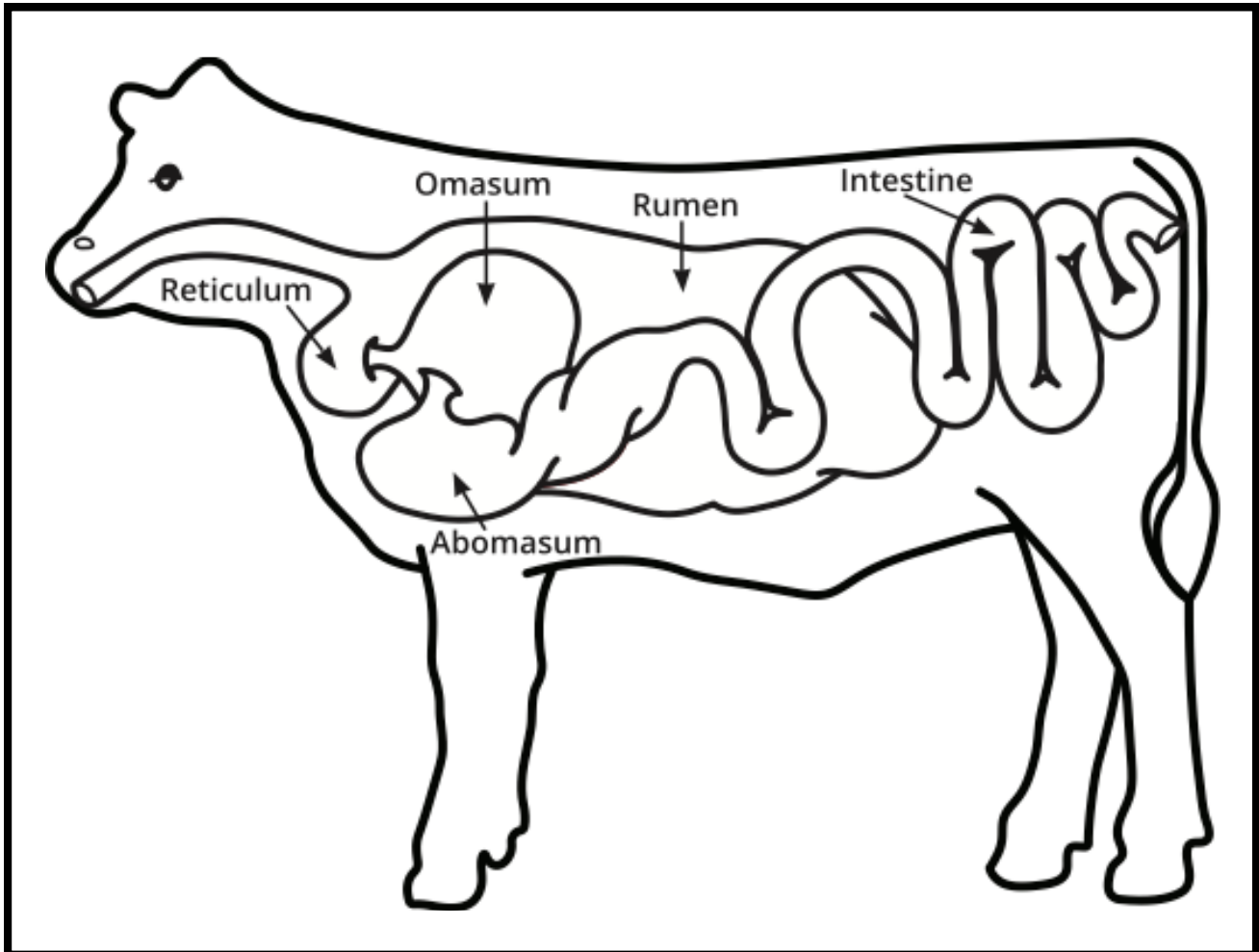


Chew it Twice

Did you know that cattle spend six hours eating and eight hours chewing their cud each day? Follow the path food takes on its way through the steer.



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 steer’s mouth. The steer chews its cud with its powerful back teeth to break the food down even more. As the steer swallows, the saliva washes the cud back into the steer’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 steer’s body needs. The final digestive process takes place in the **abomasum** (ab o mey sum). Here the steer’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 are enough to be removed as manure.