

# Welfare scoring nutritionally deprived beef cattle, dairy cattle and their crosses, sheep and horses



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# Contents

- 2 Acknowledgments
- 3 Introduction
- 4 Beef Cattle
  - 5 Fat Score 1 – At Risk
  - 6 High Risk 1
- 9 Dairy Cattle
  - 10 Body Score 3 – At Risk
  - 11 Body Score 2 – High Risk 1
  - 12 Body Score 1 – High Risk 2
  - 13 Downer
- 14 Sheep
  - 15 Fat Score 1 – At Risk
  - 16 High Risk
  - 17 Euthanase
- 18 Horses
  - 19 Condition Score 1 – At Risk
  - 20 High Risk
  - 21 Euthanase
- 22 Seeking veterinary advice checklists
  - 23 Welfare Checklist – Cattle (All)
  - 23 Additional factors to consider
  - 24 Welfare Checklist – Sheep and goats
  - 24 Additional factors to consider
- 25 Transport tips...
  - 25 If in doubt, leave it out!
  - 25 Transport tips – Beef and Beef/Dairy cross cattle
  - 26 Dairy Cattle
  - 26 Sheep
- 28 Further Information



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# Introduction

This manual has been produced for the welfare assessment of cattle, sheep and horses.

The Welfare Scores represent a common language that can be used to describe cattle, sheep and horses when assessed for body condition.

Welfare assessments are undertaken by inspectors (RSPCA NSW, AWL NSW and NSW Police) and also by Local Land Services officers under Section 8 and Part 2B of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (POCTA). The language in this booklet should be used in any notes recorded as part of that process.



# Beef Cattle

As beef breeds of cattle experience a reduction in fat cover and are classed as Fat Score 1 animals, they are beginning to mobilise muscle tissue to provide their body with the energy needs lacking from a diet of insufficient energy density, or lack of feed quantity. A Fat Score 1 animal is an At Risk animal and at this point, intervention is required to improve the condition of the animal.

Beef cattle that fall below Fat Score 1 are described in terms that reflect their body condition. The term Welfare Score is used.

There are three Welfare Scores:

- » High Risk 1
- » High Risk 2
- » Downer

The three scores reflect the muscle depletion as the beef cattle mobilise muscle tissue to provide themselves with energy to live.

The Welfare Scores apply to all beef cattle breeds within the British and European breeds, Bos indicus breed groups and their crosses.

## Fat Score 1 – At Risk

- » Backbone is easily seen but individual spines not prominent
- » Short ribs are fairly sharp to the touch (identifiable)
- » Tail head is prominent with no fat around it
- » Area inside of pins is slightly sunken
- » Hip bones and long ribs are obvious (prominent)
- » Area between tail and pin bones is concave (sunken)
- » Rump muscle is slightly concave and leg muscle beginning to waste
- » Tail bones not identifiable

- » Skin is pliable
- » Dewlap has no fat.

### Behaviour

- » Bright appearance/alert
- » Mobile gait.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

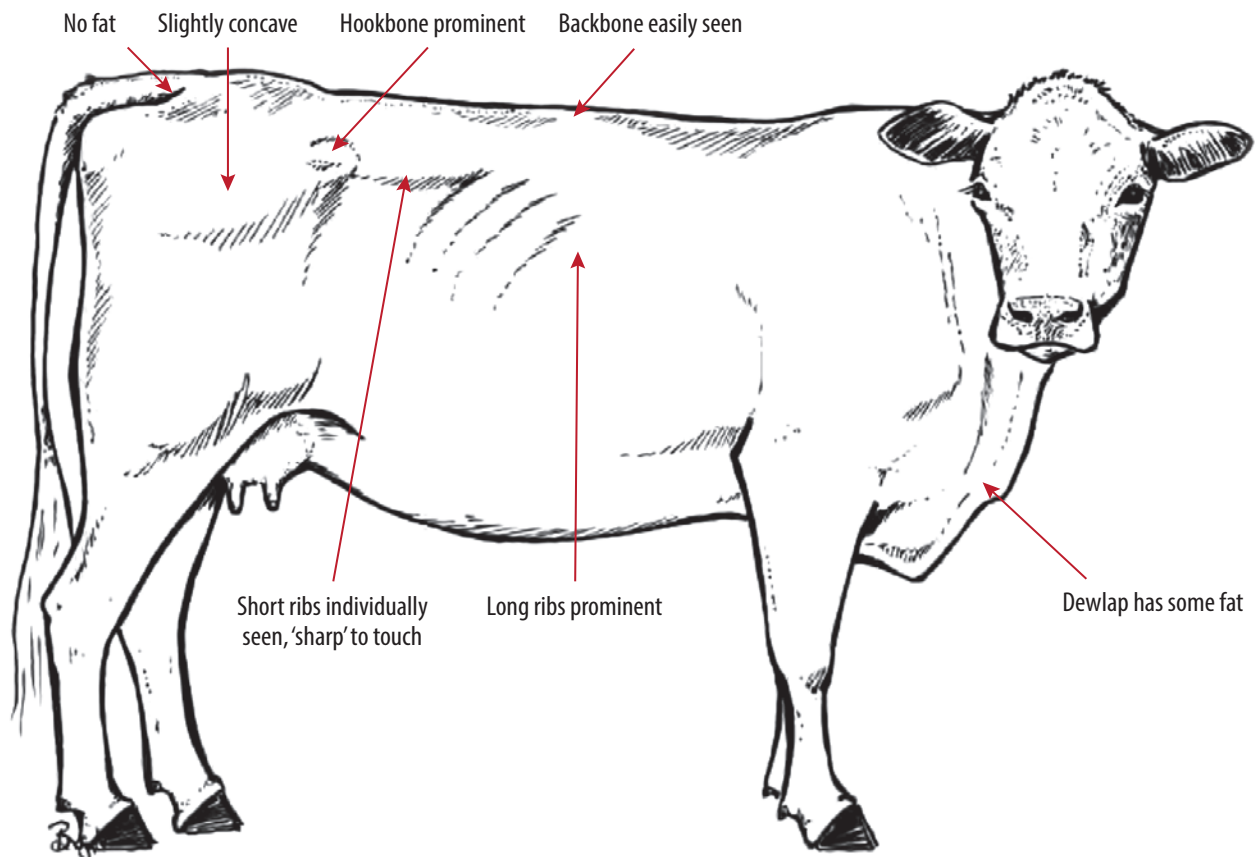
ABLE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO ABATTOIR, SALEYARD OR AGISTMENT WITH MINIMUM TIME OFF FEED



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes



Photo Ian Blackwood, former Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Paterson



## High Risk 1

- » Muscle depletion is now evident at the back and loin, and the hind leg muscles
- » The rump muscle is concave
- » Spines of the backbone are identifiable
- » Short ribs all prominent and very sharp to touch
- » Tail bones just identifiable
- » Long ribs, pin bones and tailhead prominent
- » Rump muscle concave, muscle wastage in loin and leg muscle evident
- » The inside of the pins are sunken
- » Stifle joint not identifiable
- » Udder is beginning to shrink

- » Slacker skin over hump (Bos indicus)
- » Skin is less pliable.

### Behaviour

- » Mobile but less energetic
- » Grooming behaviour ceases
- » Able to lie down/rise with ease
- » Dung pats normal and cud chewing observable.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

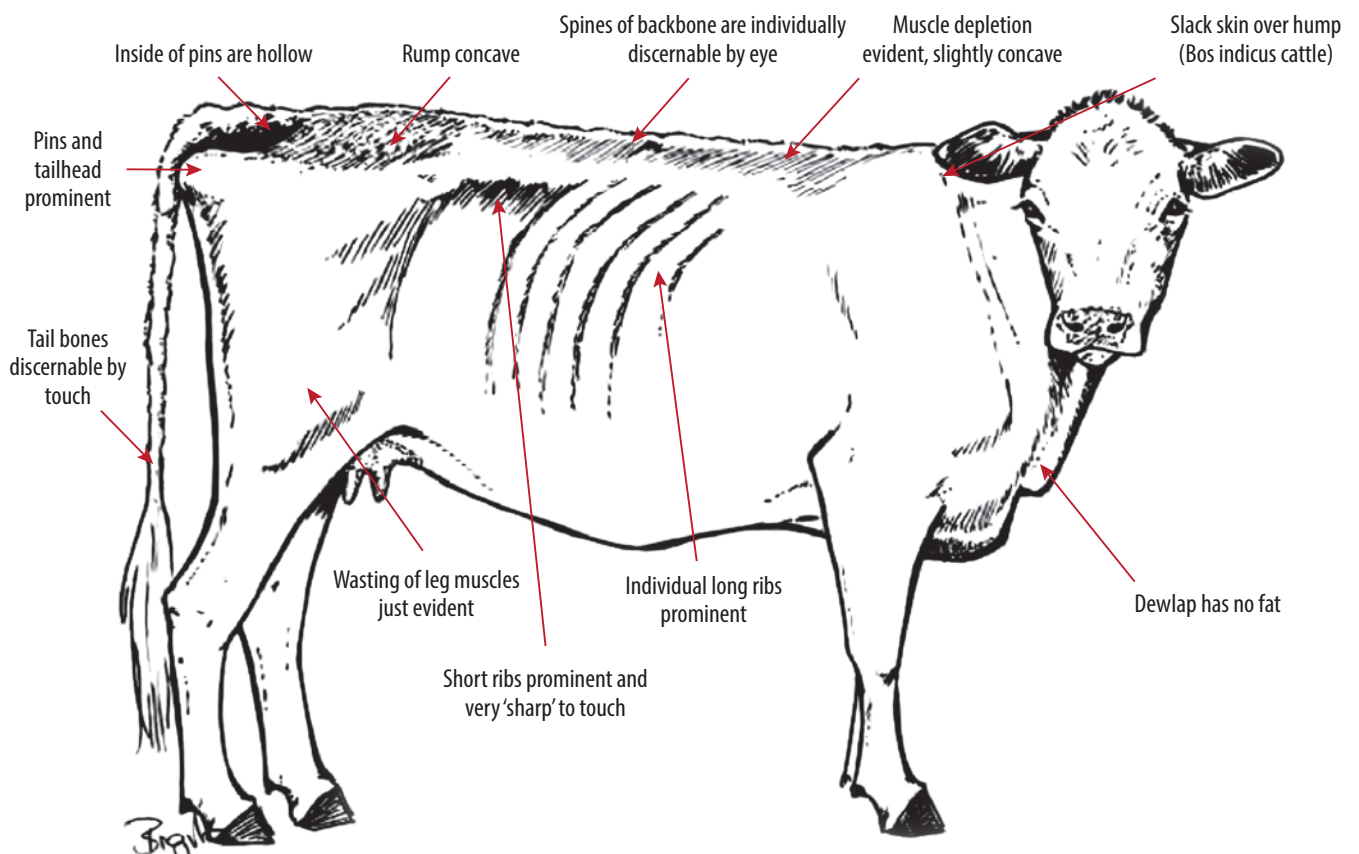
TRANSPORT TO ABATTOIR AND AGISTMENT ONLY.  
UNSUITABLE FOR SALE THROUGH SALEYARDS  
OR TRANSPORT OVER LONG DISTANCES



