ESTIMATING WEIGHT

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A HORSE'S WEIGHT SHOULD BE estimated in order to properly feed, deworm, medicate, or even tranquilize him. Recent studies indicate that most people are not accurate at estimating weights of horses; therefore, they are making errors in the administration of feed, drugs, dewormers, etc.

Guessing a horse's weight by sight is often incorrect, as was shown in a recent study at Louisiana State University, conducted in cooperation with Florida researchers. In the study, 55 people estimated the weights of five horses, which ranged in weight from 840 pounds to 1,270 pounds. The results showed that 80 percent of all the people underestimated the weight of the five horses.

Eighteen percent of the people underestimated the weight of the horses by 200 pounds apiece, and 49 percent underestimated the weight by 100 pounds per horse. Older horsemen, or horsemen with more experience, were no more accurate in estimating weight than younger or less experienced horsemen. Therefore, in order to do a more accurate job of estimating weights and administering medicines or dewormers, it is important that horsemen use scales or a weight tape in order to improve accuracy.

A scale is the most precise way of obtaining weights on horses, and will allow horsemen to more accurately administer drugs and feed properly for growth and development in their horses. However, if you are going to get consistent weights, the horses should be weighed at the same time, and preferably in the morning, before feeding. A horse's weight can change as much as 100 pounds from morning to night.

Public livestock scales can be used to accurately weigh horses, and local livestock auction facilities also have scales. With public scales, the best way to weigh a horse is to first weigh the empty trailer, and then weigh both the horse and trailer together. Subtract the weight of the empty trailer from the weight of both the horse and trailer and the total will be the weight of the horse.

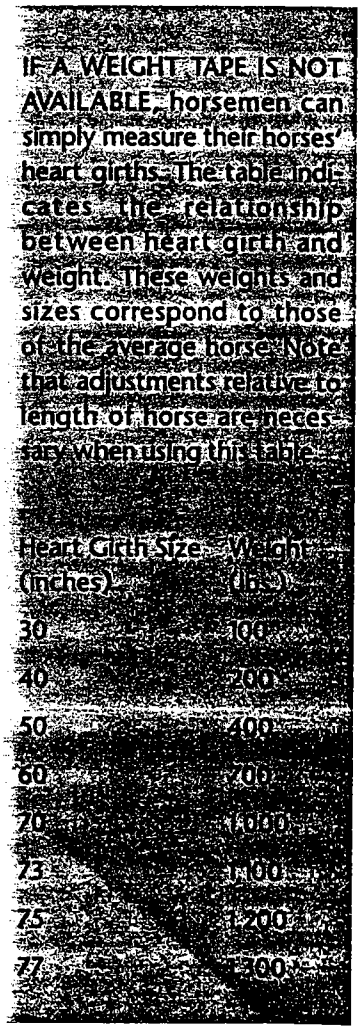
Weight tapes have also been used successfully by a number of people. There are several different tapes available from feed manufacturers. Many of these tapes are graded so that they will estimate weight on one side, and height of the horse on the other. Research of these tapes indicates that they are reasonably accurate on mature horses, but do have a 10 percent rate of error.

Most weight tapes estimate the weight only by using the heart girth. However, additional consideration should be given to horses that are shorter or longer in barrel size, or length over the top line, when determining actual weight. Therefore, a horse that is longer than usual will probably be underestimated by a weight tape, whereas a horse with a short barrel would probably weigh less than the weight tape would indicate.

Prediction equations can accurately estimate the weight of the horse. To better estimate the total weight, a mathematical formula can be used by taking the inches of the heart girth squared, times the total inches of body length (point of shoulder to point of hip), and divide by 241.3.

According to Louisiana horse extension specialist Clinton Depew, by using the weight tape and comparing it to actual weight, horsemen can make adjustments that will make them more accurate in estimating their horses' weights.

Weight estimation is extremely important in order for horsemen to do a precise job of feeding and administering dewormers and medicines to their horses. Horsemen should use the most accurate means available to them in estimating horse weights. If a weight tape or scale is not available, remember that most people tend to underestimate a horse's weight. Also, the average weight of the normal horse today is about 1,100 pounds, instead of the 1,000 pounds that is often reported. By taking these factors into consideration, horsemen can be more accurate in their estimation of horse weights. ♦



EQUINE DESCRIPTION

COLORS

Black — true black horse is rare - black coat with (key:) black skin.

