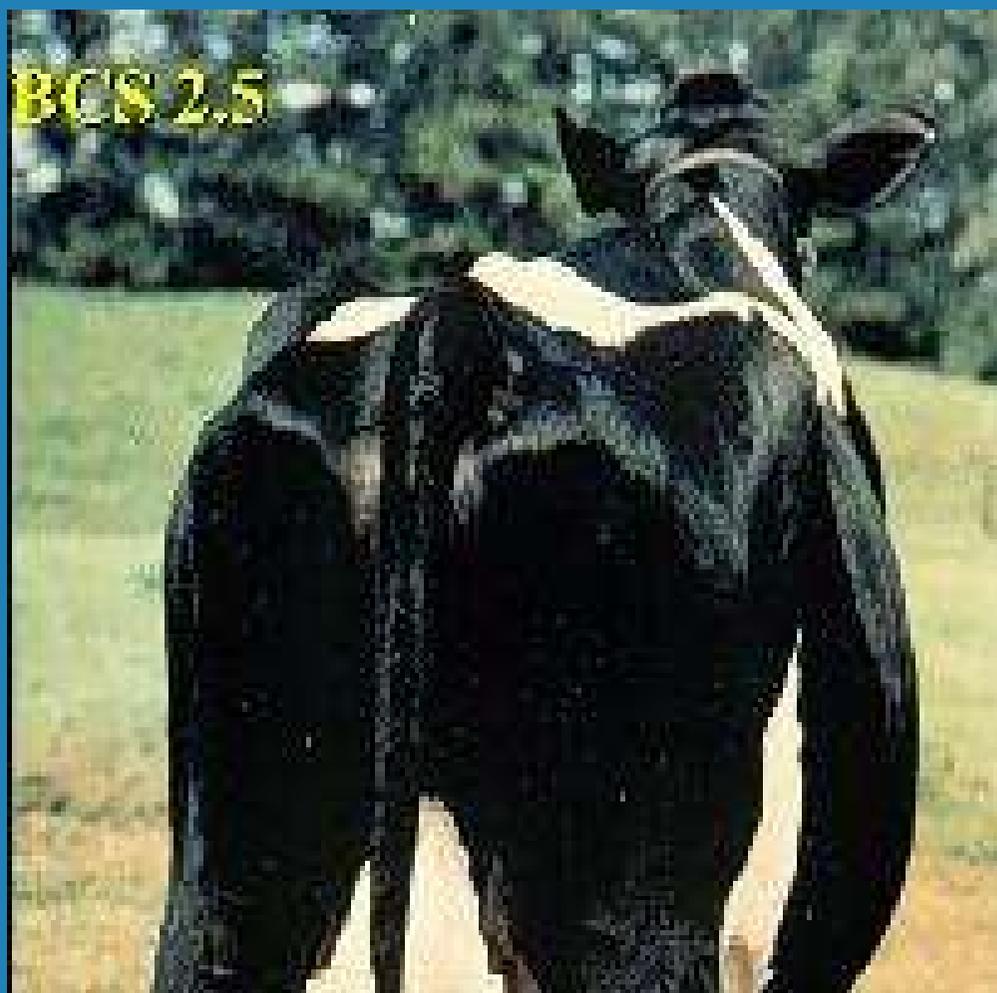


The hook and pin bones are prominent, but the depression between them is less severe. The area below the tailhead and between the pin bones is somewhat hollow, but the bone structure has a modest covering of flesh.





2.5



Score 3 is used for cows in a good condition. This body condition score is a result of proper attention given to ration formulation, monitoring cows for changing condition in bodyweight, and making ration adjustments when necessary.

Score 3



This cow has a better covering of flesh over her backbone and only a slight depression in the loin area. The hook and pin areas are more rounded and smooth. The ribs also have a better covering of flesh.



Here the pins are more rounded without any deep depressions in the tailhead area. She shows no signs of fat deposition around this area. She also lacks a severe depression between the hook and pin bones.



This is a cow that is well conditioned, but leans toward the thin side of the scale. She probably is an animal in early lactation. The short ribs appear smooth and the overhanging shelf effect is not that noticeable. She has more of a depression in the loin area than the previous animal.



