

Body
Condition
Scoring
Beef Cattle

Body Condition Scores

1 to 9 system:

1 = very thin

9 = OBESE

Priority of Nutrient Use

Cow's perspective

1. Maintenance
- 2a. Growth
- 2b. Lactation
4. Reproduction

Priority of Nutrient Use

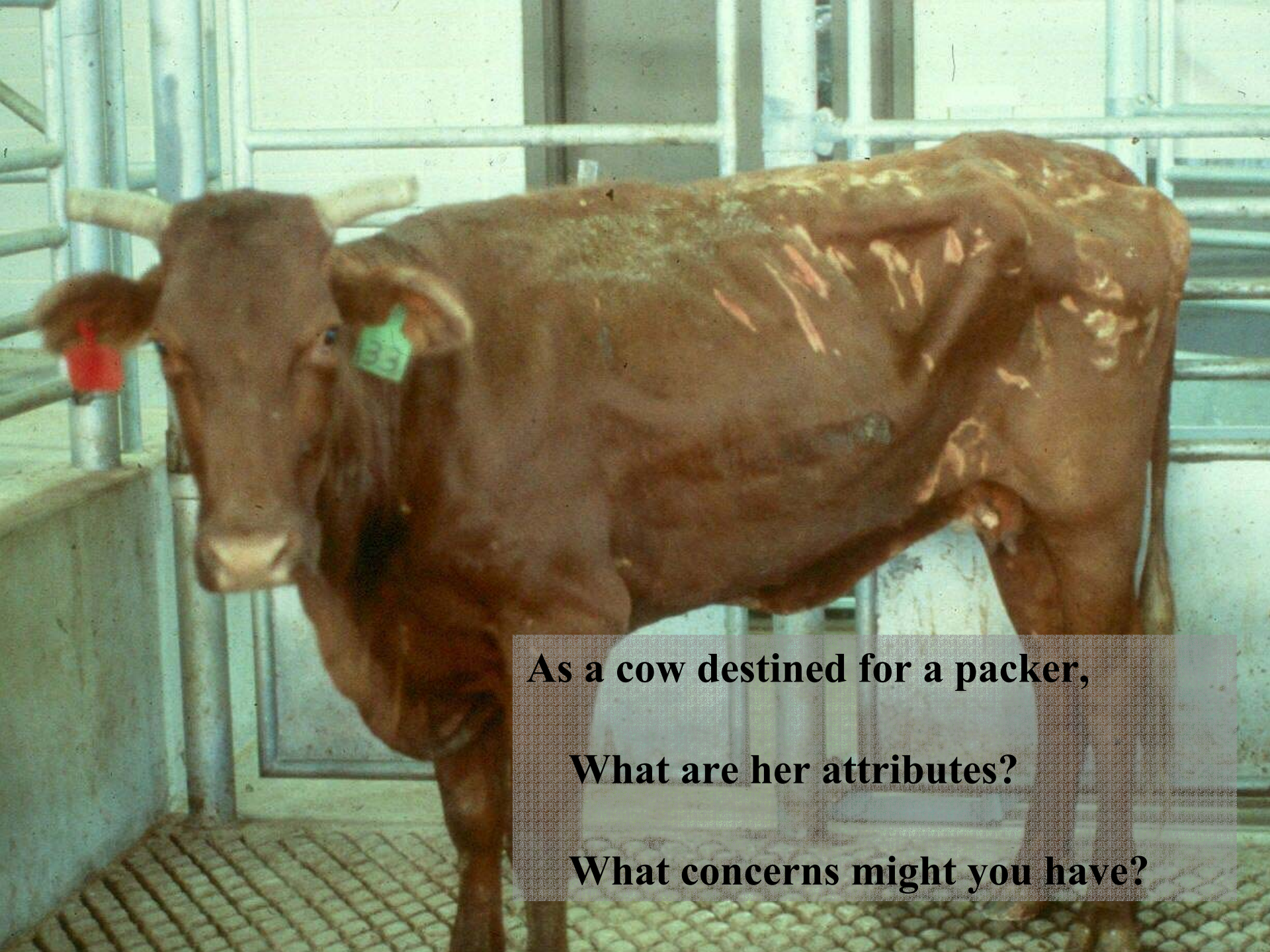
Cattlemen's perspective

1. Reproduction
2. Lactation
- 3a. Maintenance
- 3b. Growth

Priority of Nutrient Use

Dairyman's perspective

1. Lactation
2. Lactation
3. Lactation
4. Lactation



As a cow destined for a packer,

What are her attributes?

What concerns might you have?



Dark color

Attributes

✓ Lean yield
Value

Concerns

✗ Bruising
✗ Trim loss

Emerging Issues Most Frequently Cited

Packers

1. Bruises
2. Antibiotic Residues
3. Birdshot/Buckshot
4. Arthritic Joints
5. Yield (DP & product)
6. Condition (leanness)
7. Condemnation Rate