Brown — brown coat (not reddish) - may look black, but skin not black.

Bay — reddish brown coat with (key:) black mane, tail (& sometimes) lower legs

Chestnut — reddish brown with (key:) mane & tail same color as rest of coat.

*In some horse circles or areas of the country:
- **Chestnut** used if thoroughbred
- **Sorrel** used if quarterhorse

Gray — white coat with (key:) gray to black skin.

White — true white horse is rare - white coat with (key:) pink skin.

Buckskin — light tan coat with (key:) black mane, tail (& sometimes) a black stripe down back along spine.

Dun — like a buckskin, but with (key:) darker tan to brown coat; also has black mane, tail and stripe down spine.

Palomino — has light colored (light blond to white) mane and tail.

Appaloosa — has white "blanket" hair coat over rump with dark "spots" around the eyes and muzzle.

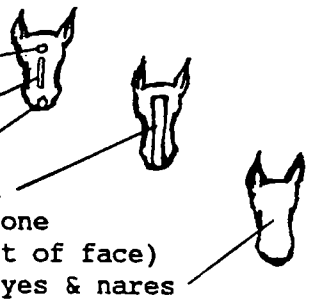
Pinto — dark brown with white band around thorax area.

***Tobiano** - white with colored markings.
***Overo** - has black tail.

Paint — similar to pinto, but usually quarterhorse stock.

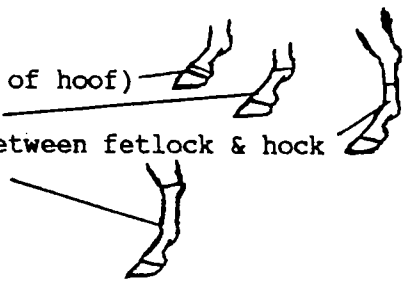
MARKINGS:

Head:

