

# Score Sheet for the assessment of wellbeing in sheep

[Animal facility/Location of work:]



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

Project title:			
Animal Ethics #		Name of contact person:	
Chief investigator:		Contact number:	
Research Group:		After hours number:	

Scoring of wellbeing will be performed relative to the following assessment criteria:

Criteria	Score			
	0	1 (mild)	2 (moderate)	3 (severe)
Demeanour (Activity and responsiveness)	Bright, alert and normally responsive (BAR)	Quieter than expected, but still alert and normally responsive (QAR), the animal may form part of the tail of the mob.	Quieter and less responsive to stimulus; forms part of the tail of the mob; may be found lying down more frequently than expected; may appear "droopy" in the face	Dull, very slow moving; the animal is still responsive but sluggish to react, flight zones are noticeably reduced; lying down more frequently than expected
Lameness [1]	Stands and walks normally, sound in all 4 limbs	Slightly shortened stride, the head may be down, and back may be arched when walking	Uneven weight bearing on one or more limbs, shortened stride, slower moving particularly around corners, back is often arched when standing and walking	Extreme reluctance to bear weight on one or more limbs, shortened stride, very slow moving (will be slower moving particularly around corners), back is often arched when standing and walking
Body Condition Score (BCS): 1-5 [2]	Optimal: BCS 3-4	Obese: BCS 5	Under-condition: BCS 2	Emaciated: BCS <2, and the animal appears physically weak.
Appetite and rumination	Normal appetite; cud chewing is occurring at a routine frequency	Reduced appetite; >25% feed refusal in one day; some reduction in frequency and duration of cud chewing may be apparent	>25% feed refusal for 3 consecutive days or >75% feed refusal for 1 day; reduction in cud chewing; mild rumen distention (e.g. mild bloat)	>75% feed refusal for 3 consecutive days; noticeable rumen distention (e.g. moderate to severe bloat)
Faeces (see Reference Photos)	Normal moist, well-formed pellets.	Soft faeces, forming larger "wet" faecal clump.	Mild diarrhoea: semi-solid to liquid faeces, some mucoid discharge may be present.	Profuse watery and/or foul smelling (liquid) diarrhoea impacting hydration status; volumes of blood observed within the faeces
Respiratory function	Normal respiratory effort; respiratory rate (RR) is 16-34 at rest	RR >34 at rest but no evidence of increased respiratory effort, the animal may move as part of the tail of the mob, some clear nasal discharge may be present	Mild respiratory effort which is exacerbated by exercise but there is no open mouth breathing or abdominal heaving observed, the animal is slower moving	Noticeably increased respiratory effort at rest; the animal is very slow and reluctant to move and may lie down under pressure; any open mouth breathing or abdominal heaving observed; any indication of blue mucous membranes.

\*please note: feed refusal can only be accurately assessed in studies which individually pen sheep.

**Action required**, relative to observed score:

**Cumulative score 0** = No action (in addition to routine care and monitoring)

**Score 1 in one or more criteria** = Assess rectal temperature (if possible) and consult relevant animal technicians. Veterinary assessment may be required (particularly if the animal has an elevated temperature).

**Score 2 in any one criterion** = Assess rectal temperature (if possible) and consult relevant animal technicians. Veterinary advice should be sought if an elevated temperature is recorded, symptoms are acute, or if symptoms relate to demeanour, lameness, appetite and rumination, or respiratory function.

**Score 3 in any one criterion** = Physical exam by a veterinarian is required as soon as possible. Euthanasia is indicated unless a management plan has been specifically prescribed by the independent consulting veterinarian.

**Veterinary advice specifically refers to consultation with a veterinarian that is independent of the research group.**

**Comments:**

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CREATE CHANGE




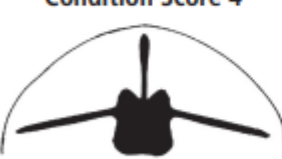

## References

1. DairyNZ. (Accessed 2021). "DairyNZ Lameness Scoring." from <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5559877/lameness-scoring-poster-dairynz.pdf>.  
*Note this is a reference for dairy cattle, thus, only the general principles of lameness recognition can be applied.*
2. Lifetime Wool (Accessed 2021) "Condition Scoring Sheep"  
<http://www.lifetimewool.com.au/pdf/Condition%20scoreA5.pdf>
3. Pope, R. A., S. Parida, D. Bailey, J. Brownlie, T. Barrett and A. C. Banyard (2013). "Early Events following Experimental Infection with PesteDes-Petits Ruminants Virus Suggest Immune Cell Targeting." Plose One 8(2): 1-15.

Reference Photos

Body Condition Score (BCS): 1-5

Source: <http://www.lifetimewool.com.au/pdf/Condition%20scoreA5.pdf>

<p><b>Condition Score 1</b></p> 	<p><b>Backbone</b> The bones form a sharp narrow ridge. Each vertebra can be easily felt as a bone under the skin . There is only a very small eye muscle. The sheep is quite thin (virtually unsaleable).</p>	<p><b>Short Ribs</b> The ends of the short ribs are very obvious. It is easy to feel the squarish shape of the ends. Using fingers spread 1cm apart, it feels like the fingernail under the skin with practically no covering.</p>
<p><b>Condition Score 2</b></p> 	<p><b>Backbone</b> The bones form a narrow ridge but the points are rounded with muscle. It is easy to press between each bone. There is a reasonable eye muscle. Store condition- ideal for wethers and lean meat.</p>	<p><b>Short Ribs</b> The ends of the short ribs are rounded but it is easy to press between them. Using fingers spread 0.5cms apart, the ends feel rounded like finger ends. They are covered with flesh but it is easy to press under and between them.</p>
<p><b>Condition Score 3</b></p> 	<p><b>Backbone</b> The vertebrae are only slightly elevated above a full eye muscle. It is possible to feel each rounded bone but not to press between them. (Forward store condition ideal for most lamb markets now. No excess fat).</p>	<p><b>Short Ribs</b> The ends of short ribs are well rounded and filled in with muscle. Using 4 fingers pressed tightly together, it is possible to feel the rounded ends but not between them. They are well covered and filled in with muscle.</p>
<p><b>Condition Score 4</b></p> 	<p><b>Backbone</b> It is possible to feel most vertebrae with pressure. The back bone is a smooth slightly raised ridge above full eye muscles and the skin floats over it.</p>	<p><b>Short Ribs</b> It is only possible to feel or sense one or two short ribs and only possible to press under them with difficulty. It feels like the side of the palm, where maybe one end can just be sensed.</p>
<p><b>Condition Score 5</b></p> 	<p><b>Backbone</b> The spine may only be felt (if at all) by pressing down firmly between the fat covered eye muscles. A bustle of fat may appear over the tail (wasteful and uneconomic).</p>	<p><b>Short Ribs</b> It is virtually impossible to feel under the ends as the triangle formed by the long ribs and hip bone is filled with meat and fat. The short rib ends cannot be felt.</p>

**Faeces Scores:**

**0: Normal**



**1: Soft**



**2: Mild diarrhoea (semi-solid – liquid)**



**3: Watery or smelly diarrhoea**