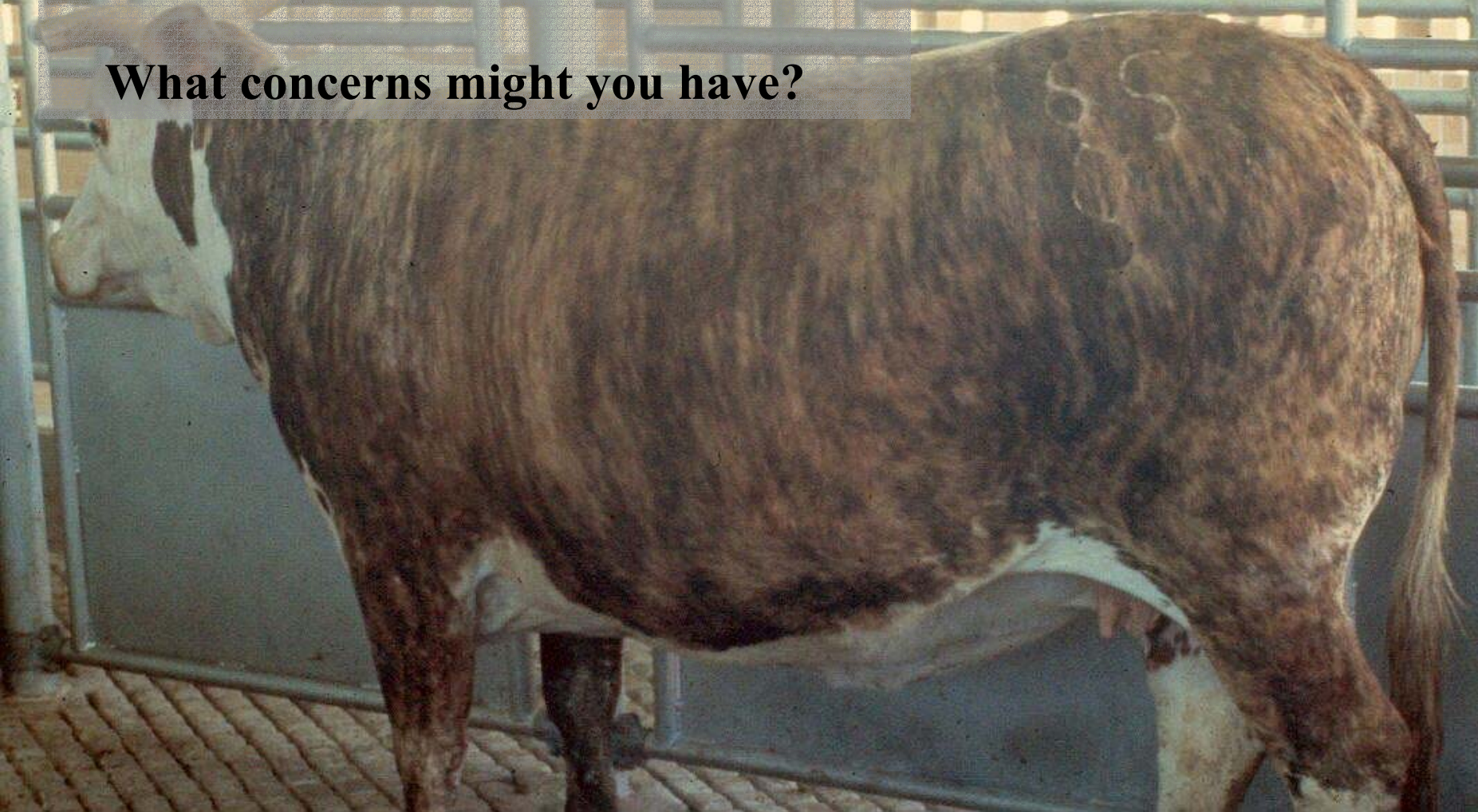
Affiliated Organizations

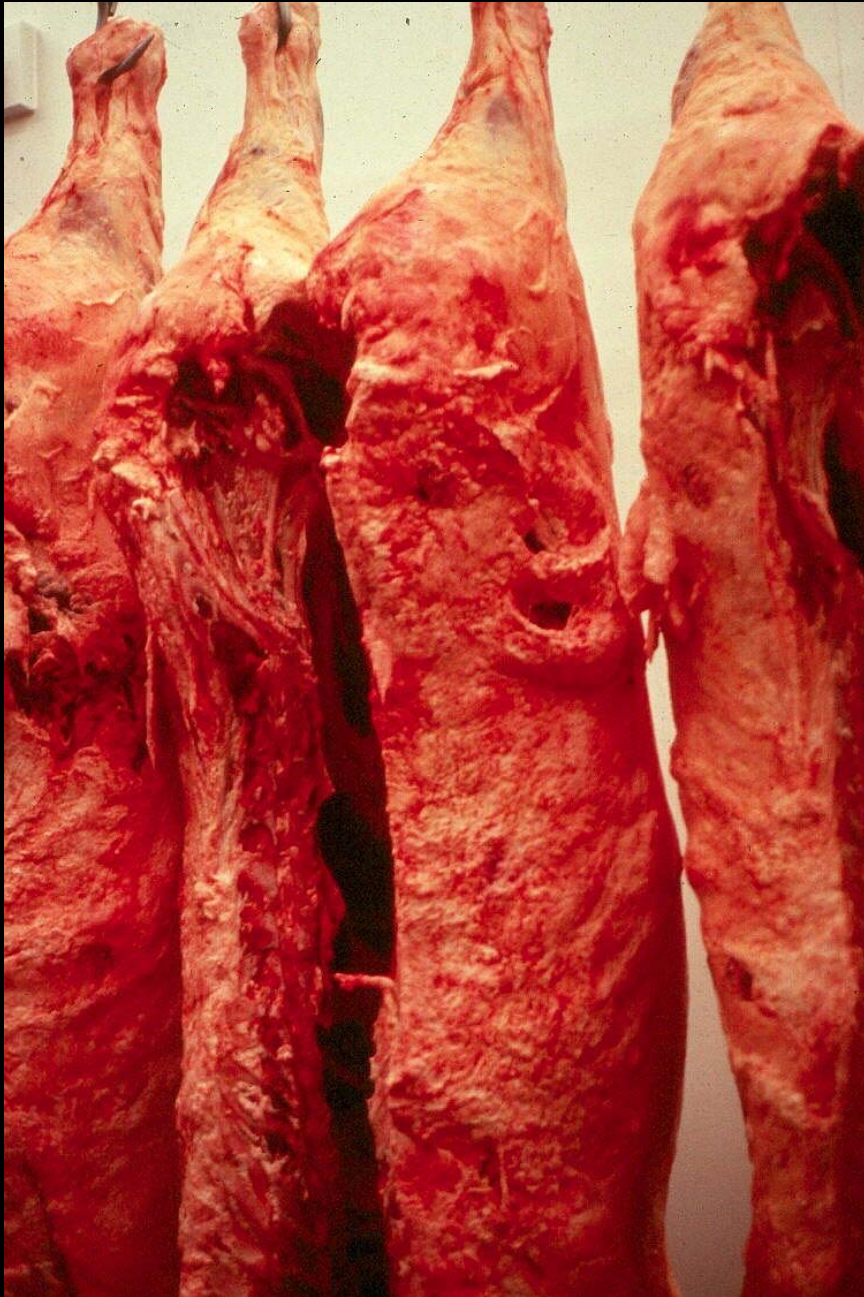
1. Pricing & Prompt Payment
2. Antibiotic Residues
3. National ID & Verification
4. Pathogen Control
5. Injection-site Lesions
6. Birdshot/Buckshot
7. Anti-microbial Resistance

As a cow destined for a packer,

What are her attributes?

What concerns might you have?