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes





## High Risk 2

- » The animal is emaciated
- » The spines of the backbone are individually identifiable – pointed to the touch
- » The hips, pins, tailhead, long ribs and short ribs are individually identifiable
- » Tail bones can be easily felt
- » Inside of pins is deeply sunken to the bone
- » Wasting in the leg muscles has occurred to the extent that stifle joint is identifiable
- » Deeply concaved rump muscle between hooks and pins
- » Skin is tight
- » Udder is now shrunk and tucked up to the body
- » Dewlap is a skinfold and the sternum identifiable
- » Loose skin over the hump of *Bos indicus* and *Bos indicus* cross cattle
- » Any dung will show evidence of poor rumen function e.g. undigested feed, mucous membrane, dirt, watery.

### Behaviour

- » Dull appearance/no grooming behaviour
- » Locomotion slow and unsteady gait, tend to drag hind feet
- » Animal may “plait” hind legs as they walk
- » Cud chewing reduced
- » Lie down/stand up is difficult.

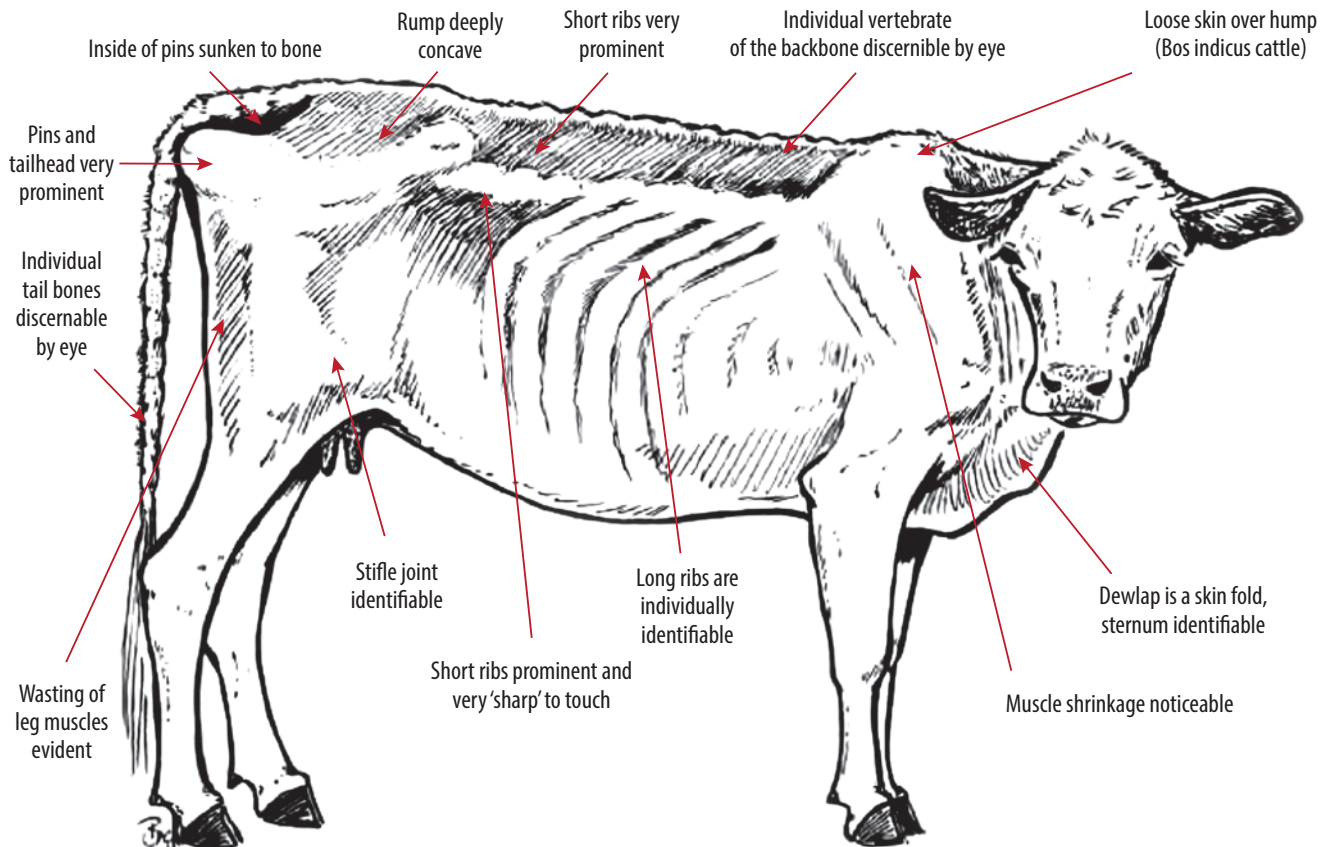
**TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:**  
**NOT FIT TO TRAVEL, DO NOT TRANSPORT.**



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes



## Downer

The animal meets all the descriptors for Welfare Score High Risk 2 with the following observations easily seen:

- » Immobile with zero flight distance despite attempted flight behaviour
- » No response to any external stimuli
- » Locomotion is difficult/ unsteady gait, or not possible, 'plaiting' motion of hind legs, difficulty maintaining balance
- » If lying down the animal is unlikely to stand without assistance because muscle strength is depleted

- » 'Paddle' marks from feet
- » movement/body or head movement where animal is sitting/lying
- » Eyes are 'tearing', sunken and glazed
- » Brown liquid faeces indicates no/limited rumen function.

### RECOMMENDATION:

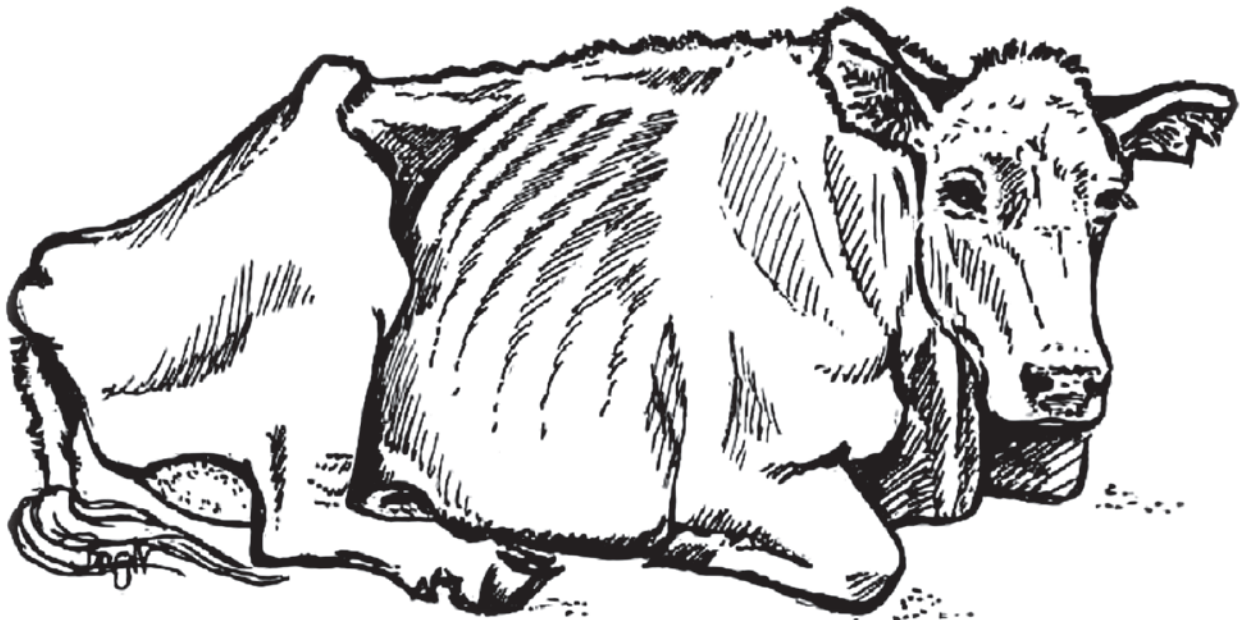
SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE FOR EUTHANASIA DECISION



