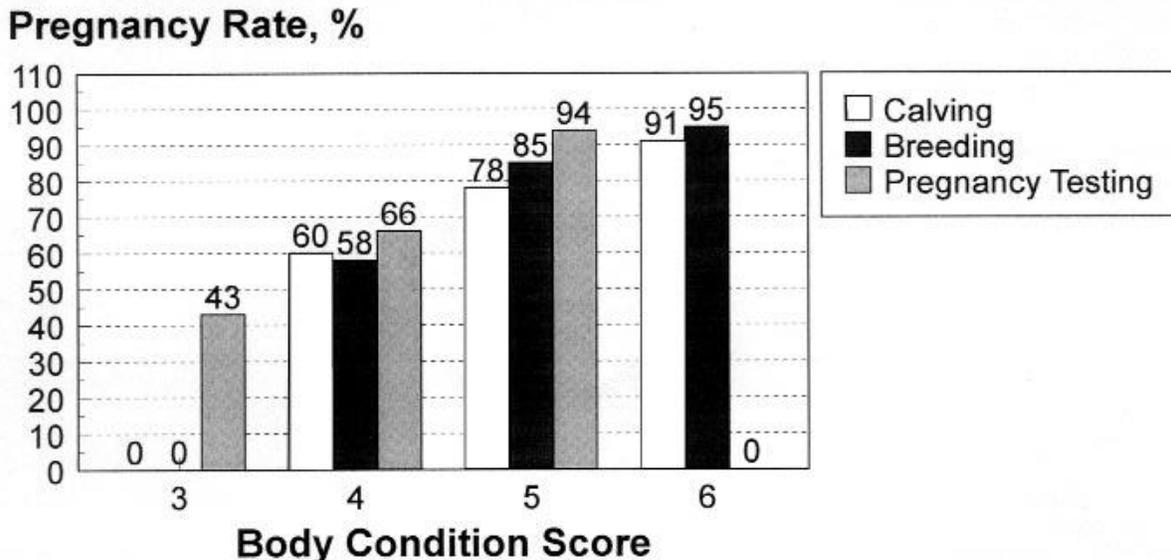


Howdy,

Body condition scoring is a tool that can be used to make feeding and management decisions that will positively impact the cow herd if properly utilized. In addition to providing guidance for decision making, knowing BCS is important because it has a direct impact on cow reproductive performance. This includes number of services per conception, calving interval, and percentage of open cows. Length of post-partum interval, lactation performance, and health of newborn calves are some other areas that are greatly affected by cow BCS. As depicted in Figure 1 below, the cattle that were in the BCS 5 to 6 ranges at calving, breeding, and pregnancy testing were the cattle with the highest pregnancy rates. To help your cattle be as reproductively efficient as possible, we recommend the cows be in BCS no lower than 5 at the time their calves are weaned. By breeding season, these cows should be at BCS 5 ½ or 6. This will put the cows in a body condition that will support their growth and maintenance, and the growth of their fetuses. To avoid making drastic changes in the herd's diet last minute in attempt to get them in the recommended BCS at calving, weaning, and breeding, regular monitoring of the herd BCS is strongly encouraged.

For more information on body condition scoring, including pictures that aide in determining BCS, go to [http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/Beef%20Cattle%20Handbook/Body\\_Condition\\_Scoring.pdf](http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/Beef%20Cattle%20Handbook/Body_Condition_Scoring.pdf).

**Figure 1. Relationship of Body Condition When Scored at Calving, Breeding or Pregnancy Testing to Pregnancy Rate**



Compilation of results from studies conducted in Texas, Oklahoma and Florida; Kunkle et al., 1994

Stay tuned for a follow-up email later this summer that will give more information on how BCS can be directly used to make management decisions such as winter feeding rations. In the meantime, let me know if I can help you with anything.