Fat cows
are *Wasty*

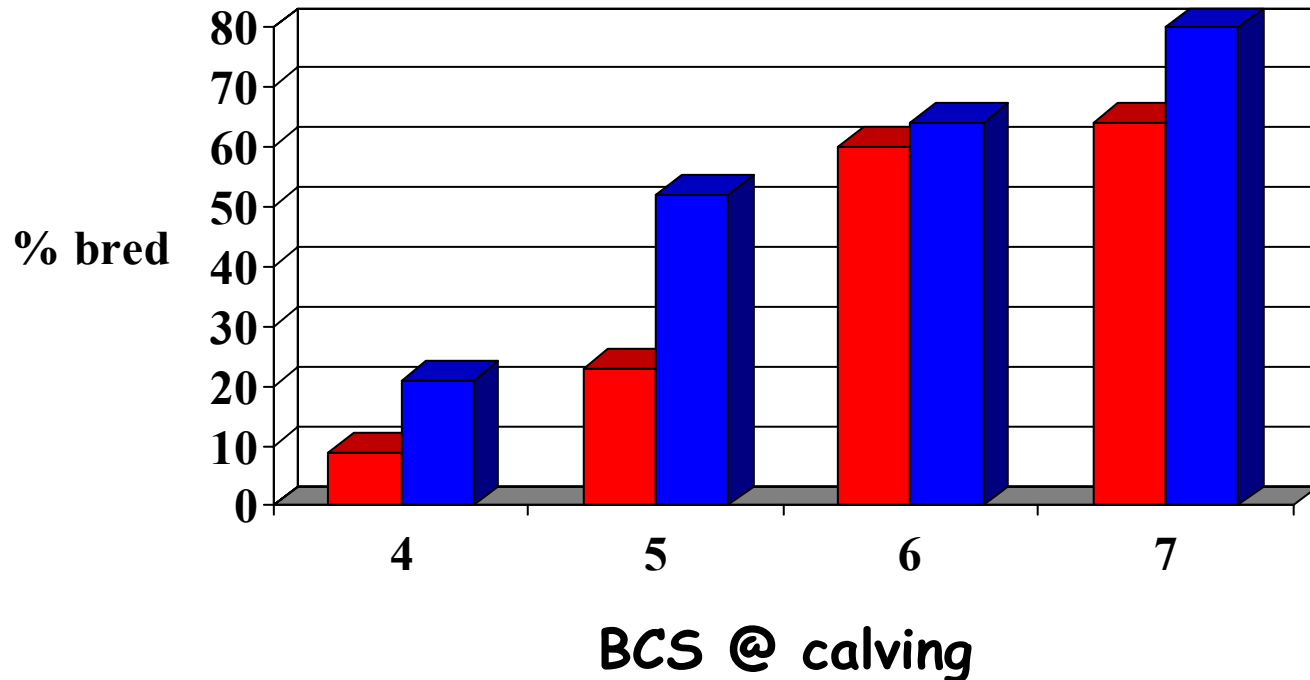
Concern

x Trim loss

Remember, the primary product harvested from cull cows/bulls is lean red meat.

Relationship between Body Condition Score and Reproduction

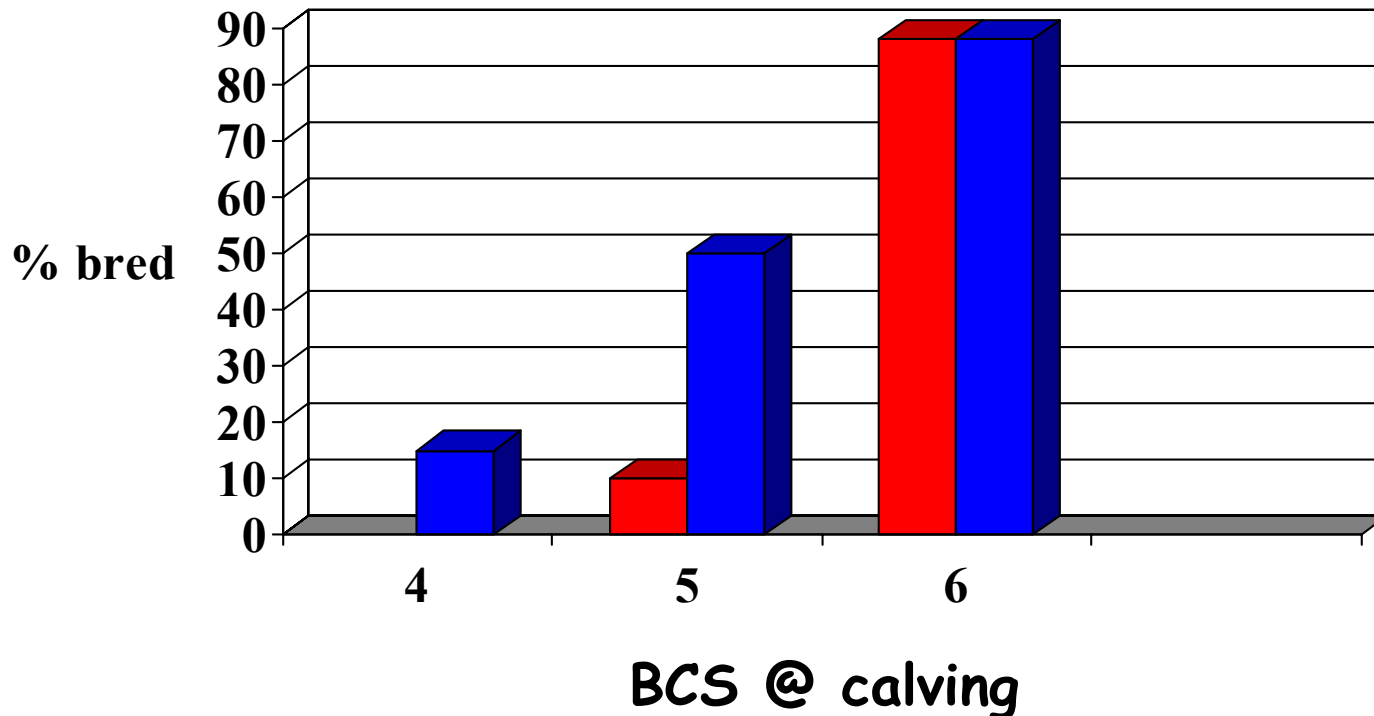
Effect of Body Condition on Rebreeding by 1st Calf Santa Gertrudis Heifers



