

Condition

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Score Description

GUARDIAN OF EQUINE HEALTH

- **Poor**: Animal extremely emaciated. Spinous processes, ribs, tailhead, and hooks and pins projecting prominently. Bone structure of withers, shoulders, and neck easily noticeable. No fatty tissues can be felt.
- 2 Very thin: Animal emaciated. Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes, transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinous processes, ribs, tailhead, and hooks and pins prominent. Withers, shoulders, and neck structures faintly discernible.
- 3 Thin: Fat build-up about halfway on spinous processes, transverse processes cannot be felt. Slight fat cover over ribs. Spinous processes and ribs easily discernible. Tailhead prominent, but individual vertebrae cannot be visually identified. Hook bones appear rounded, but easily discernible. Pin bones not distinguishable. Withers, shoulders, & neck accentuated.
- 4 Moderately thin: Negative crease along back. Faint outline of ribs discernible. Tailhead prominence depends on conformation, fat can be felt around it. Hook bones not discernible. Withers, shoulders, and neck not obviously thin.
- 5 Moderate: Back level. Ribs cannot be visually distinguished but can be easily felt. Fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy. Withers appear rounded over spinous processes. Shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body.
- **6 Moderate to fleshy:** May have a slight crease down back. Fat over ribs feels spongy. Fat around tailhead feels soft. Fat beginning to be deposited along withers, behind shoulders, and along the neck.
- **7 Fleshy:** May have crease down back. Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Fat around tailhead is soft. Fat deposited along withers, behind shoulders, and along the neck.
- 8 Fat: Crease down back. Difficult to feel ribs. Fat around tailhead very soft. Area along withers filled with fat. Area behind shoulders filled in flush. Noticeable thickening of neck. Fat deposited along inner buttocks.
- **9 Extremely fat:** Obvious crease down back. Patch fat appearing over ribs. Bulging fat around tailhead, along withers, behind shoulders, and along neck. Fat along inner buttocks may rub together. Flank filled in flush.

Photo Credit: Jeff Kirkbride Photo