Notice that the hook and pin bone area are more rounded and smooth, but she is hollow below the tailhead. Because of this, we would give her a score of 3-.



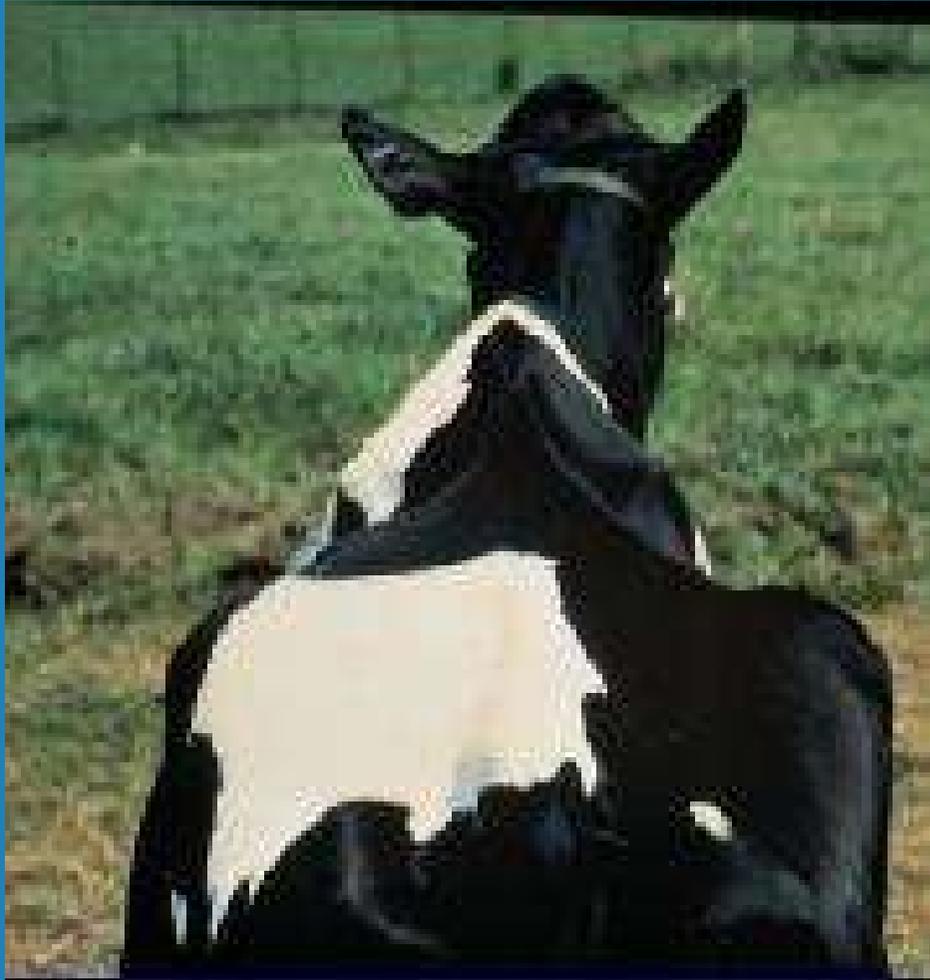
This animal is still considered to be well fleshed, but she shows a tendency to be a little flat over the loin area and more rounded around the hook and pin bone areas than the previous two cows. She would be an example of what a well-fleshed animal should be like during mid to late lactation. We would give her a score of 3+.



**This cow is rounded over the hook and pin bones.
You would not want this animal to be much
heavier, especially for a late lactation or dry cow.**