Sprott & Wilbank

■ 40 d postcalving ■ 80 d postcalving

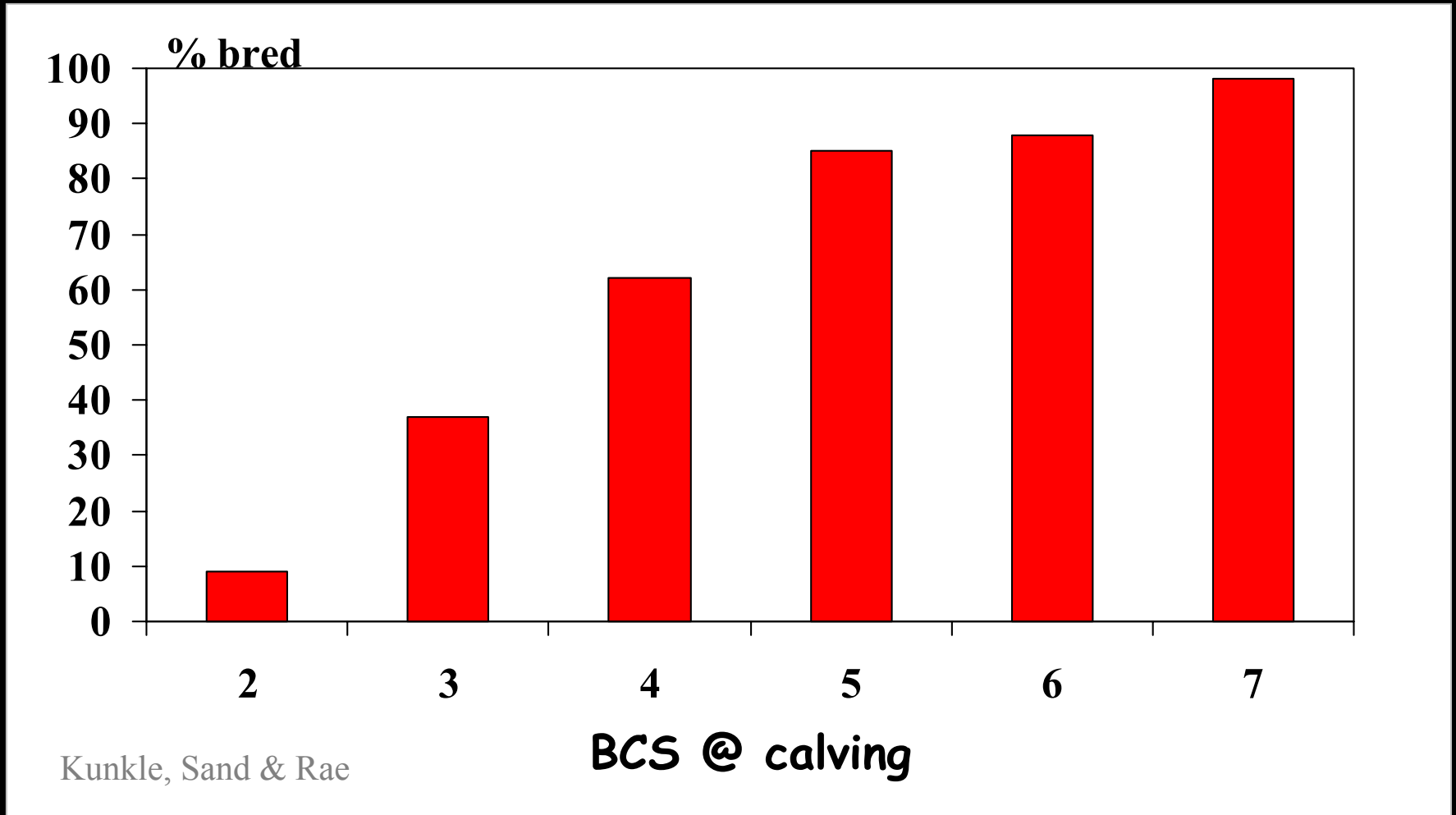
Effect of Body Condition on Rebreeding by 1st Calf Hereford Heifers