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes



Photo Jeffrey House, Livestock Officer, NSW DPI Forbes





# Dairy Cattle

Within Australia dairy cattle are body condition scored on a numerical system from 1 (lowest) to 8 (highest). Condition Score 3 is identified as being an At Risk animal and intervention is needed at this point in order to improve the body condition of the animal. For those animals that fall further in condition, the Dairy Welfare Scores correspond with the two lowest scores in the Body Condition system, as well as the Downer animal, where euthanasia is the only action upon veterinary approval. These Welfare Scores are:

- » High Risk 1 (condition score 2)
- » High Risk 2 (condition score 1)
- » Downer

This is a visual assessment based on the amount of fat covering the bones of a dairy animal, regardless of body size. The two major dairy breeds in Australia are Holstein Friesian and Jersey and are vastly different in body size and weight. A Holstein Friesian cow in mid lactation weighs around 600 kgs , whilst a Jersey cow in mid lactation weighs around 400 kgs. For a dairy cow to improve condition by one score, it requires the following weight gain:

**Holstein Friesian** 42 kg equals/one Body Condition Score.

**Jersey** 26 kg equals/one Body Condition Score.

**Holstein Friesian/Jersey cross** 34 kg equals/one Body Condition Score.

Dairy cattle are defined as the recognised dairy breeds of cattle, and their crosses, being managed for the production of milk for human consumption.

Dairy breeds, being managed for the production of meat, are not considered dairy cattle.

## Body Score 3 – At Risk

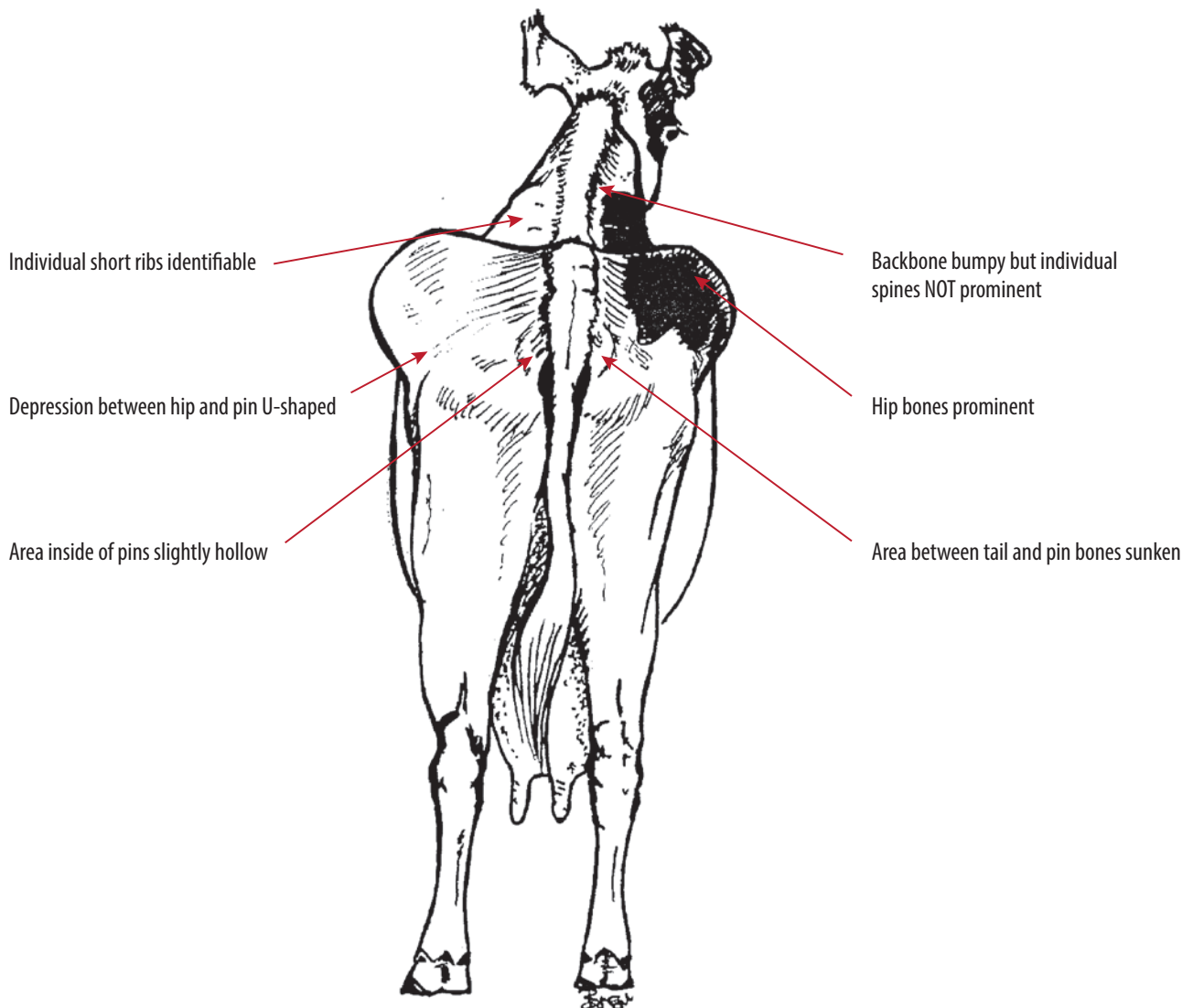
- » Backbone is easily seen but individual spines not prominent
- » Short ribs are identifiable and fairly sharp to the touch
- » Tailhead is prominent with no fat around it
- » Area inside of pins is slightly hollow
- » Hip bones and long ribs are obvious and prominent
- » Area between tail and pin bones is concave and sunken
- » Rump muscle is slightly concave and leg muscle beginning to waste
- » Tail bones not identifiable
- » Skin is pliable
- » Dewlap has no fat.

## Behaviour

- » Bright appearance/alert
- » Mobile gait.

## TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

ABLE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO ABATTOIR, SALEYARD, AGISTMENT OR 'FARM TRANSFER'



## Body Score 2 – High Risk 1

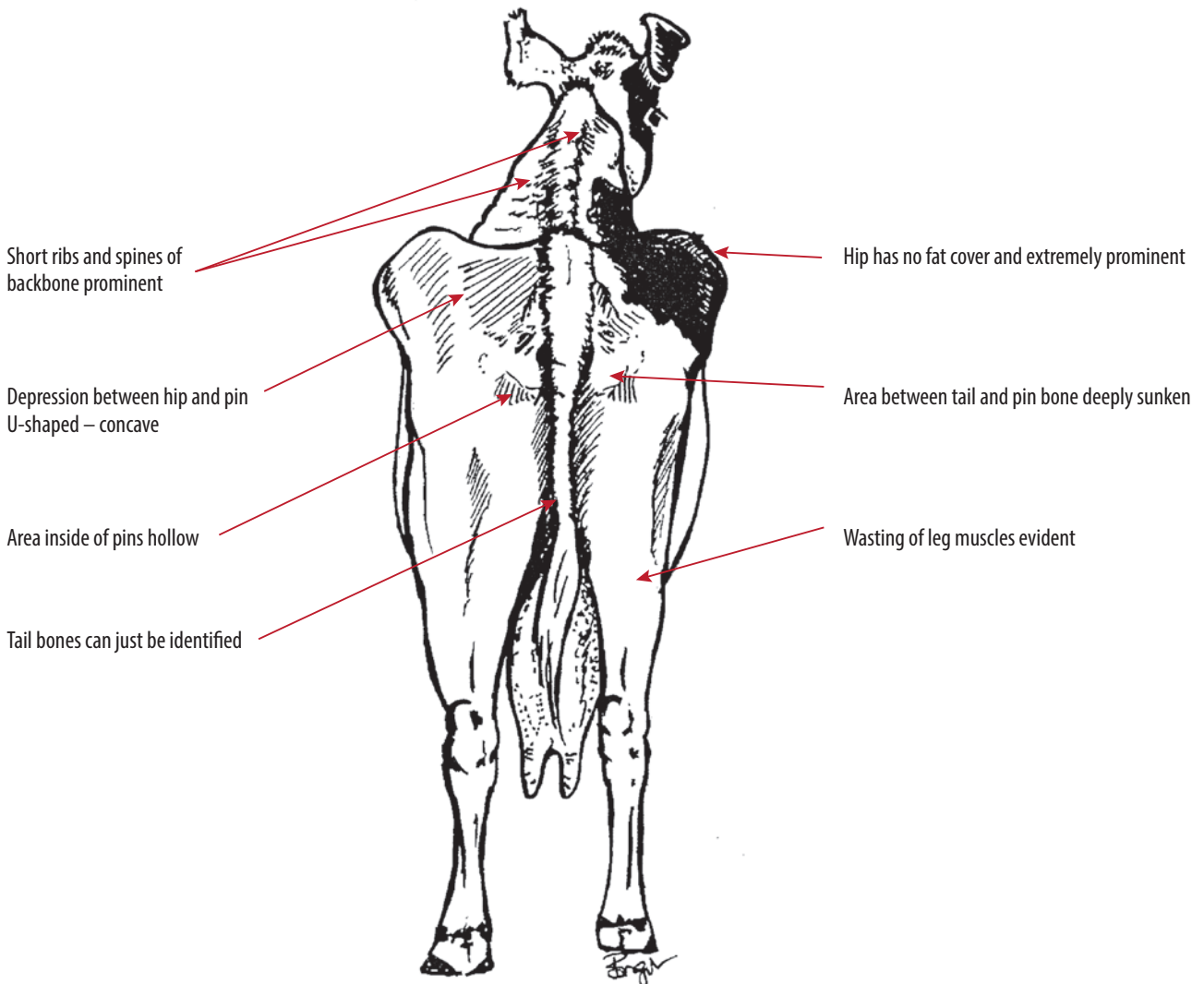
- » Muscle depletion is evident at the back and loin, and the hind leg muscles
- » The rump muscle is concave
- » Spines of the backbone are identifiable
- » Short ribs all prominent and very sharp to touch
- » Tail bones just identifiable
- » Long ribs, pin bones and tailhead prominent
- » The inside of the pins are hollow
- » Udder is beginning to shrink
- » Skin is less pliable.

