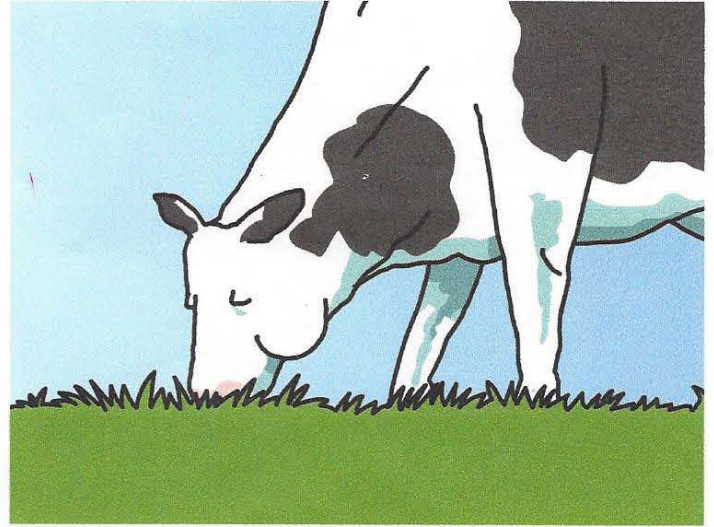




FYI Digestive System

In order to be able to digest grass and other fibrous plants, cows have a specialized stomach consisting of four compartments.

The first and largest compartment is called the **rumen**, which contains a liquid in which billions of bacteria, protozoa, yeasts, and other microorganisms live. These tiny creatures break down the normally indigestible cellulose in the plant matter cows love to eat, turning it into the substances cows use for energy.



Food entering the rumen has to be chewed really well for the organisms living there to be able to digest it properly. Any insufficiently chewed food is belched up, so the cow can chew it some more. This is known as “chewing cud.”

The second compartment of a cow’s stomach acts as a trap for any foreign objects the cow has chewed. You can sometimes find things like rocks, nails, and pieces of wire and metal in there! The third compartment is a kind of gateway, and the fourth compartment acts like our stomach, with acids and enzymes breaking food down before moving it along.

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