

BISON BODY CONDITION



**MANAGEMENT TOOL TO MONITOR
THE NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THE
BISON COW**

By Arnold Norman

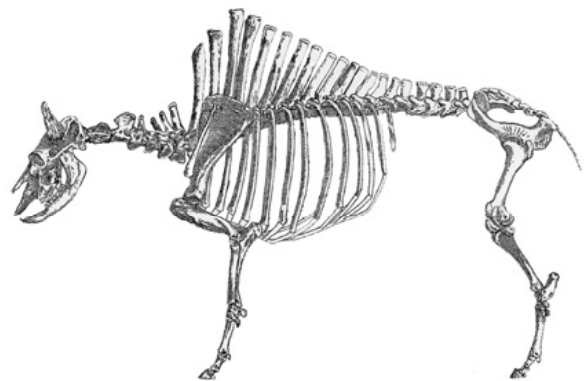
Reproductive Efficiency Linked to Body Condition Scores

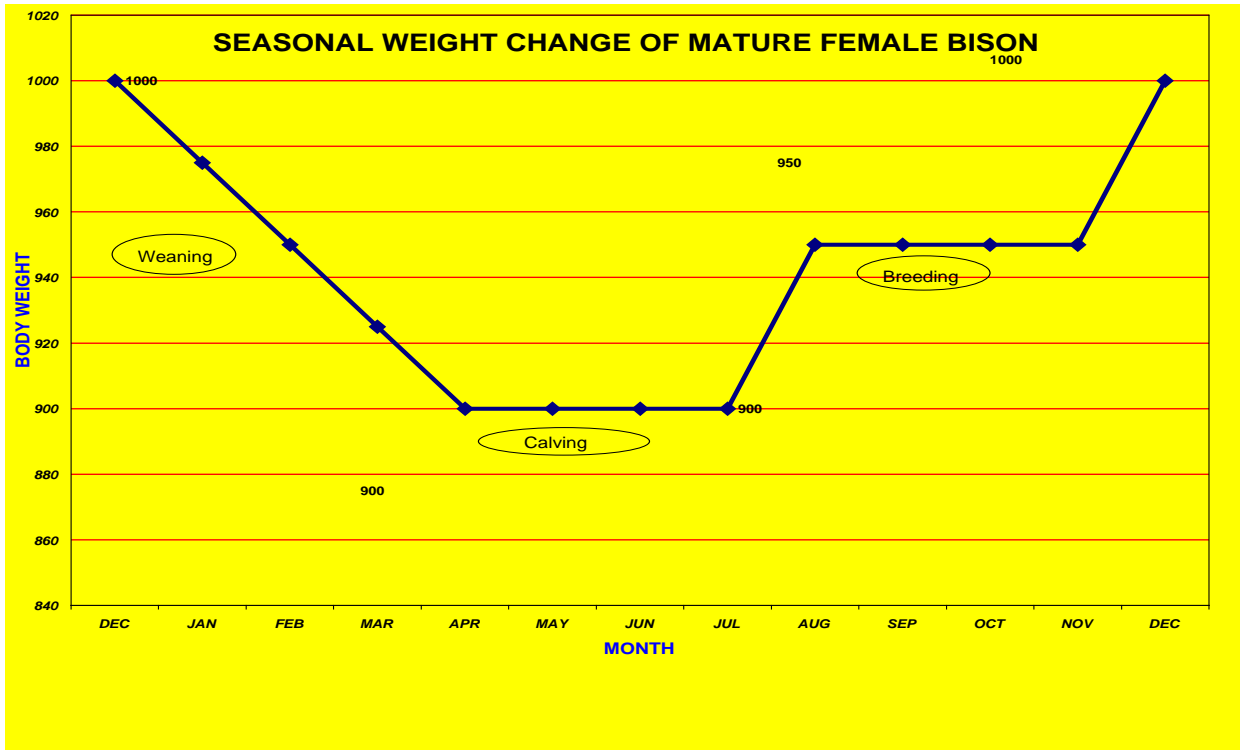
Monitoring the body condition score of the female bison throughout the year especially at breeding time can give a clear relationship between reproductive success and postpartum intervals. If greater than 20% of pre-winter body weight is lost, there is an increased risk of abortions, stillborn calves, or if the calves are born, smaller and weaker calves. Thin or poorly conditioned cows most likely will not conceive. If these cows do breed they will delay conception until later estrus cycles thus delaying calving. In contrast to thin cows, cows that are too fat may not conceive either.

Description of Body Condition Scoring (BCS)

Body Condition score

	1	Severely emaciated. Bone structure of shoulders, ribs, back, hooks and pins very visible.
	2	Very thin no fat on the brisket or ribs, and some muscle still visible. Backbone is easily visible.
OPTIMAL	3	Last 2 ribs cannot be seen, some evidence of fat in the brisket, ribs and back appears rounded
	4	Very good flesh, brisket full. Fat cover is thick and spongy. Ribs are very smooth.
	5	Obese, back very square, brisket distended, heavy fat pockets around tailhead. Square appearance





BODY CONDITION SCORE

4



BODY CONDITION SCORE

3



BODY CONDITION SCORE

2