### Behaviour

- » Mobile but less energetic
- » Grooming behaviour infrequent
- » Able to lie down/rise with ease
- » Dung pats normal and cud chewing observable.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

ABLE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO ABATTOIR OR FOR 'FARM TRANSFER'



## Body Score 1 – High Risk 2

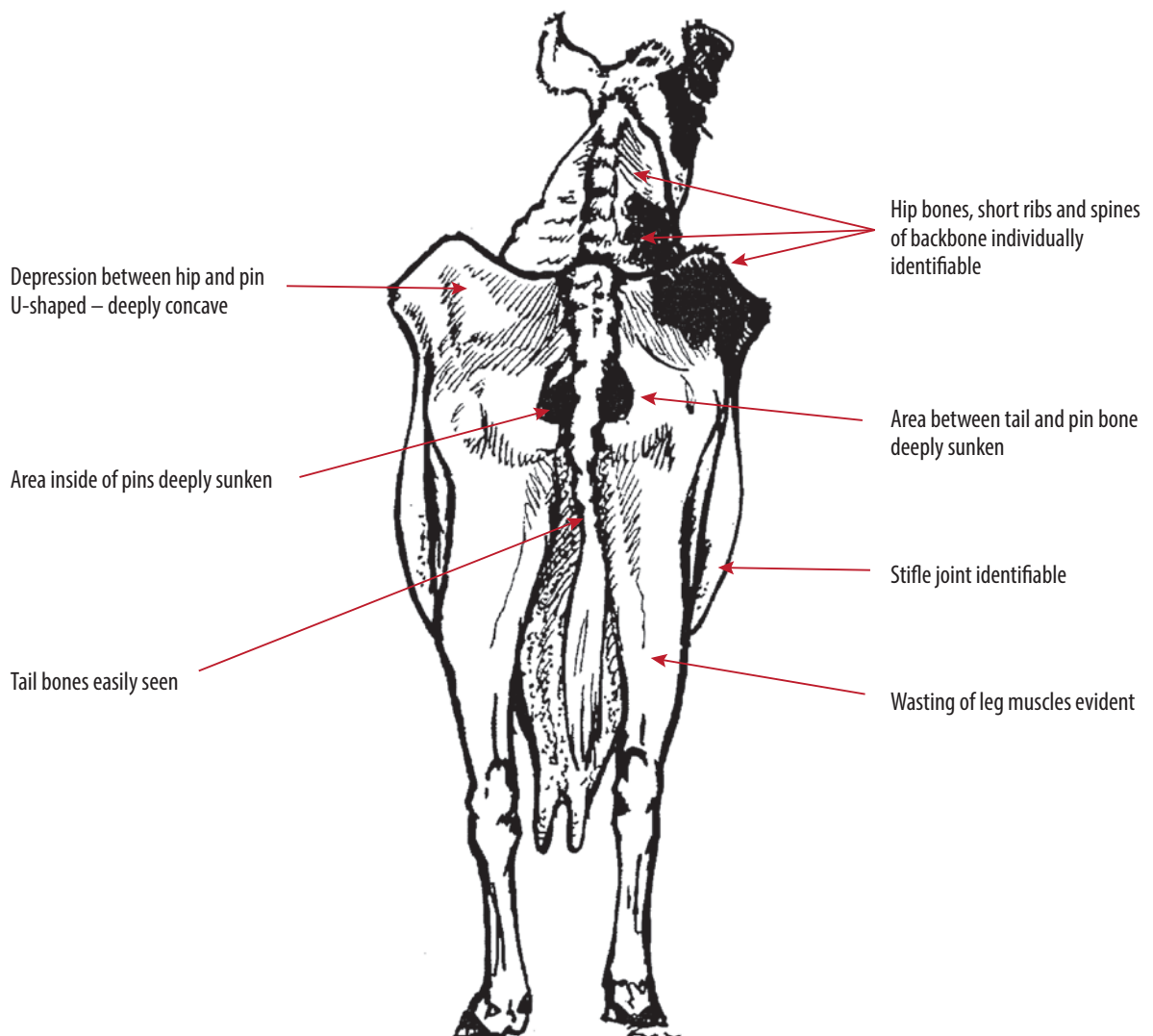
- » The animal is emaciated
- » The spines of the backbone are individually identifiable – pointed to the touch (skin cover only)
- » The hips, pins, tailhead, long ribs and short ribs are individually identifiable (skin cover only)
- » Tail bones can be easily seen
- » Inside of pins is sunken to the bone (extremely hollow)
- » Wasting in the leg muscles has occurred to the extent that stifle joint is identifiable
- » Deeply concaved rump muscle between 'hooks' (hip) and pins
- » Skin is tight over the skeleton
- » Udder has shrunk
- » Dewlap is a skinfold and the sternum identifiable
- » Any dung will show evidence of poor rumen function e.g. undigested feed, mucous membrane, dirt, watery.

### Behaviour

- » Dull appearance locomotion slow and unsteady gait, tend to drag hind feet
- » Animal may 'plait' hind legs as they walk
- » Cud chewing reduced
- » Lie down/stand up is difficult
- » No grooming behaviour noticeable.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

NOT FIT FOR TRAVEL DO NOT TRANSPORT

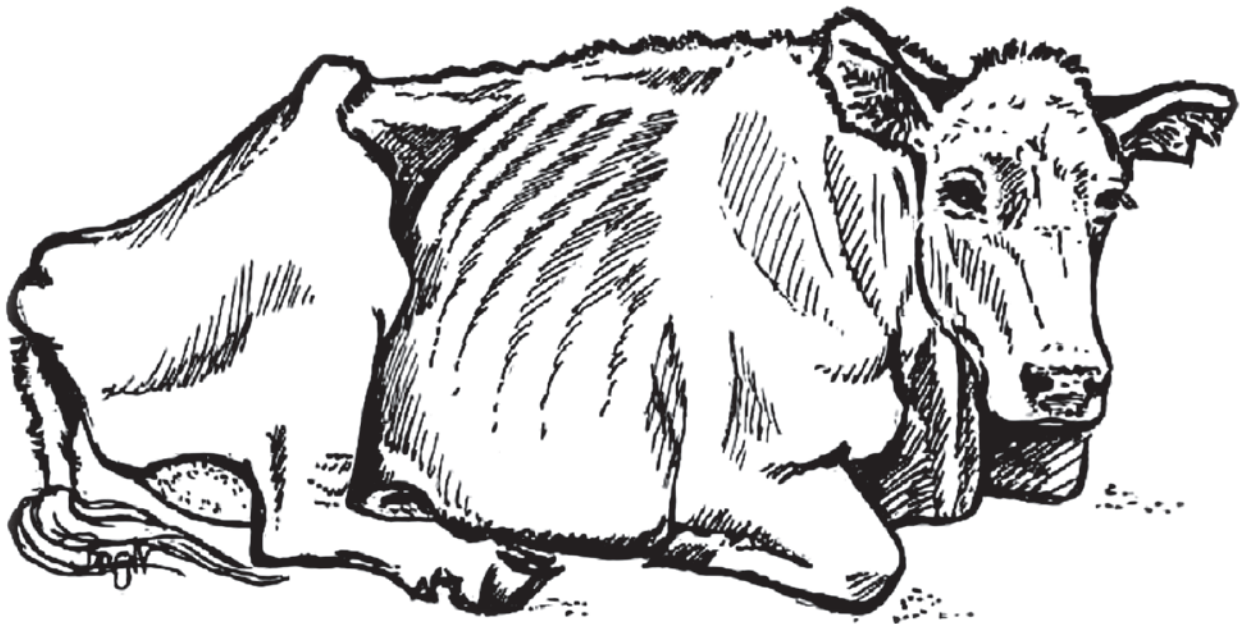


## Downer

- » Immobile with zero flight distance despite attempted flight behaviour
- » No response to any external stimuli
- » Locomotion is difficult/unsteady gait, or not possible, 'plaiting' motion of hind legs, difficulty maintaining balance
- » If lying down, the animal is unlikely to stand without assistance because muscle strength is depleted
- » 'Paddle' marks from feet movement/body or head movement where animal is sitting/ lying
- » Eyes are 'tearing', sunken and glazed
- » Brown liquid faeces indicates no/limited rumen function or 'hard' low moisture content faeces indicating dehydration and intake of high cellulose roughage (low digestibility).