3

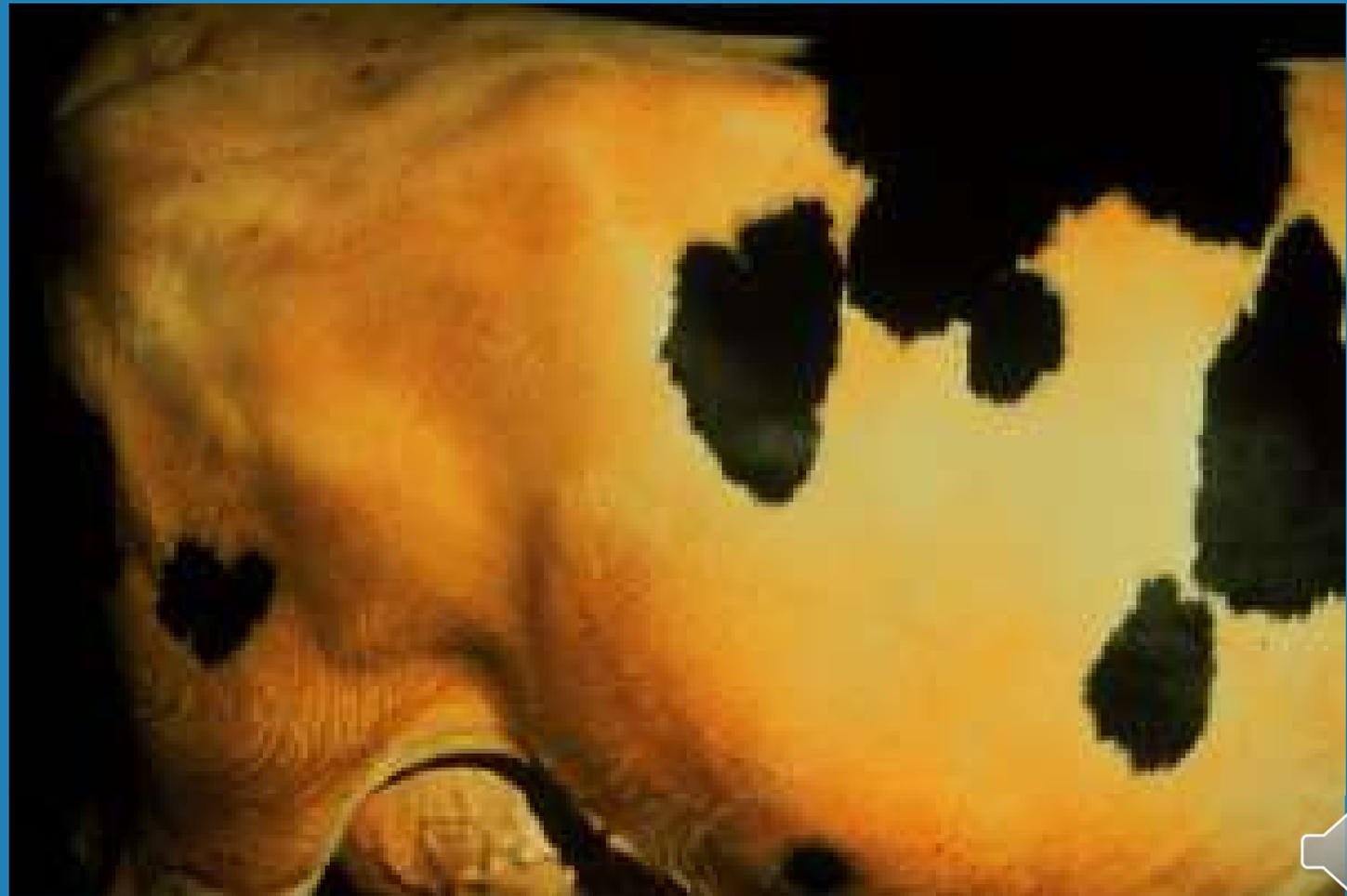


Score 4 is for overconditioned cows.