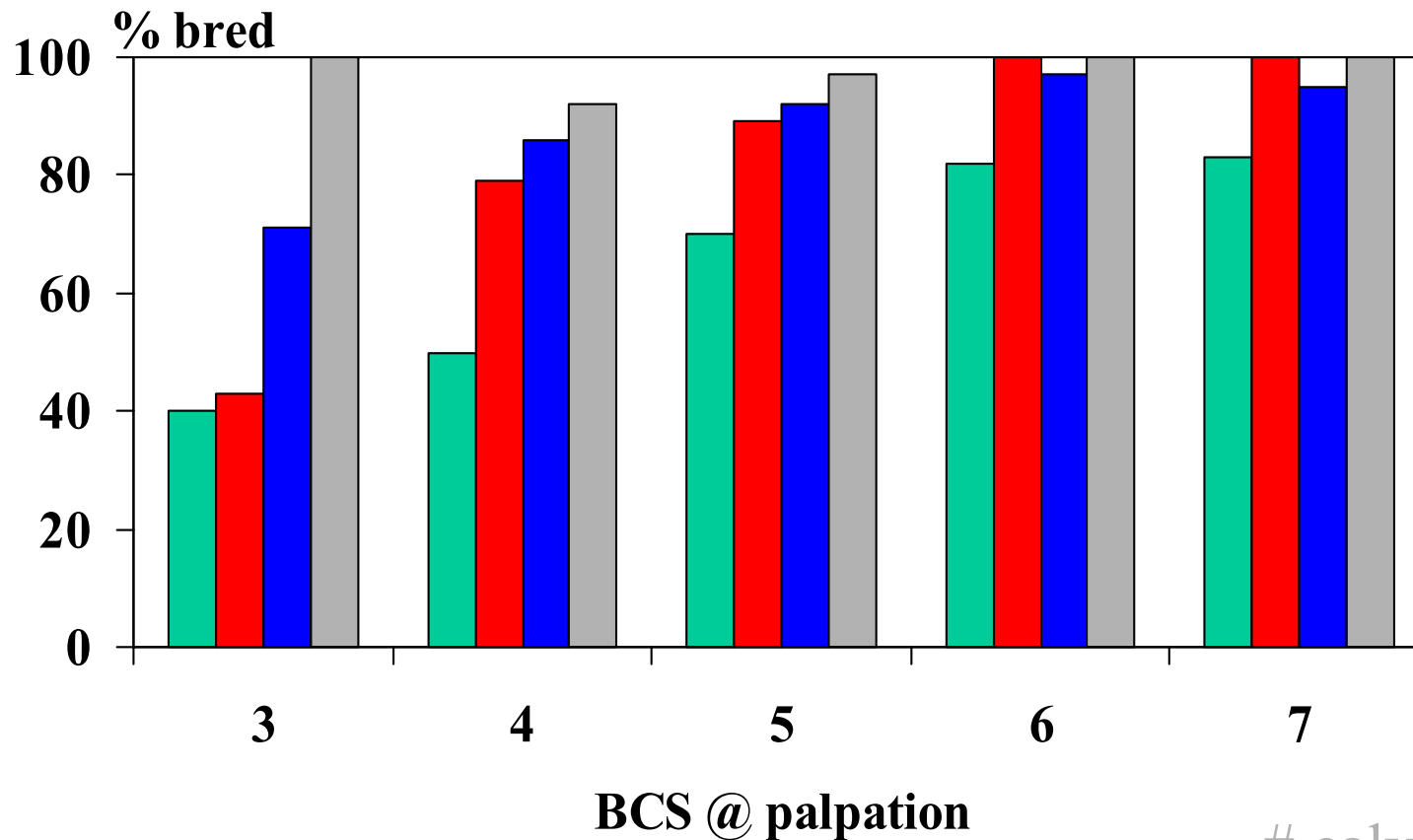
Sprott & Wilbank

■ 120 d postcalving ■ 180 d postcalving

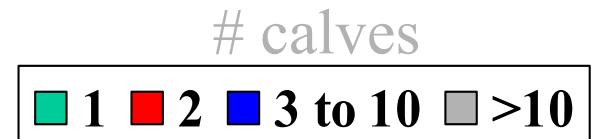
Body Condition Score vs. Conception Rate (Florida study, mature cows)



Body Condition Score vs. Conception Rate



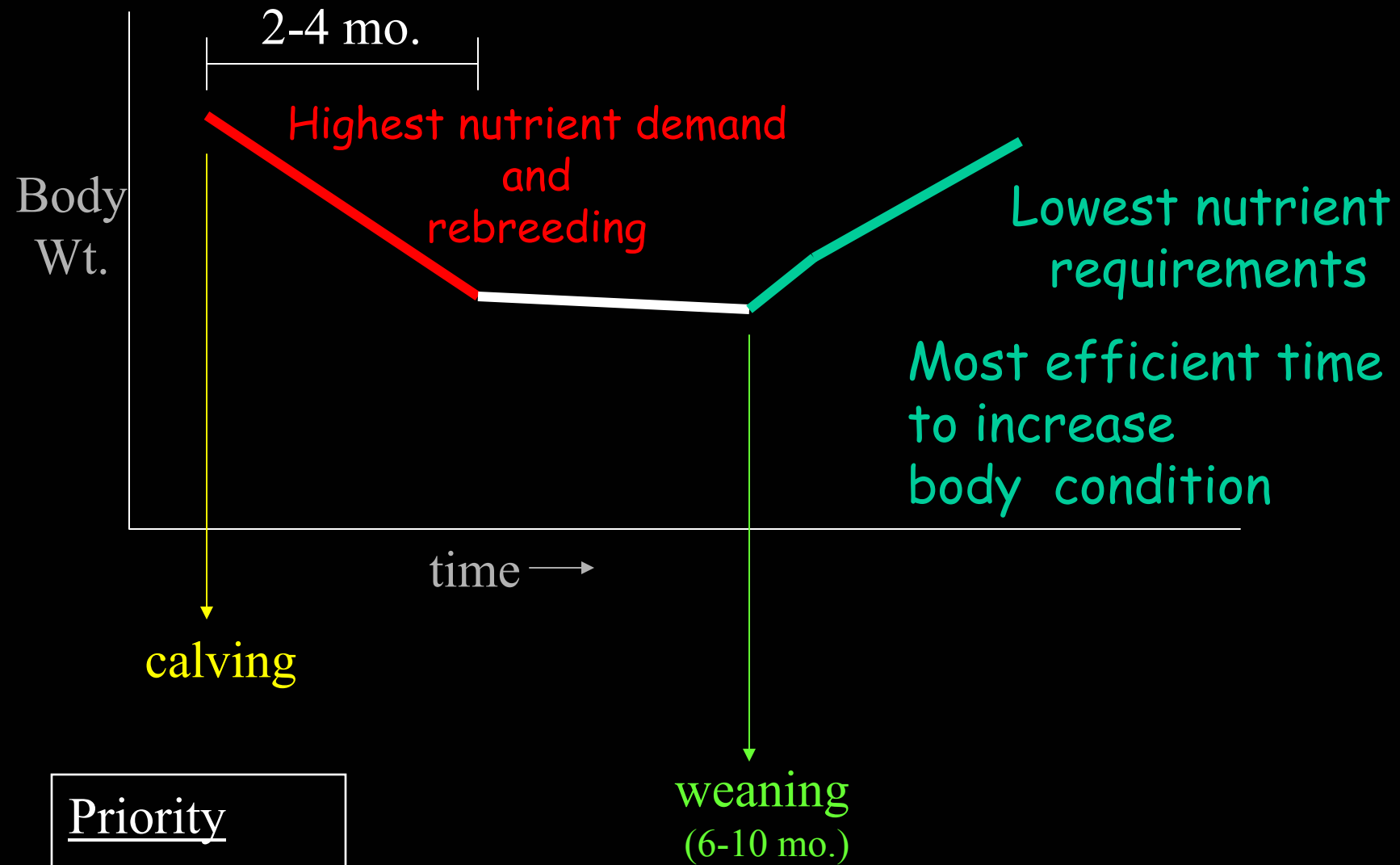
Texas A&M data
883 cows



Body Condition Score

Critical time:

at calving



- Priority
- 1. maintenance
 - 2. growth
 - 2. lactation
 - 4. reproduction



Why?

Health concerns

- internal parasites?
- disease?