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE FOR EUTHANASE DECISION





# Sheep

As sheep experience a reduction in fat cover, and fall into the Fat Score 1 category, they are beginning to mobilise muscle tissue to provide their body with energy needs that are lacking from a diet of insufficient energy density, or lack of feed quantity.

Sheep that fall below Fat Score 1 are described in terms that reflect their body condition. The term Welfare Score is used.

Most aspects of appearance in sheep are best examined by touch due to wool obstructing an accurate view. For this reason, assessment is made by manual palpation of the animal as opposed to visual assessment. Some characteristics will be visible depending on wool length, however manual palpation should always be used to assess animals correctly. A Fat Score 1 animal is identified as an At Risk animal and intervention is required immediately to ensure that the animal improves in condition. However for animals that have continued to drop condition, there are two Welfare Scores for sheep that are used to further classify them into the appropriate category for management.

- » High Risk
- » Euthanase

The three scores reflect the muscle depletion that occurs as the muscle tissue is mobilised for the provision of energy to live.

The Welfare Scores apply to all sheep breeds and their crosses.



## Fat Score 1 – At Risk

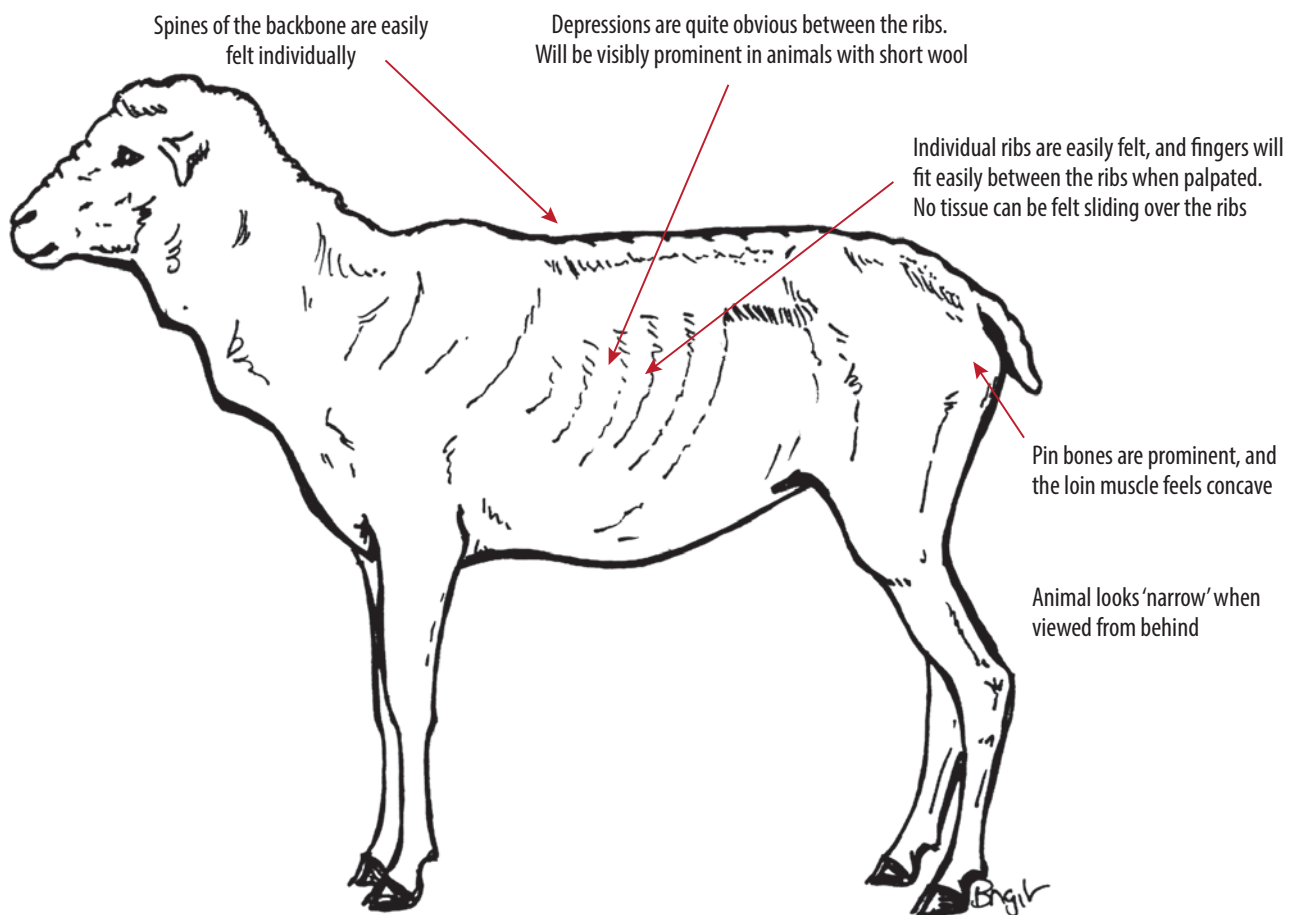
- » Individual ribs are easily felt, and fingers will fit easily between the ribs when palpated. No tissue can be felt sliding over the ribs
- » Depressions are quite obvious between the ribs. Will be visibly prominent in animals with short wool
- » Pin bones are prominent, and the loin muscle feels concave
- » Spines of the backbone are easily felt individually
- » Individual tail bones not identifiable
- » Animal looks 'narrow' when viewed from behind.

### Behaviour

- » Animal appears alert and mobile, will be attempting to eat grass, head to the ground
- » Able to lie down and rise easily, normal gait
- » Healthy appetite
- » High lamb mortality if lambing or in early lactation.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

ABLE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO SALEYARD, ABATTOIR OR AGISTMENT ONLY WITH MINIMUM TIME OFF FEED



## High Risk

- » Animal emaciated. Inside of pins are sunken to the bone, concave rump muscle when viewed from behind. 'Tent' shaped from behind.
- » Skin is very loose over the ribs and backbones. Wool may be dull and rough visually and to the touch. Wool likely to be tender.
- » The actual spines of the backbone are easily identified, as are the hips, pins, tailhead and bones, long ribs and short ribs – pointed to the touch, no soft tissue between skin and bone. Point of shoulder will be prominent.
- » Loin muscle and leg muscle extremely depleted
- » Sunken or humped back, head lowered
- » Any dung will show evidence of poor rumen function – rumen contractions are infrequent.

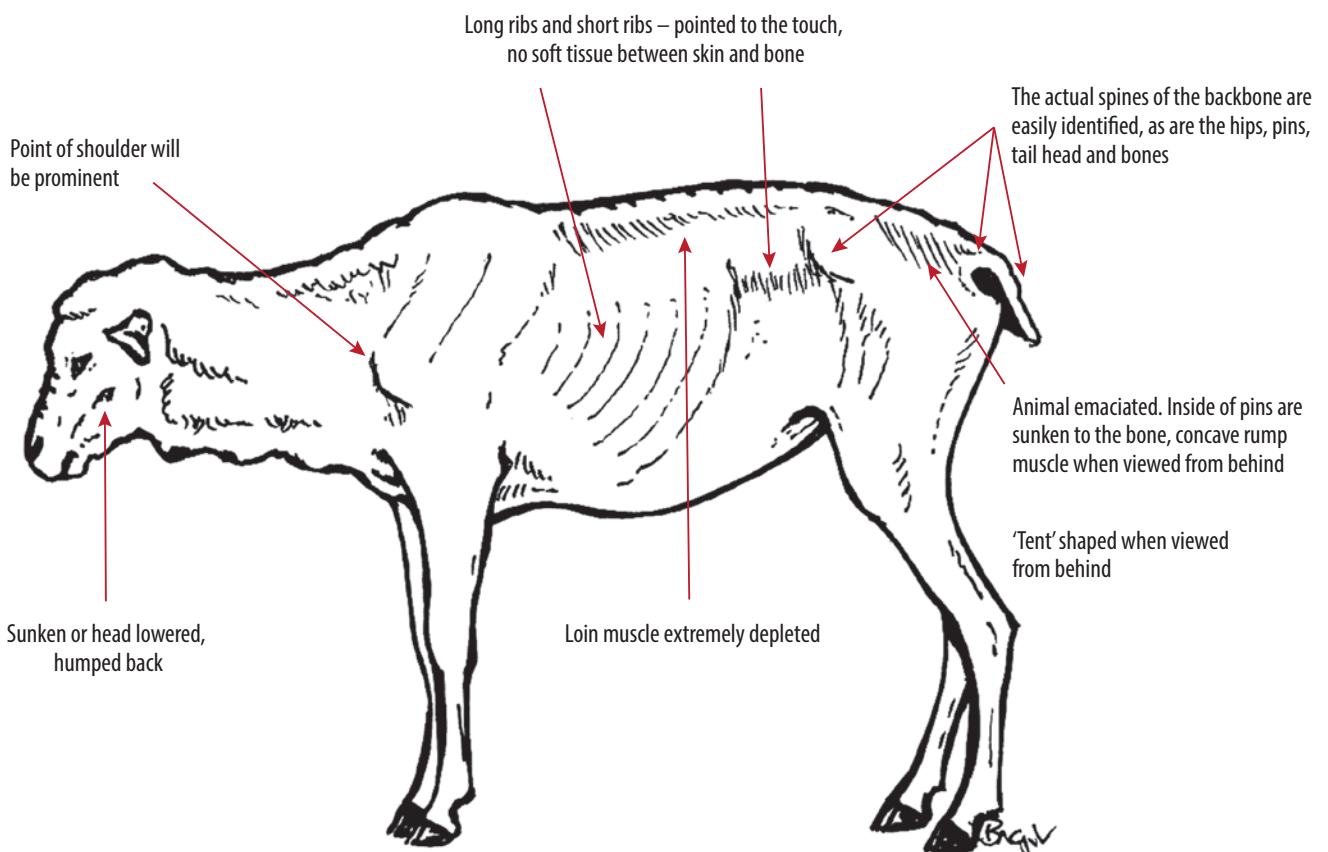
## Behaviour

- » Dull, listless appearance
- » May lag behind if the mob is driven
- » Slow and unsteady gait, animal tends to drag hind feet, animal may sway when standing
- » Great effort is required to lie down/stand up.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

ABLE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO ABATTOIR OR AGISTMENT.

