



\*\* This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online <https://ksre-learn.com/bull-body-condition-scoring>

**Note to editors:** A photo to accompany this story is at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ksrecomm/54371329249>

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### **Cattle Chat: Body condition scoring in bulls**

K-State beef cattle experts say it takes longer for bulls to change their body condition than cows

*[By Lisa Moser](#), K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Many athletes are conscious of their diets ahead of their competitions to make sure they are setting themselves up for success. Similarly, beef producers manage their bulls to make sure they too are ready for the breeding season by being in the optimum body condition, the experts at Kansas State University's Beef Cattle Institute said.

[Speaking on a recent Cattle Chat podcast](#), K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster and K-State veterinarian Brad White offer advice on how to assess bull body condition.

“Just like with cows, bull body condition is evaluated by looking at the amount of fat the bull is carrying on his back, ribs, and hooks and pins,” Lancaster said. “To change a score, it requires a shift of about 7% of their body weight.”

He gave the example of a 2,000-pound bull that had a weight change of 150 pounds leading to a score change. By contrast, Lancaster said, a cow will shift a body condition score at 100 pounds due to the differences in size and muscle mass.

“As an animal moves from one point on the body condition score to another, they are either gaining or losing body fat and potentially muscle mass,” Lancaster said. “If they start with a lower body condition score and lose weight, that change will lead to a decline in more muscle mass than fat. Conversely, if they are at the other end of the scale, the animal will lose more fat than muscle mass.”

This has special implications for yearling bulls who are still growing, White said.

“Yearling bulls typically have a different body condition than mature bulls at pasture turnout and the goal is to have the bulls in a positive energy balance heading into breeding season so that they can maintain it through the season,” White said.

Because bulls are bigger than cows, it takes a longer time to move them on the body condition score scale due to the differences in weight, he added.

“Now is the time to make sure the bulls are in the right body condition so that there is time for them to gain weight head of turnout,” White said.

To hear the full discussion, [listen to Cattle Chat on your preferred streaming platform](#).

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**FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS:** Links used in this story

Beef Cattle Institute Cattle Chat podcast, <https://ksre-learn.com/cattle-chat-march21>

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