Nursing a calf

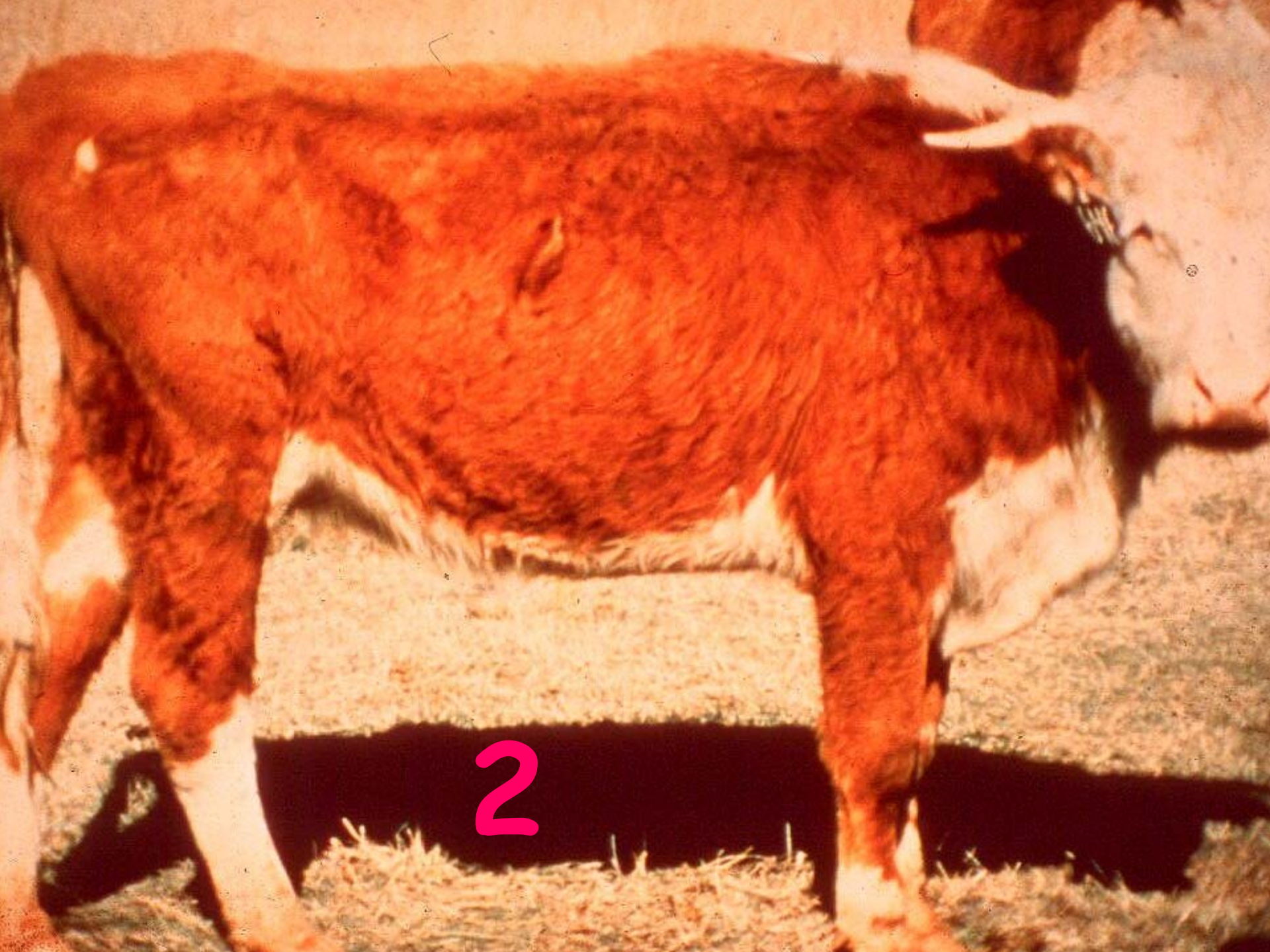
1



Why?

Forage Availability
- not enough to eat
Nursing a big calf

1



2







5



6



7



8

A photograph of a brown and white cow grazing in a green field. The cow is facing right and has its head down. The background shows trees and a grassy area.

Why?