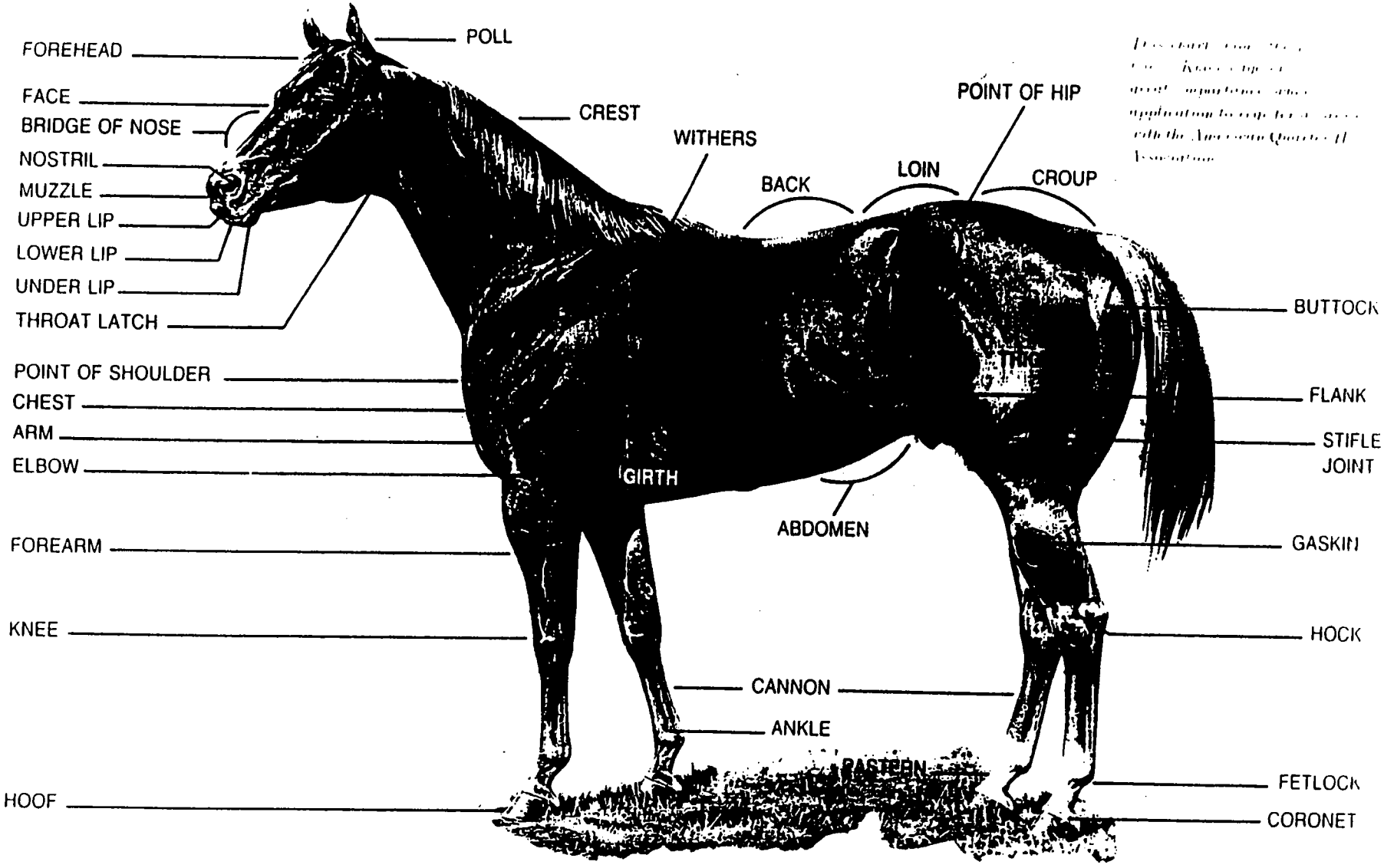


Star - white in center of forehead
Strip - white streak down middle of forehead
Snip - white streak down tip of nose & muzzle
Blaze - wider than stripe, white all the way down forehead, from the star to the snip (ie, one long continuous wide white band down front of face)
Baldface - whole width of face is white, even over eyes & nares

Legs:



Coronet — thin white band around coronary band (top of hoof)
Pastern — white band from fetlock to coronary band
Sock — white band from coronary band to midway between fetlock & hock
Stocking — white band from coronary band to the hock


FOREHEAD
POLL
FACE
BRIDGE OF NOSE
CREST
POINT OF HIP
WITHERS
NOSTRIL
BACK
LOIN
CROUP
MUZZLE
UPPER LIP
LOWER LIP
UNDER LIP
THROAT LATCH
BUTTOCK
POINT OF SHOULDER
FLANK
CHEST
ARM
STIFLE JOINT
ELBOW
GIRTH
ABDOMEN
FOREARM
GASKIN
KNEE
HOCK
CANNON
ANKLE
PASTERN
FETLOCK
HOOF
CORONET

