

ADDRESS | ADRES:

Unit 7, Genius Loci Office Park No. 6,
 Hoogenhout Street, Langenhovenpark,
 BLOEMFONTEIN
 Private Bag X12, BRANDHOF 9324

CONTACT | KONTAK:

T: +27 51 446 4619 / 3452
 F: +27 51 446 3148
 E: info@brahman.co.za
 W: www.brahman.co.za



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Body Condition Scoring South African and Namibian Brahman

'Body Condition Scoring is an easy way to assess the nutritional status of the herd and the impact of an operation's nutritional program' says John Hall, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Extension beef specialist. By using body condition scoring at critical times, cattlemen can make decisions on when to supplement. Also, considerable research indicates that body condition score before calving and during the breeding season is directly related to reproductive efficiency.

Body Condition Scoring for South African and Namibian Brahman is done according to a **1 - 9 system** where 1 indicates an extremely emaciated condition and 9 an extremely fat condition. The trait code used for recording is **BC**.

Body Condition Score system:

Code	Description
1 – Emaciated	Cow is extremely emaciated. Tailhead and ribs project prominently. No detectable fat over backbone and hips.
2 – Poor	Somewhat emaciated. Tailhead and ribs are less prominent. Backbone still sharp.
3 – Thin	Ribs are less sharp, but definable. Some fat on spine.
4 – Borderline	Ribs not obvious. Some fat over ribs and hip bones. The backbone can be identified, but feels rounded, not sharp.
5 – Moderate	Good overall appearance. Palpable fat cover on the ribs.
6 – High Moderate	Firm pressure needed to feel backbone. High degree of fat is now palpable over ribs and around tailhead.
7 – Good	Fleshy condition. Carries considerable spongy fat over ribs and around tailhead.
8 – Fat	Very fleshy and over-conditioned. Large fat deposits over ribs and around tailhead. Backbone almost impossible to palpate.
9 – Extremely Fat	Cow has lost definition. Hips buried in fat tissue, looks blocky. May be impaired in mobility. Bone structure no longer visible.

- *Information from Jack Ward, American Hereford Association Chief Operating Officer & Director of Breed Improvement.*