UNSUITABLE FOR SALE THROUGH SALEYARDS OR TRANSPORT OVER LONG DISTANCES

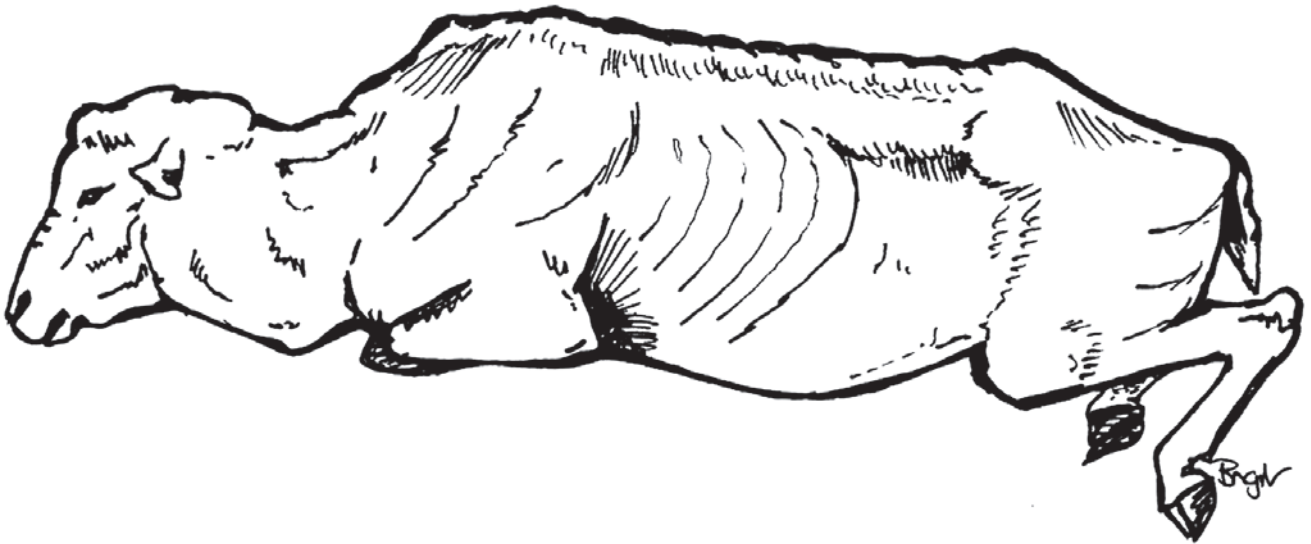


## Euthanase

- » Will possess physical characteristics of High Risk animals in addition to:
- » Severe muscle depletion and nil or almost nil fat cover
- » Immobility
- » Little response to any external stimuli
- » No ability to walk
- » Lying down, unlikely to stand
- » 'Paddle' marks from feet movement/body or head movement where animal is sitting/ lying
- » Eyes are sunken and glazed – face muscles are depleted
- » Faeces abnormal, indicating no/limited rumen function or 'hard' low moisture content faeces indicating dehydration and intake of high cellulose roughage (low digestibility).

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE FOR EUTHANASE DECISION





# Horses

As horses experience a reduction in fat cover and are classed as Condition Score 1 animals, they are beginning to mobilise muscle tissue to provide their body with the energy needs lacking from a diet of insufficient energy density, or lack of feed quantity. A Condition Score 1 animal is an At Risk animal and at this point, intervention is required to improve the condition of the animal.

Horses that fall below Condition Score 1 are described in terms that reflect their body condition. The term Welfare Score is used.

There are two Welfare Scores for horses:

- » High Risk
- » Euthanase

The two scores reflect the muscle depletion as the horses mobilise muscle tissue to provide themselves with energy to live.

The Welfare Scores apply to all horses and ponies.

## Condition Score 1 – At Risk

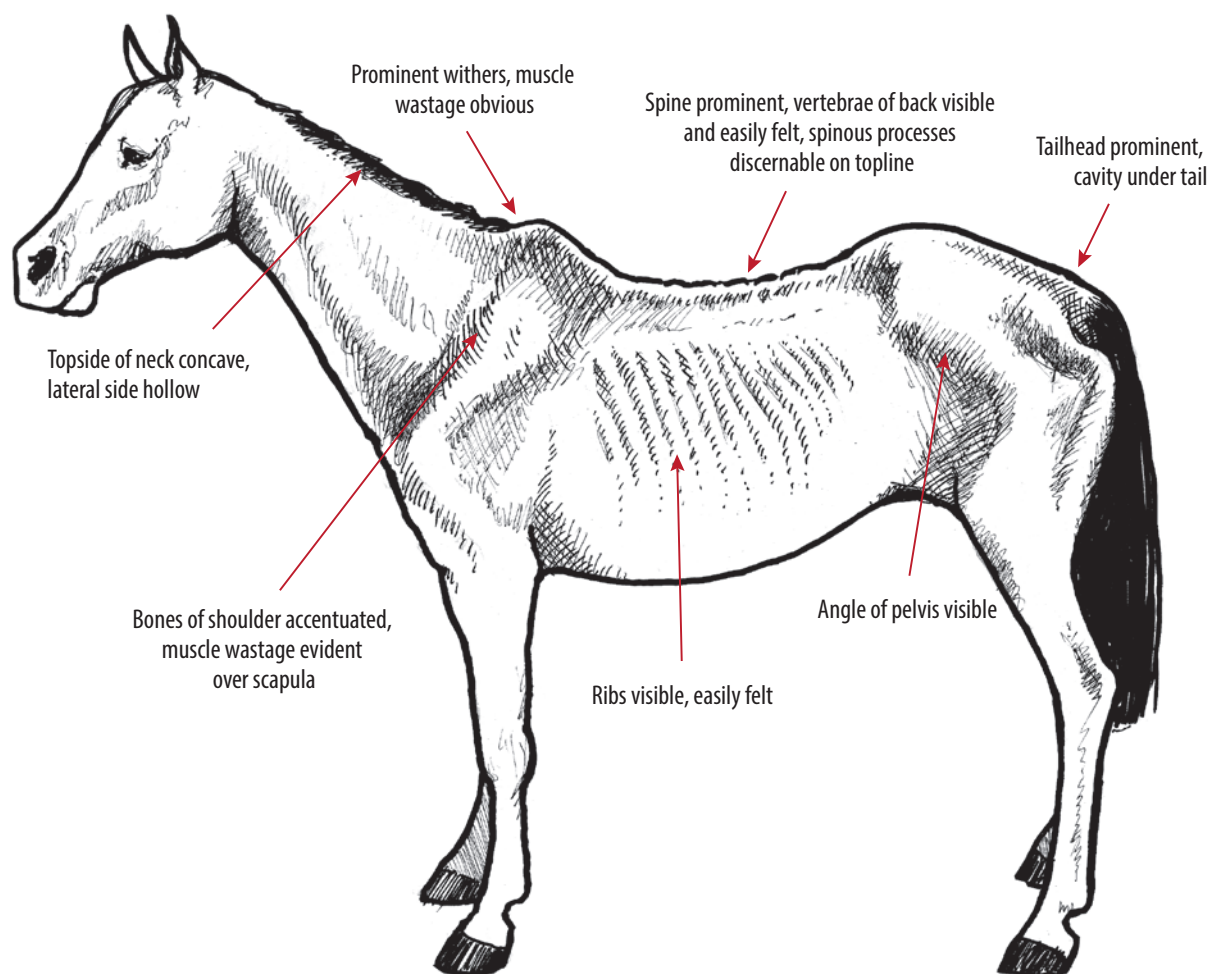
- » Animal appears narrow when viewed from behind. Some muscle wastage but able to walk around and forage.
- » Top side of neck appears concave, lateral side appears hollow, vertebrae felt slightly on palpation
- » Withers appear prominent, muscle wastage obvious on either side
- » Bones of shoulder accentuated, muscle wastage evident over scapula
- » Ribs visible, easily felt
- » Spine prominent, vertebrae of back visible and easily felt, spinous processes discernable along topline
- » Tail head prominent, presence of cavity under tail
- » Rump sunken, angle of pelvis visible.

### Behaviour

- » Alert but may be lethargic
- » Able to lie down and rise easily
- » Moves voluntarily but may lag if driven.

### TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:

ABLE TO BE TRANSPORTED ONLY ON VETERINARY ADVICE



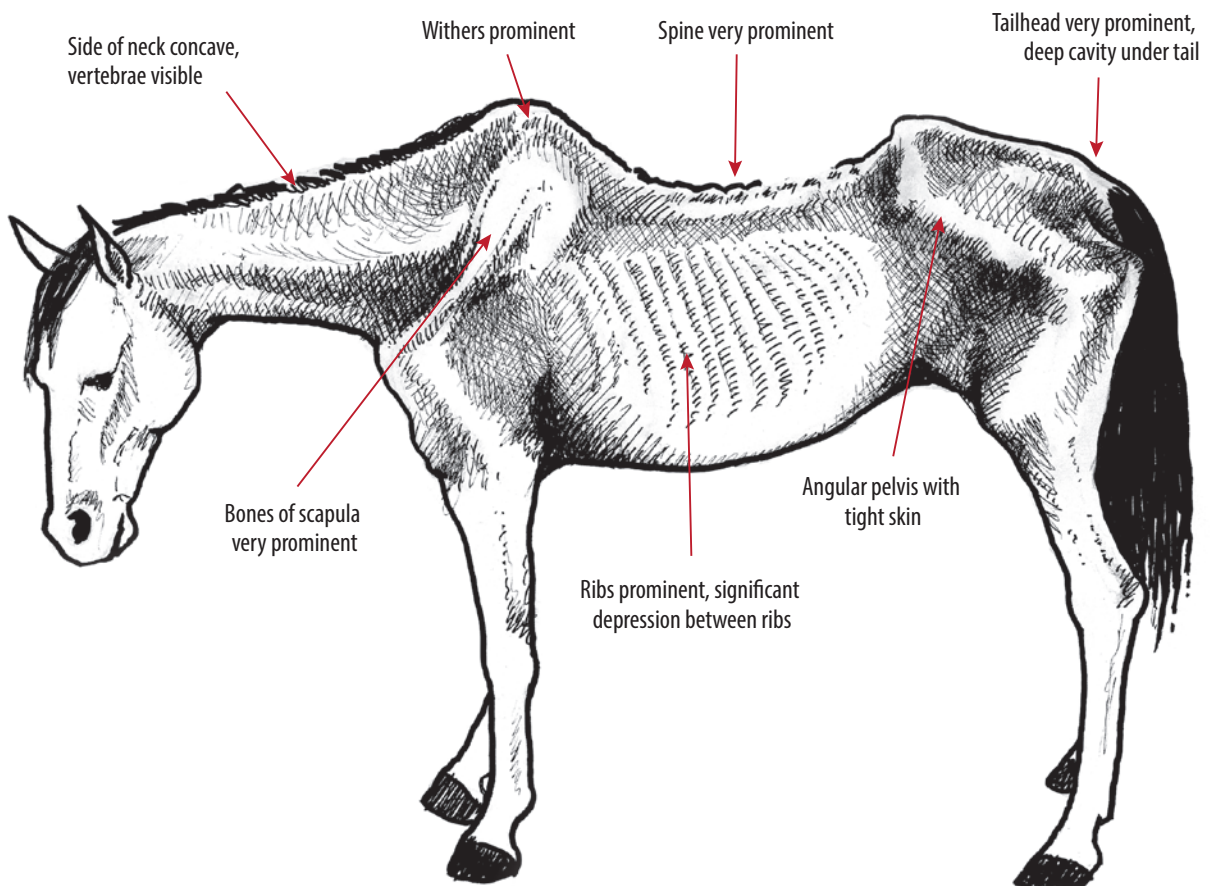
## High Risk

- » Significant muscle wastage
- » Side of neck concave, vertebrae visible
- » Withers prominent
- » Bones of scapula very prominent
- » Ribs prominent, significant depression between the ribs
- » Spine very prominent, tissue on either side of backbone sunken giving a concave, hollowed appearance
- » Tail head very prominent with a deep cavity visible under the tail
- » Rump very concave, angular pelvis with tight skin.

## Behaviour

- » Aware but extremely lethargic
- » Limited response to stimuli
- » Low head position
- » Locomotion slow and unsteady, may drag feet
- » Difficulty in rising from the ground.

**TRANSPORT RECOMMENDATION:**  
**DO NOT TRANSPORT**



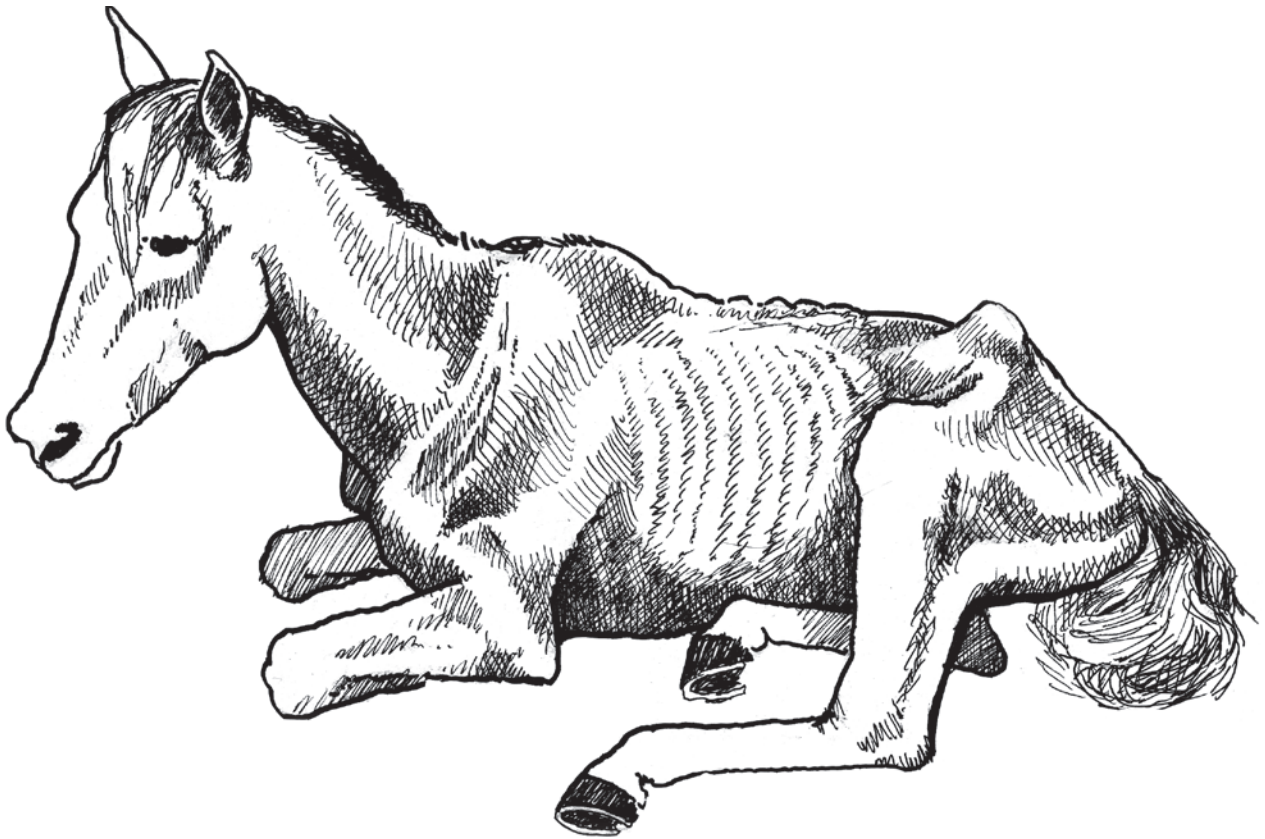
## Euthanase

- » The animal meets all the descriptors for Condition Score 0 (High Risk)
- » Weak with low body reserves
- » Skin stretched over skeleton, rub marks and hair loss over bony prominences from extended periods of lying down.

## Behaviour

- » Little or no awareness or response to stimuli
- » If standing, head is held very low
- » Walking difficult, may stumble and fall
- » May be recumbent and unwilling or unable to rise
- » No interest in eating.

**RECOMMENDATION:**  
EUTHANASE





# Seeking veterinary advice checklists

The following Welfare Checklists are provided to assist officers in recording their observations of animals during welfare investigations. The check list may then be referred to in cases where a euthanasia decision by a veterinarian is required or when the observations must be recalled and described at a later date.

Officers use the checklist in order to make an accurate record of what they are seeing in the animal/s. This is a faster method than writing notes and may be transferred into a contemporaneous notebook at a later stage if there are many animals to assess.

The checklist is also a comprehensive list for all necessary animal observations that must be made in order to gain a complete assessment of the animal/s. This ensures that officers do not miss the recording of any valuable information when attending investigations.