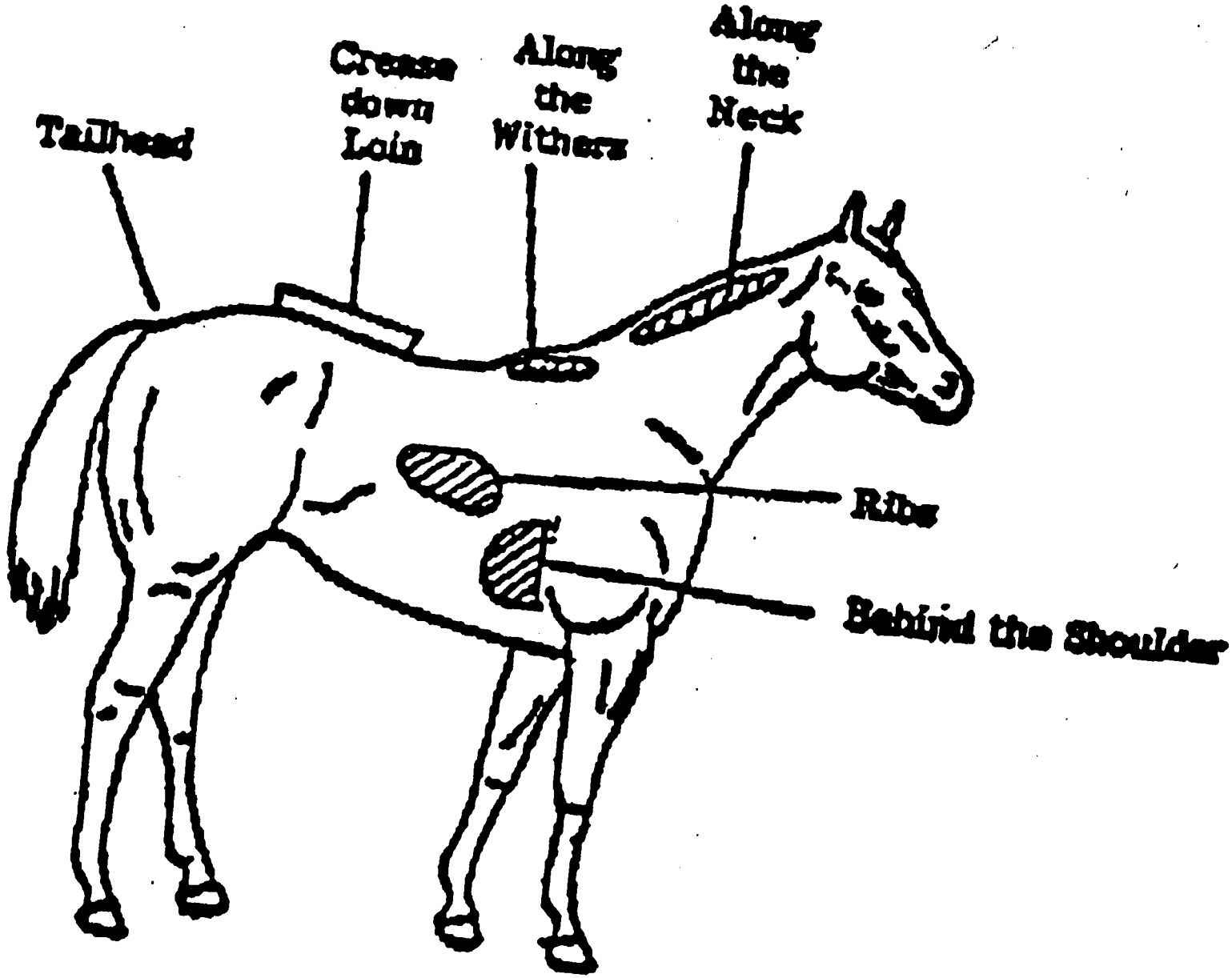

Tailhead
Crease down Loin
Along the Withers
Along the Neck
Ribs
Behind the Shoulder

Table 1. Conditions Scores for Equines*

Condition	Neck	Withers	Loin	Tailhead	Ribs	Shoulder
(1) **Poor**	Bone structure easily noticeable	Bone structure easily noticeable	Spinous process projects prominently	Tailhead and hip bones project prominently	Ribs project prominently	Bone structure easily noticeable
(2) **Very Thin**	Faintly discernible	Faintly discernible	Slight fat covering over base of spinous process. Traverse process of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinous process are prominent	Tailhead prominent	Ribs prominent	Faintly discernible
(3) **Thin**	Neck accentuated	Withers accentuated	Fat buildup halfway on spinous process, but easily discernible. Traverse process cannot be felt	Tailhead prominent but individual vertebrae cannot be visually identified Hip bones appear rounded but are still easily discernible.	Slight fat cover over ribs. Ribs easily discernible	Shoulder accentuated
(4) **Moderately Thin**	Neck not obviously thin	Withers not obviously thin	Negative crease along back	Prominence depends on conformation Fat can be felt Hip bones not discernible.	Faint outline discernible	Shoulder not obviously thin
(5) **Moderate**	Neck blends smoothly into body	Withers rounded over spinous process	Back level	Fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy	Ribs cannot be visually distinguished, but can be easily felt	Shoulder not obviously thin
(6) **Moderately Fleshy**	Fat beginning to be deposited	Fat beginning to be deposited	May have slight positive crease down back	Fat around tailhead feels soft	Fat over ribs feels spongy	Fat beginning to be deposited
(7) **Fleshy**	Fat deposited along neck	Fat deposited along withers	May have positive crease down back	Fat around tailhead is soft	Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat	Fat deposited behind shoulder
(8) **Fat**	Noticeable thickening of neck	Area along withers filled with fat	Positive crease down back	Tailhead fat very soft	Difficult to feel ribs	Area behind shoulder filled in flush with body
(9) **Extremely Fat**	Bulging fat	Bulging fat	Obvious positive crease down back	Building fat around tailhead	Patchy fat appearing over ribs	Bulging fat

* *The ideal body condition score is between 5 and 7.*