Appears to be barren

9

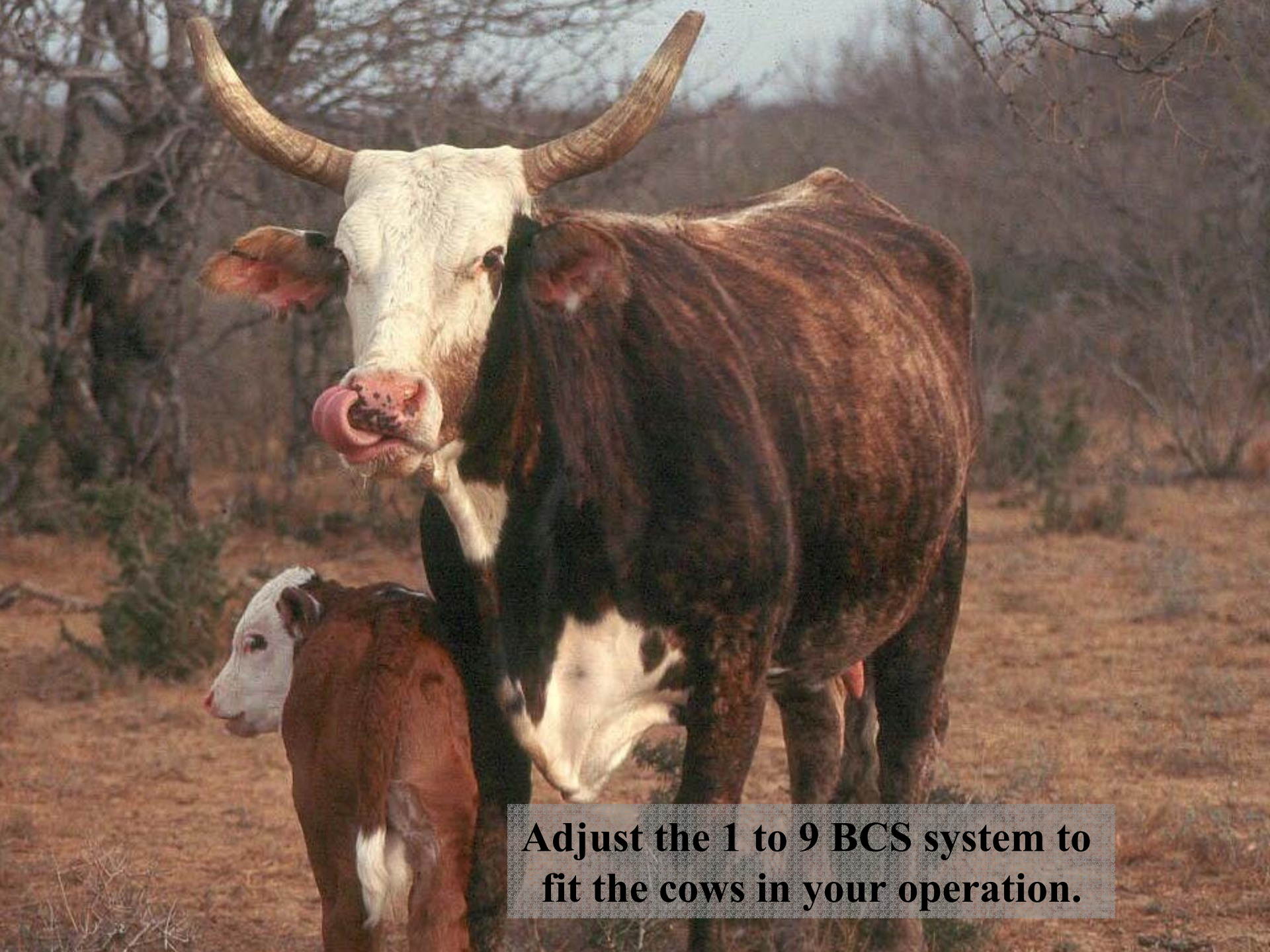
Exceptions

to the

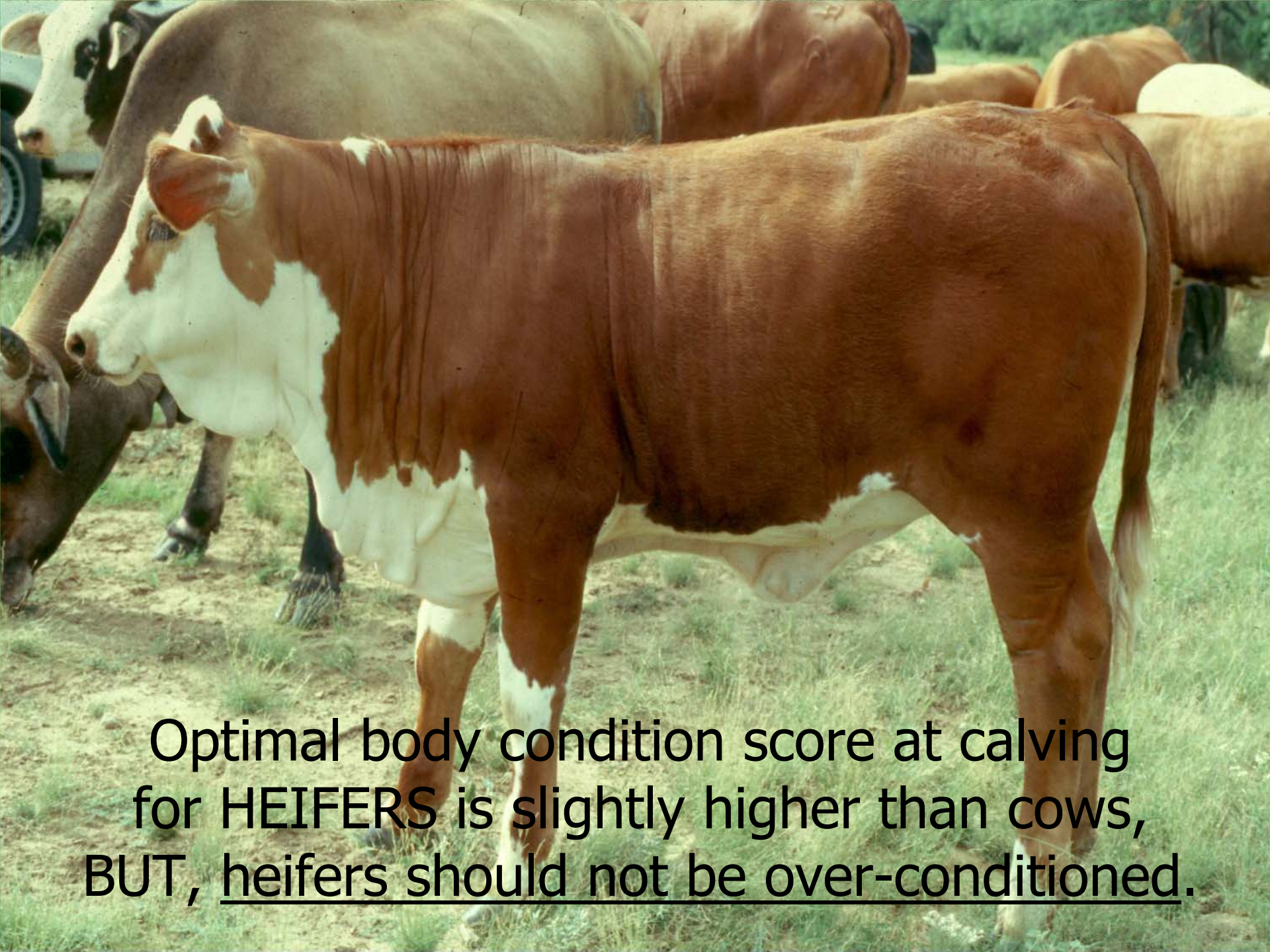
rules

**25 year old Longhorn cow
- had just weaned her 23rd calf**



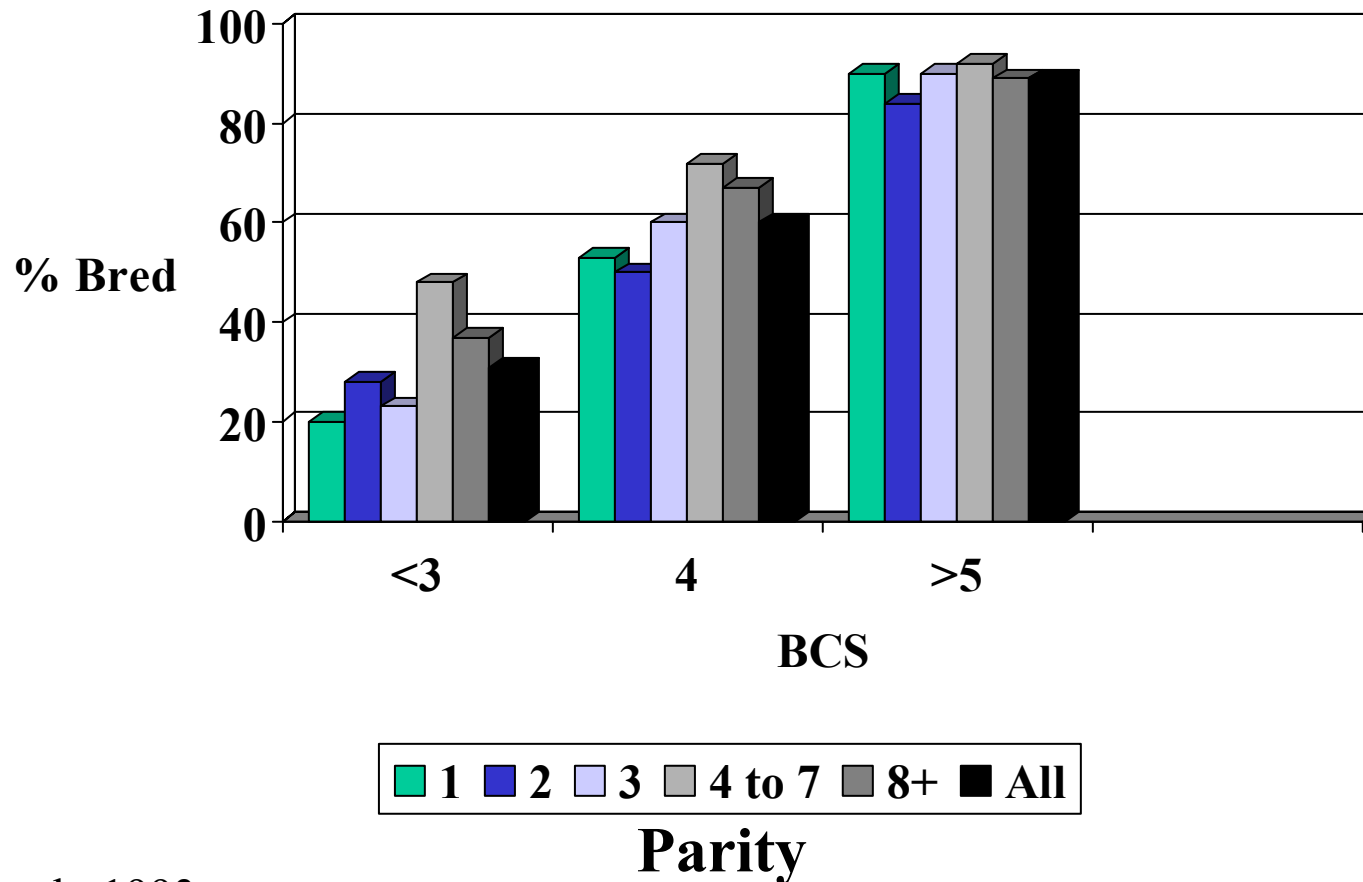


Adjust the 1 to 9 BCS system to fit the cows in your operation.



Optimal body condition score at calving for HEIFERS is slightly higher than cows, BUT, heifers should not be over-conditioned.

Relationship of Parity and BCS to Pregnancy Rate



Optimal BCS for heifers - 6



A black cow is standing in a grassy field. The cow is facing left. The background shows a clear blue sky and some distant