

What Do Dairy Cows Eat?

Foods That We Can't . . .



Silage: made in silos; fermented grasses, alfalfa, or corn.



Hay: dried grass or alfalfa.



Pasture grasses.



I won't eat that stuff!

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

We Eat or Use

Cooking oil from soybeans



Sugar from sugar beets



Cotton for clothes



Beer from barley, hops



Juice from oranges



Sugar for soda from corn



Chocolate, gummy bears



Stale donuts, cakes, bread



Byproducts Cows Eat

Soybean Meal

Beet Pulp

Cottonseeds

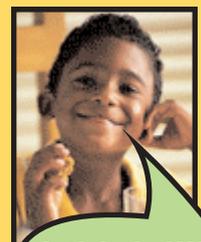
Brewers Grains

Citrus pulp

Corn gluten feed

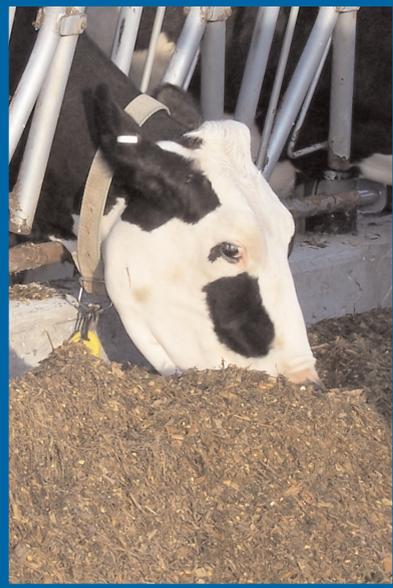
Candy waste

Bakery waste

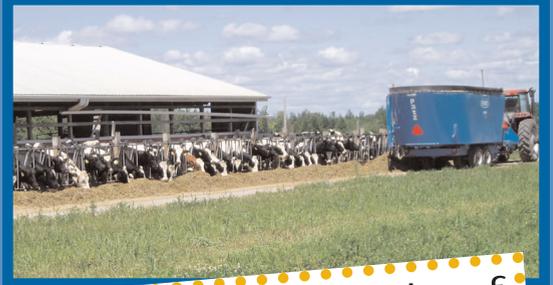


I think I'll stick with my school lunch!

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!



x 600/day!



x 360/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.

alfalfa
cottonseed
vitamins
corn
soybean meal
minerals

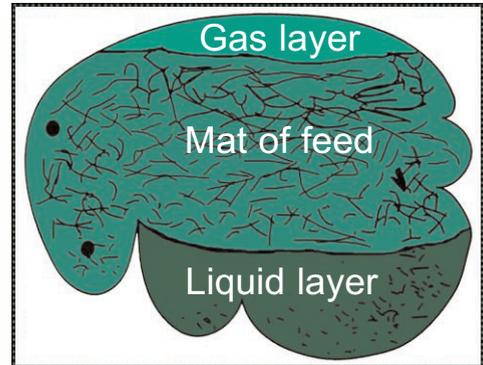


Rumens make cows special!

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!

The Rumen



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?

This is so good I think I'll chew it again!



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.