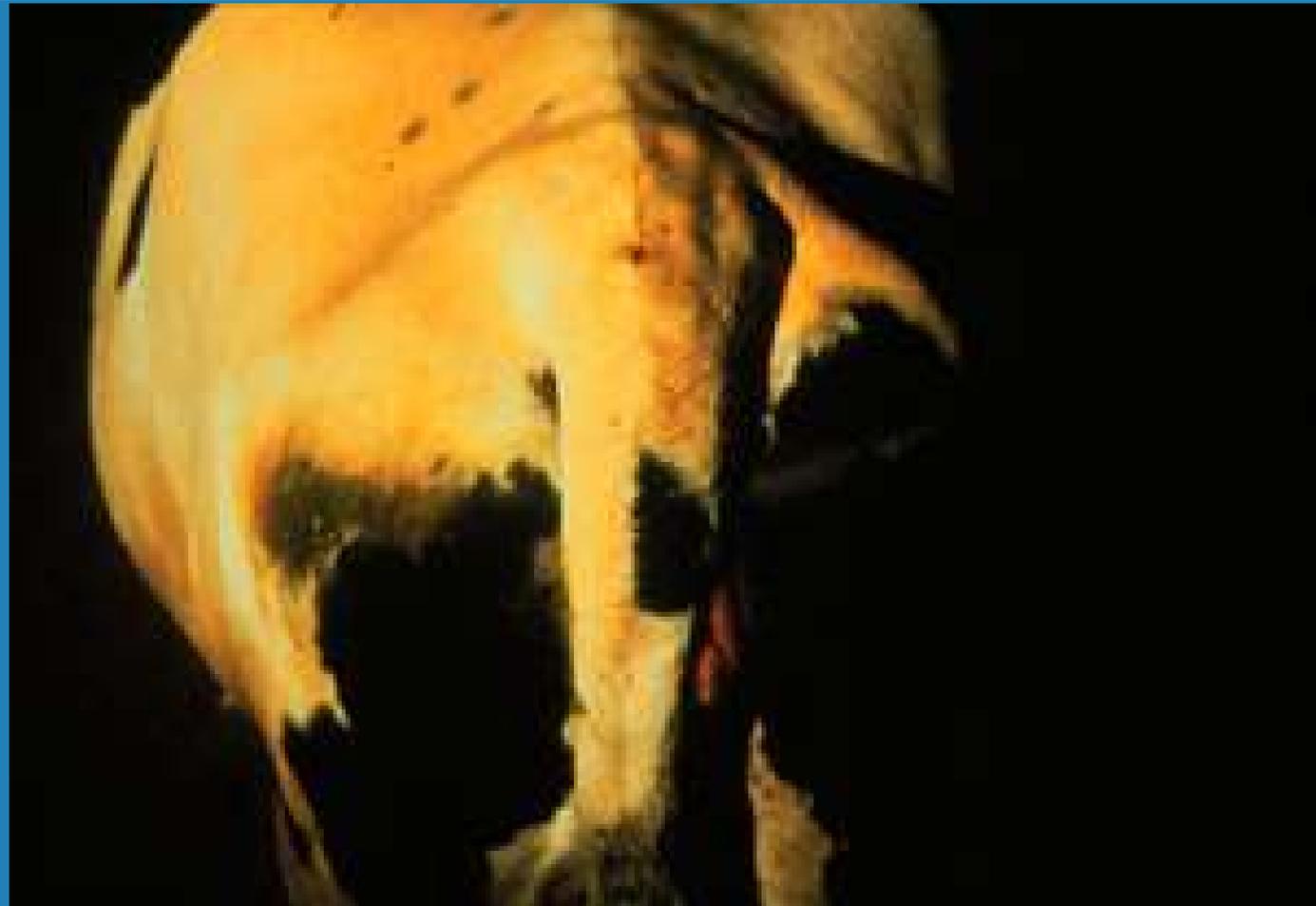
Score 4



The short ribs on this animal appear flat and there is no overhanging shelf effect. The loin area also appears flat. Her backbone is barely prominent.



Here the hook bone area is rounded and the span between the hooks is flat. The rump appears flat. The area around the tailhead and the pin bones is rounded with evidence of fat deposition.



Score 5 is for cows that are severely overconditioned or grossly fat. Score 5 cows are prime candidates for fat cow syndrome.

Score 5



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Score 5



With this cow appearing black against a dark background it is difficult to see how fat she really is. You can notice that the bone structure of the backbone, short ribs, and hook and pin bone region are not apparent.



This slide presents a slightly better view of an overconditioned animal. Her tailhead is buried in fatty tissue. Fat deposits are very evident over her rump and legs. This is a potential problem cow in any herd.

