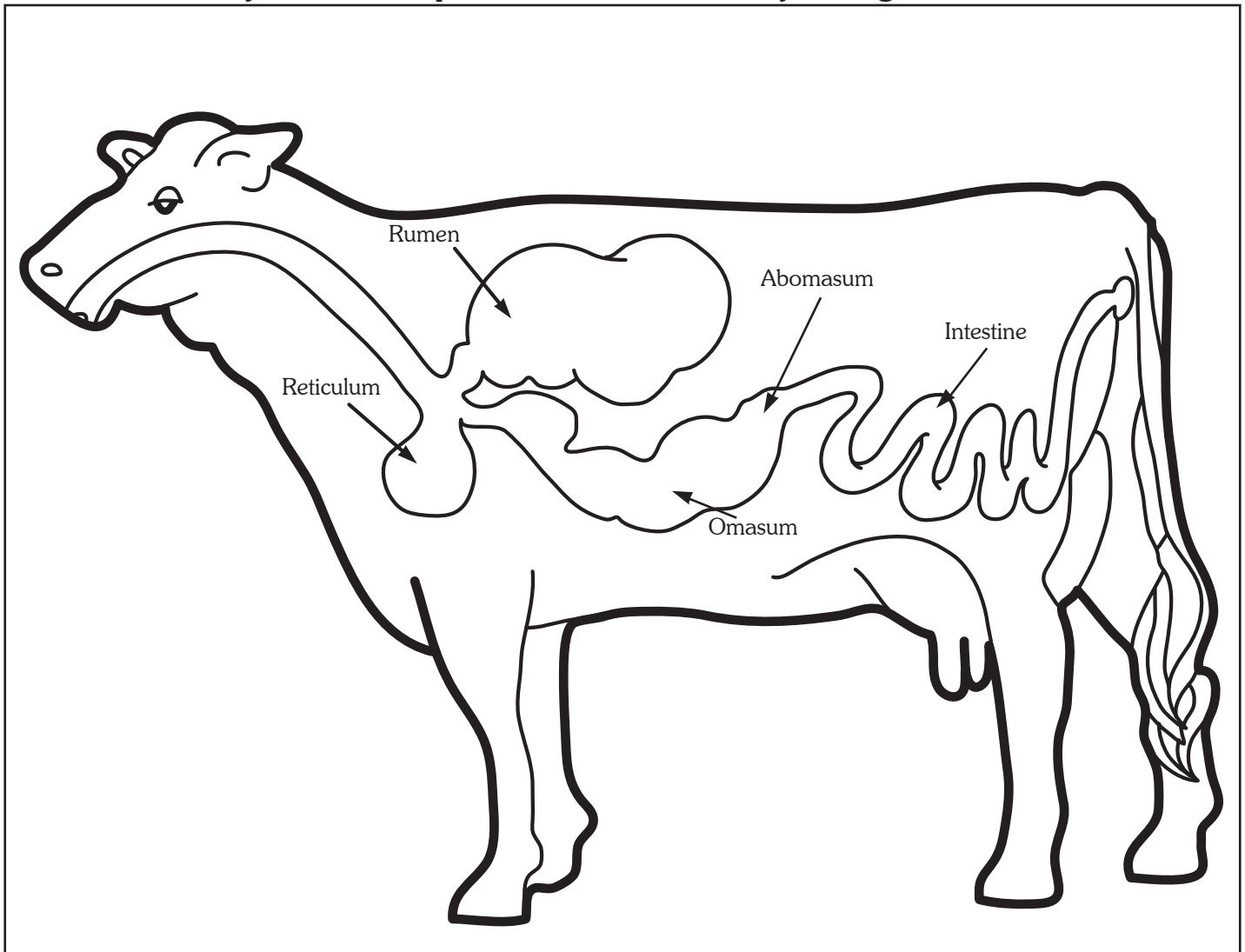


Chew It Twice

Did you know that a cow spends six hours eating and eight hours chewing its cud each day? Follow the path food takes on its way through the cow.



As cattle eat, the food passes from the mouth into the **rumen** (**roo** mihn), where the food is partly digested by tiny bacteria. The food is then passed to the **reticulum** (ruh **tik** yu lum), which is a membrane with “honeycombed” ridges. These ridges break the food down into smaller pieces called cud. The cud comes back into the cow’s mouth. The cow chews its cud with its powerful back teeth to break the food down even more. As the cow swallows, the saliva washes the cud back into the cow’s system. The food now flows into the **omasum** (o **mey** sum). This is where the food breaks down into vitamins and nutrients that the cow’s body needs. The final digestive process takes place in the **abomasum** (ab o **mey** sum). Here the cow’s system gets all the remaining food value it needs before the food passes into the **intestines**. The intestines continue to absorb nutrients and store the unused food portions until there is enough to be removed as cow manure.