What Do Dairy Cows Eat? Foods That We Can’t . . .

...including leftovers from what people eat (byproduct feeds).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We Eat or Use</th>
<th>Byproducts Cows Eat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking oil from soybeans</td>
<td>Soybean Meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar from sugar beets</td>
<td>Beet Pulp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton for clothes</td>
<td>Cottonseeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer from barley, hops</td>
<td>Brewers Grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juice from oranges</td>
<td>Citrus pulp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar for soda from corn</td>
<td>Corn gluten feed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chocolate, gummy bears</td>
<td>Candy waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stale donuts, cakes, bread</td>
<td>Bakery waste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I won’t eat that stuff!

I think I’ll stick with my school lunch!
How Much Do Dairy Cows Eat?

Cows drink 30–50 gallons of water each day – a bathtub full.

Cows eat more than 100 pounds of feed every day – often in a meal called a Total Mixed Ration.

If you ate like a cow you would have to eat 360 cheeseburgers and drink 600 cartons of milk every day!

Total Mixed Rations are like the casseroles we eat: All of the feed is mixed up to make sure each cow gets a balanced diet. Huge mixers are used to mix all of the feed ingredients.
Rumens make cows special!

What is a rumen?
- The first of 4 compartments in a cow’s stomach.
- It is full of bacteria and protozoa that help the cow digest rough feed -- the kind we can’t eat.
- The bacteria and protozoa are also a good source of protein for the cow!

What is a ruminant?
Any hooved animal that digests its food in steps:
1. eat the feed;
2. regurgitate (bring back up) the semi-digested feed (cud);
3. chew, swallow, and digest the cud some more.

Ruminants include:
cows sheep goats
deer elk buffalos
bison giraffes camels
llamas wildebeest antelope

Why Do Cows Chew Their Cuds?

A ‘cud’ is food that a cow brings back up to chew some more. She will swallow food, digest it some, bring it back up to chew again, swallow and digest some more . . . until the food is ready to move on. This allows cows to use foods that we could never eat.