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Body condition scoring of Equine: Short note

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Abstract

The horses are kept for mainly for riding and racing purpose. Beside, this body condition score is very Much important to assess the health, nutritional status and performance of horse. The optimum BCS to maintain the health and enhances the longevity as well as improved performance. In low and high BCS, horses are more susceptible to limbs disorders and reduced reproductive efficiency.

Keywords: Laminitis, visual, body condition score, ribs, health, performance

Introduction

BCS is managemental tools for assessment of body fat status in body. Body condition score indicate the physical and nutritional status of the animal [3]. BCS also affect the reproductive and productive performance of horse [13]. Horse having low BCS; it may be suffered from huge parasitic infestation as well as systemic infection and dental disorders. Horses with high BCS are more prone to laminitis and colic [16]. Both high and low BCS affects the health, reproductive and productive performance of horse.

Measurement of body condition score

To measures the body condition score is done by two methods one is subjective and other is objective methods. In subjective method includes visual palpation of different point in the body of horse such as neck, chest, withers, retro-scapula, and tail regions [1, 2, 4]. In subjective method score ranged from 1 to 9, beside this, score 1 indicate extremely emaciated on other hand score 9 represent obese. Score is given base on quantity of deposition of fat in different region of the body. On objective methods it includes lean meter is based on ultrasound for the measurement of thickness of fat about 11 cm away from the base of tail [16].

Table 1: Ideal BCS of different stage in horse

| S. No | Stages | Optimum body condition score |
|-------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Brood mare | 5-7 |
| 2 | Breeding stallion | 5-6 |
| 3 | Performance horse | 4-6 |

Table 2: Horse Body Condition Scoring System

| Score | External appearance | |
|-------|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Extremely emaciated | Very prominent and seen easily the spinous processes, ribs, tail head, and hip and point of buttocks and no fatty material present around it. All the regions felt very easily |
| 2 | Emaciated | Fat deposit around the spinous processes; ribs, tail head, and point of hip and buttocks very prominent and easy to palpate. |
| 3 | Slightly Emaciated | Spinous process of vertebrae and ribs very prominent, the point of hip and buttock easily distinguish and tai head prominent. |
| 4 | Moderate | The outline of individual ribs can be distinguished; fat can be felt at tail head wither, shoulder and neck are not distinguished individually. |
| 5 | Ideal | Individual ribs not easily seen but can be felt tail head to felt as spongy may be due deposition of fat. Withers become appear rounded at spinous processes, shoulders and neck soft in felt. |
| 6 | Slight moderate | Ribs become spongy, surrounding of tail head soft due to deposition of fat. Wither become thick, neck and shoulder also thickened may be deposition of fat. |
| 7 | Slight obese | Individual rib can be felt, fat deposit around tail head, withers, behind shoulders and neck. |
| 8 | Obese | Difficult to feel ribs, tail head, withers due to deposition of fat. Shoulder and neck region feel soft in touch. |
| 9 | Extremely obese | Patchy appearance show over ribs and bulging of tail head due to deposition of excess fat. Flank, neck and shoulder filled with fat. It is impossible to felt any region. |

Effect of improper BCS ^[5].

Horse with high BCS can develop the laminitis ^[10, 12], reduced fertility, respiratory distress, reduced exercise ^[8, 9], hyperlipaemia and some time shows colic ^[11]. There is dysfunction of posterior pituitary ^[6], systemic infection ^[15] along with horse also suffers from diabetes mellitus ^[7] and Osteochondrosis ^[14].

On low BCS horse, increase interfoaling intervals, increase the services per conception, reduced the percentage of successful conception and also may be reduced immunity ^[5].

Conclusion

It is concluded that the optimum body condition score of horse is very important for the reproductive and productive performance of horse. The BCS is also important for racing horse. High and low BCS horse suffers from a number of problems.

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