Veterinary advice must be sought for all horses of Condition Score 1 and below. Checklists are provided for:

- » Cattle (all)
- » Sheep and Goats



## Welfare Checklist – Cattle (All)

Animal descriptor	Meets criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Defining criteria/Characteristics	Comments
Body condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welfare Score 'High Risk 2' and below	Use Welfare Score reference drawings
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Eyes – tearing, sunken, glazed Lacks any alertness to external stimulation Nose dry, skin is 'dry'/not pliable/taunt Dehydration obvious	
Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Slow response to any external stimuli Remains immobile at zero flight distance despite attempted avoidance behaviour Total lack of herd behaviour instinct/solitary No curiosity Convulsions of body Paddle marks on ground (if 'down')	Inability to drink and swallow Head movement on the ground also common
Rumen function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Faeces liquid consistency – brown colour No rumen movement detectable	Liquid faeces indicates no rumen function Hardened faeces/dehydration Rumen movement heard through stethoscope
Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Unable to stand Able to stand with mechanical assistance Unable to stand, and retain stand, unless mechanically supported 'Swaying' walk if mobile	Unable to stand still or maintain balance Lacks muscle strength
Injury	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Broken legs Predation by other animals	Broken ribs?
Body function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Heart rate more than 80 beats/min Breathing rate – more than 40 breathes/min Rectal temperature – more than 39°C Urine colour – yellow/dark yellow	Laboured breathing or panting Summer body temperatures higher – 40°C

## Additional factors to consider

Animal descriptor	Meets criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Defining criteria/Characteristics	Comments
Environment – Season		■ Summer/Autumn/Winter/Spring	
Prevailing weather	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	■ Temperature – min/max/humidity ■ Rain ■ Wind ■ Snow	More than 28°C and 70% humidity causes heat stress 35°C and 70% humidity causes severe heat stress Wind chill critical
Availability of food and water	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	■ Drought conditions prevail ■ Clean water available ■ Supplementary feed available	Must be roughage based to re-establish rumen function
People	<input type="checkbox"/>	■ Lack of ability/inclination of the owner/ manager to provide food, water, attention	Consider previous history and actions of the past three months. This people factor is a major consideration

## Welfare Checklist – Sheep and goats

Animal descriptor	Meets criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Defining criteria/Characteristics	Comments
Body condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welfare Score 'High Risk' and below	Use Welfare Score reference drawings
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Eyes – tearing, sunken, glazed Lacks any alertness to external stimulation Nose dry Skin is 'dry'/not pliable/taunt Dehydration obvious	
Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Slow response to any external stimuli Remains immobile at zero flight distance despite attempted avoidance behaviour Total lack of herd behaviour instinct/solitary No curiosity Convulsions of body Paddle marks on ground (if 'down')	Inability to drink and swallow Head movement on the ground also common
Rumen function	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faeces liquid consistency – brown colour No rumen movement detectable	Liquid faeces indicates no rumen function Rumen movement heard through stethoscope
Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Unable to stand Able to stand with mechanical assistance Unable to stand, and retain stand, unless mechanically supported 'Swaying' walk if mobile	Unable to stand still or maintain balance Lacks muscle strength
Injury	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Broken legs Predation by other animals	Broken ribs?
Body function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Heart rate Sheep more than 85 beats/min Goats more than 100 beats/min Breathing rate Sheep more than 20 breathes/min Goats more than 19 breathes/min Rectal temperature Sheep more than 39°C Goats more than 39.5°C Urine colour – yellow/dark yellow	Laboured breathing or panting Summer body temperatures higher – 40°C

## Additional factors to consider

Animal descriptor	Meets criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Defining criteria/Characteristics	Comments
Environment – Season		■ Summer/Autumn/Winter/Spring	
Prevailing weather	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	■ Temperature – min/max/humidity ■ Rain ■ Wind ■ Snow	More than 28°C and 70% humidity causes heat stress. 35°C and 70% humidity causes severe heat stress Wind chill critical
Availability of food and water	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	■ Drought conditions prevail ■ Clean water available ■ Supplementary feed available	Must be roughage based to re-establish rumen function
People	<input type="checkbox"/>	■ Lack of ability/inclination of the owner/ manager to provide food, water, attention	Consider previous history and actions of the past three months. This people factor is a major consideration

# Transport tips...

## If in doubt, leave it out!

The following 'Transport tips' are provided to help the key consideration ... that the livestock to be transported are 'fit' for the intended journey.

The *Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals – Land Transport of Livestock* underpin these 'Transport tips'.

'Transport tips' are provided for:

- » Beef and Beef/Dairy Cross cattle
- » Dairy cattle
- » Sheep

that are transported as a result of 'failure to provide proper and sufficient food and water'. Animals with observable physical injuries should not be transported in any circumstances. Only horses of Condition Score 1 may be transported and then only on veterinary advice.

## Transport tips – Beef and Beef/Dairy cross cattle

Beef cattle breeds and crosses and beef/dairy cross should only be selected as 'fit' to transport when they meet the assessment standards:

### Fat Score 1 – At Risk

#### High Risk 1 – Not to saleyard

- » 'High Risk 1' score cattle must be kept on feed and water until 'pick-up'. Feed should be roughage (hay or silage) and feeding commenced at least 3 days before transport.
- » 'High Risk 1' score cattle should be placed on roughage feed (hay or silage) and clean water for at least 3 days after arrival for agistment.
- » Cattle should be placed on new pasture only after a morning feed of hay or silage to fill their rumen before grazing.
- » 'High Risk 1' score cattle should not be trucked for more than 8 hours and trucks should be checked at 30–60 minutes than at 2–3 hour intervals and rest stops to ensure cattle are standing.
- » Feed needs to be of ME value equal to or better than 8 MJ/kg DM.
- » Load cattle by Welfare Score status i.e. draft Fat Score 1 from Welfare Score 'High Risk 1' score.
- » Load 'High Risk 1' cows on bottom deck only.
- » Load horned cattle separately to polled/dehorned cattle.
- » Do not load cows that are more than 8 months pregnant.
- » Never load cows with calves at foot together in the same pens. Always separate the calves and cows and load separately.
- » On arrival at agistment allow 'High Risk 1' and Fat Score 1 cows 2–3 days to 'settle down' and attain gut fill before attempting any management practices.
- » Recently calved cows in Fat Score 1/Score 'High Risk 1' may be trucked to agistment provided calves are:
  - Eight days old or more
  - Showing dry and withered naval cords and have hooves that are not soft and bulbous

- Separated (from cows)
- Provided with bedding to lay on
- Mothered up upon arrival
- Loaded on the bottom deck
- Loaded so they have sufficient space to lie on their sternum.
- » Avoid transporting in hot weather (more than 35°C) or severe cold weather (5°C or less). Humidity and windchill also need to be considered.
- » Never mix with any other species during transport.
- » Dogs should not be used to work Score 'High Risk 1' cows.
- » Handling aids for Score 'High Risk 1' cows that should not be used are electric prodders, rigid stock canes/sticks/plastic pipe.
- » Cows and calves leaving their property of origin for agistment must be tagged with NLIS devices and transferred onto the agistment property through the NLIS database.
- » Where cattle are not able to be tagged for any reason always contact Local Land Services (LLS) and follow their instructions about complying with stock movement regulations.

## Dairy Cattle

Dairy breeds should be selected as 'fit' to transport when they meet the assessment standards:

### Body Score 3

### Body Score 2

*Please see previous comments for beef cattle – these also apply to Dairy Cattle.*

- » Body Score 3 and 2 cows are loaded on bottom deck only.
- » Body Score 2 cows more than 8 months pregnant should be transported only on veterinary advice.
- » Do not use dogs, electric prodders on Body Score 3 and 2 cows.
- » The consignee should notify the transport operator of the body score of the animals to be transported when the load is booked.
- » For NLIS regulations see those that apply for Beef Cattle.

## Sheep

Sheep breeds and crosses should be selected as 'fit' to transport when they meet the assessment standards for:

### Fat Score 1 – At Risk

### High Risk – not to saleyard

#### Ewes and lambs

- » Separate lambs from ewes, loading separately
- » Teach lambs to eat grain before separating from ewes
- » Wean lambs above 8 kg liveweight and retain to feed
- » Recently lambled ewes that are At Risk only, may be trucked to agistment provided lambs are:
  - 10 days old or more
  - Separated (from ewes)
  - Mothered up upon arrival
  - Loaded on the bottom deck
- » At Risk sheep must be kept on feed and water until 'pick-up'. Feed should be roughage (hay) and feeding commenced at least 3 days before transport.
- » At Risk sheep should be placed on roughage feed (hay) and clean water for at least 3 days after arrival for agistment.

- » Sheep should be placed on new pasture only after a morning feed of hay to fill their rumen before grazing.
- » At Risk sheep should not be trucked for more than 8 hours and trucks should be checked at 30–60 minutes than at 2–3 hour intervals and rest stops to ensure sheep are standing.
- » Load sheep by body condition status i.e. draft At Risk sheep away from 'High Risk' sheep.
- » Load 'High Risk' sheep on bottom deck only.
- » Fat score 1 – At Risk ewes that are 3 months pregnant or more must be transported with veterinary recommendations.
- » 'High Risk' ewes that are at least 3 months pregnant or more should not be transported at all, unless directed to transport by a veterinarian.
- » Do not use dogs on 'High Risk' ewes.
- » All animals transported, particularly lambs and recently shorn sheep, should be protected from wind chill and heat stress.
- » Please see Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock for detail regarding loading densities of stock.
- » Never mix with any other species during transport.
- » The consignee should notify the transport operator of the Welfare Score of the animals to be transported when the load is booked so that appropriate stocking density can be determined.
- » All sheep moving undergoing property to property transfers must be transported under NLIS guidelines. See NSW DPI guidelines on NLIS for details.
- » Where sheep and goats are not able to be tagged for any reason, the LLS must be contacted for advice regarding compliance with stock movement regulations.



# Further Information

**Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock**

[www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport](http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport)

**Caring for Bobby Calves Before and After Transport – Dairy Australia**

[www.dairyaustralia.com.au/farm/animal-management/animal-welfare/bobby-calves](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/farm/animal-management/animal-welfare/bobby-calves)

**National Livestock Identification Scheme**

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis)

**NSW Department of Primary Industries website**

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare)

**Is the animal fit to load? – Meat & Livestock Australia**

[www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/transportation](http://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/transportation)





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