

## **Condition scoring sheep**

To be used in conjunction with the **ATASA Condition Scoring models**, available for loan to ATASA members through Lead Ag Teacher, Sue Pratt. (0428 445 171 <a href="mailto:sue.pratt@agcommunicators.com.au">sue.pratt@agcommunicators.com.au</a>)

1. Introduce the concept of condition scoring by watching the video: How to condition score sheep <u>https://youtu.be/1F5V-</u> GcG1Qk?si=8oSbPPWaU0ylmeWW

Practice with the CS models after each condition score is introduced in the video.

Reinforce the ideas by watching this video: Sheep - how to score their condition in dry times <u>https://youtu.be/mrpJEGP\_KXY?si=J8s4c0l1V6j2TJl3</u>

- 2. Try a blindfold test with the CS models
- 3. Check out the Lifetimewool website: Lifetime Wool - more lambs better wool healthy ewes - Condition Scoring of Sheep http://www.lifetimewool.com.au/conditionscore.html
- 4. Organise for your students to practice with live sheep either at school or on a commercial property. Ensure a risk assessment has been completed and animal welfare is protected at all times.

Detailed guidelines on handling sheep for schools can be found at:

<u> Sheep – handling (nsw.gov.au)</u>

https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/animals-in-schools/animals-in-schools-species/sheep/sheep-handling

In South Australian Department for Education schools, condition scoring requires Category 2 Approval. Please ensure all approvals are in place and check:

Standard operating procedures for the use of animals in schools, preschools and child care centres. (education.sa.gov.au) https://www.education.sa.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0010/267454/stand

ard-operating-procedures-for-the-use-of-animals-in-schools-preschools-childcare-centres.pdf Invite an industry expert such as a stock agent or sheep producer to demonstrate condition scoring with your students and guide them as they practice. If possible, start with a small number of sheep with a range of condition scores in a handling race to build understanding and confidence with the feel of each CS.

Use the mob record chart on page 4 to record mob results.

Comparisons can be made across a mob, age groups, pregnancy status (dry, single, twin, lactating), breeds, gender, seasons, feed types, feedlot and extensive.

Condition score can be used along with weight as a dependent variable in investigations using sheep.

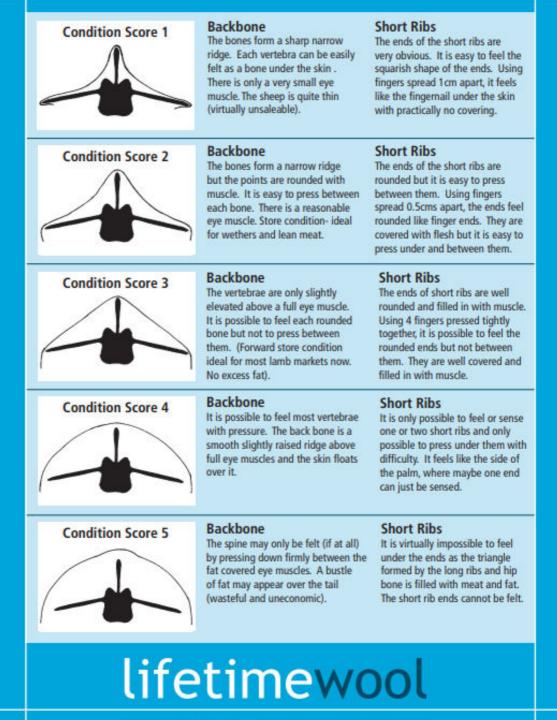
5. **Extend the application of condition scoring** by exploring the Ewe Management Handbook which makes clear connections between condition score and ewe survival, twin rates and lamb survival:

> <u>Lifetime Wool - more lambs better wool healthy ewes - Ewe Management</u> <u>handbook - HRZ</u>

http://www.lifetimewool.com.au/tools/handbook.html

Disclaimer: This curriculum resource is designed to support schools in delivering quality food and fibre content to students. It has been developed by Lead Ag Teacher Sue Pratt, AgCommunicators – a registered teacher with more than 30 years' experience in teaching agriculture and science. Prior to using this resource, teachers should conduct a risk assessment in line with their site's curriculum and safety guidelines and check all links are appropriate to the school's online policies. The risk assessment may include provision of specialised Personal Protective Equipment and review of the school's policies and procedures on chemical use.

## How to Condition Score



more lambs, better wool, healthy ewes

## **Condition Scoring of Sheep**

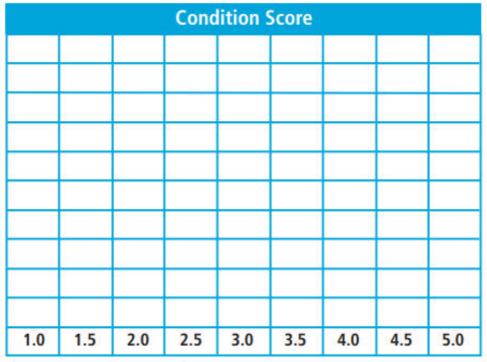
Place your thumb on the backbone just behind the last long rib and your fingers against the stubby ends of the short ribs. Use the scoring system described on the back. Half scores such as 2.5 or 3.5 can be used. Randomly score 25-50 sheep from the middle of the mob.

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1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0

**Recording the score** 



Record the condition score of each sheep with an 'X' on the chart. The middle score of the distribution is close to the average. In this example the median value is 3.0 but by using the chart you can see that the average is just less than 3.0. Note any dry sheep CS < 1.5 or pregnant ewe CS < 2 should be removed and fed to gain weight.



If you wish to mark a score of .25 put the X on the appropriate vertical line.

For information on ewe condition score targets visit:

## lifetimewool.com.au