trees. The cow's body is dark and appears to have a thick coat. The grass is green and somewhat tall.

Fat heifers often experience:
reduced conception rates
lower milk production potential

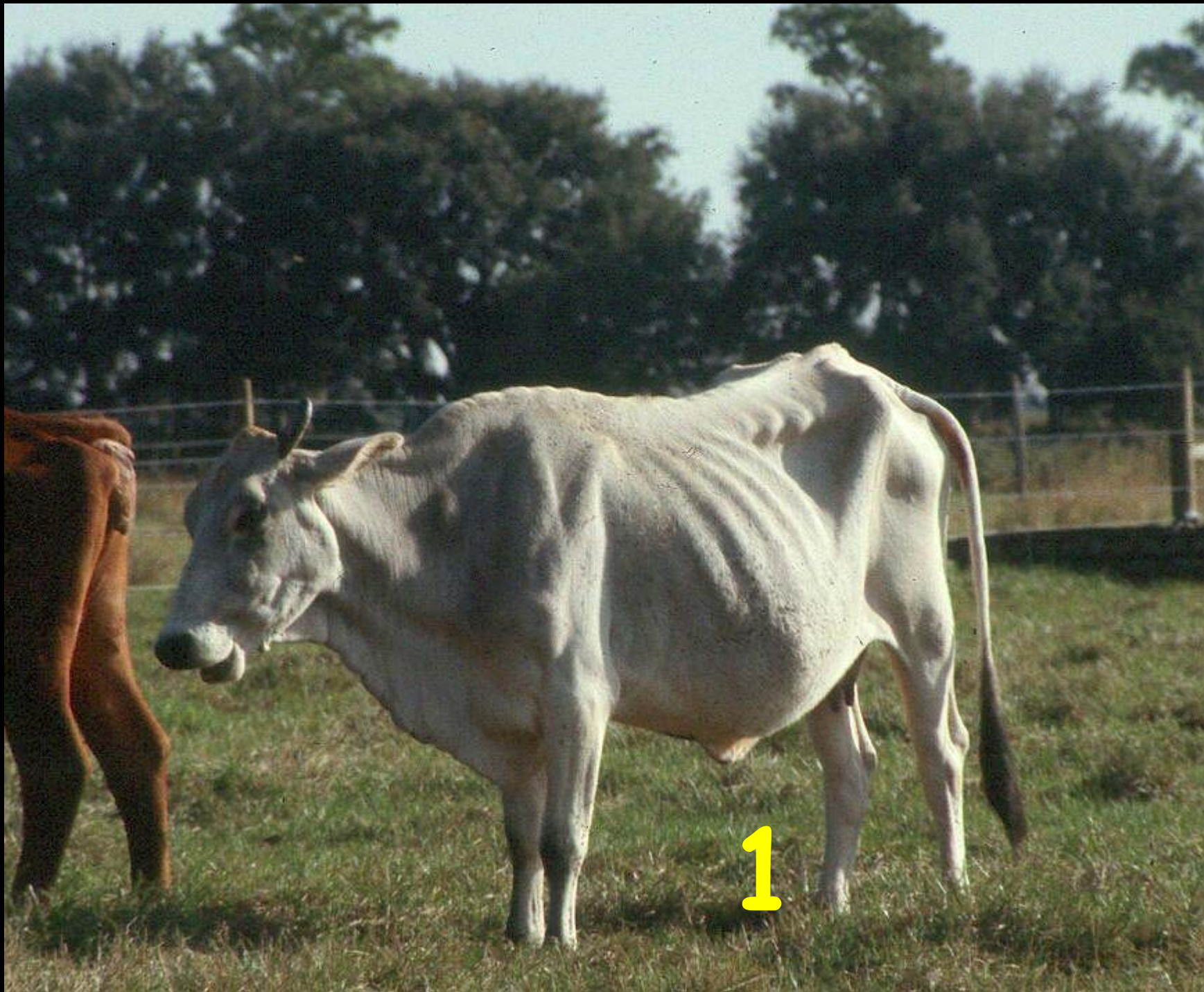
Exam Time

Look at the following slides and make your assessment of the cow's body condition. Then left-click to reveal the condition score.













4









Body Condition Score

Summary

1. Related to reproduction
2. Reflects nutrient intake
3. Indicator of forage

availability
quality



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for
more
information

<http://animalscience.tamu.edu>