

E528Q – Use of body condition scoring for livestock on a monthly basis to keep track of herd health

This worksheet is intended to help practitioners in maintaining adequate records for the purposes of the CSP enhancement. This document is not required to be filled out if other adequate records are available.

Annual Enhancement Checklist

(complete once per year, unless no management changes needed)

Grazing Plan: A written plan of how the forage available will be managed to meet the needs of the grazing animals:

Grazing Objectives:

- ___ Maintain or improve plant health and vigor
- ___ Control or reduce invasive species
- ___ Maintain or improve forage quantity and quality
- ___ Improve grazing distribution
- ___ Provide or improve nesting cover for grassland nesting birds
- ___ Reduce wildfire hazard
- ___ Increase native species composition
- ___ Remove excessive litter/duff/residue
- ___ Other: _____

Resource Inventory: Forage inventory (stocking rates) (can use SD Grazing Tool SD-CPA-39 Forage Inventory), maps, and other needed items.

Contingency Planning: (attach additional pages if needed). If not applicable, just write NA.

What will I do in the case of drought: _____

What will I do in the case of unplanned fire: _____

What will I do in the case of flood: _____

What will I do in the case of _____ (other disaster): (i.e., lightning, hail, tornado, harassment, unlawful entry, etc): _____

Monitoring Plan for Body Condition Scoring

Animal Type	Month/Stage of Production	# of Animal Type	# of Animals needed to be Monitored (1 out of 5 or 1 out of 10*)	Ideal Body Condition Score
<i>Bison</i>	<i>November/start of weaning</i>	<i>150 - mature cows</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>4</i>

1 out of every 10 animals for mature cows (3+ years); 1 out of 5 animals for sub-adults (less than 3 years-old and non-breeding)

Suggested Times for Body Condition Scoring: (enter month(s) when this occurs on your operation)

Pre-Calving _____

Prior to Breeding _____

2 months prior to weaning _____

Circle months when animals will be monitored: Include the months from above, as well as any months when grazing will occur

January	February	March	April	May	June
July	August	September	October	November	December

Bison BCS Recommendations

Stage of Production (time frame; months)	Ideal BCS for Conservation* focus:			Ideal BCS for Production* focus:		
	Cow	Heifer	Bull	Cow	Heifer	Bull
Weaning (Nov – Apr)	4→2.5	4→3	4→3	4→3	4→3	4→3
Pre-Calving (Apr – Jun)	2.5	3	3.5	3	3.5	3.5
Prior to Breeding (Jun – Sep)	3	3	2.5	3.5	3.5	2.5
Gestation/Pre-winter condition (Sep – Nov)	4	4	3.5	4	4	4

*Conservation and production focused operations are separated to better guide the bison manager's decisions. The → indicates a downward trend of body condition score over winter due to harsh conditions (this is normal in bison).

Additional Resources:

Rubric: What's the Score: Bison Body Condition Scoring (BCS) Guide (2007):
[https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex9622/\\$FILE/bcs-bison.pdf](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex9622/$FILE/bcs-bison.pdf)

Nutritional Guidelines: Basic Nutrition of Bison (2000) Murray Feist. Saskatchewan Agriculture.
<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/livestock/cattle-poultry-and-other-livestock/bison/bison-basic-nutrition>. *Note, this document may be out of date.

Huntington, G., M. Woodbury, and V. Anderson. 2019. Invited Review: Growth, voluntary intake, and digestion and metabolism of North American bison. *Appl. Anim. Sci.* 35:146–160. doi:10.15232/aas.2018-01798. Available from:
<https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S2590286519300278>

Center of Excellence for Bison Studies, South Dakota State University. <https://www.sdstate.edu/center-excellence-bison-studies>.

