

Ever wondered
where milk from
the grocery
store comes
from or
how it's made?



how a cow makes milk

the milking process

- The milking process begins by collecting the animals. The cows are then routed into the milking parlour where they undergo an inspection and cleaning of their teats.
- The milking equipment is then attached to their teats and the milk is transferred through tubes via vacuum into a stainless steel bulk tank. It usually takes 5-8 minutes for each cow to be milked. Once the cows have released all of the milk from their udder, the milk machines are automatically removed from their teats.
- The cows then leave the parlour and return to the barn where they can relax and socialize with their fellow cows until it is time for their next milking.
- Dairy cows are happiest when they are on a predictable schedule for feeding, milking and cleaning.
COOL FACT - Some cows enjoy music in the milking parlour while they are getting milked.
- Cows are usually milked twice a day, twelve hours apart.
*COOL FACT - A cow is milked for about **305 days** out of 365 days in the year. The remaining 60 days are a rest period for the cows to take a break.*



for more information call BC Milk Producers at 604.294.3737
or 1.877.46.BCMPA (22672) www.bcmilkproducers.ca

the dairy cow is the primary milk producing animal in the world



Cows need food for energy

Dairy cows are at work all day to make the milk that we drink, which is why we provide them with a balanced diet of various feeds. Proper nutrition keeps cows healthy and allows them to produce high quality milk. There are many different kinds of feed that dairy farmers feed their cows.

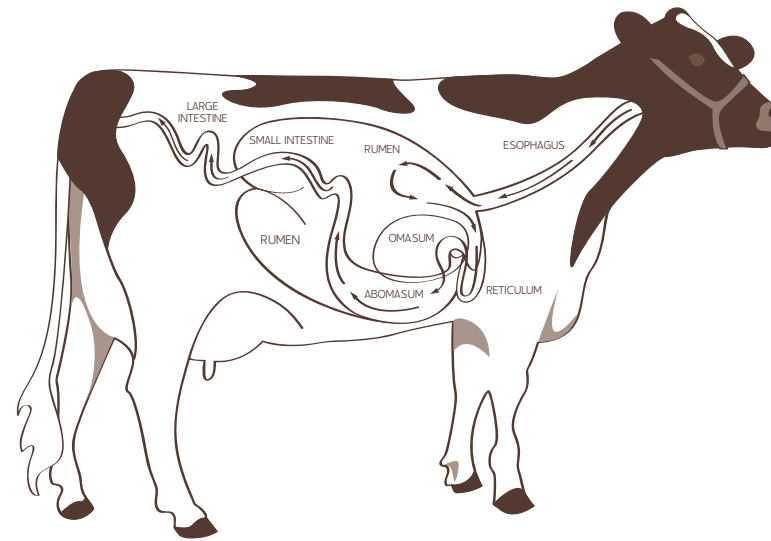
- Grass on pasture
- Hay (dried grass or alfalfa)
- Feed grains (corn, barley, wheat and oats)
- Protein supplements
- Vitamins and minerals
- Silage (fermented crops such as grass, corn and or/barley)

Cows have water and feed available to them at all times

- Cows make use of fibrous feeds called forages like grass and hay and convert them into nutritious milk.
- They drink about a bathtub full of water and eat about 50 kilograms of food (or 1675 servings of cereal) a day.

the all natural milk machine

Cows are known as ruminant animals because they have a unique stomach system, made up of 4 stomach compartments. This allows them to digest foods such as corn and hay more efficiently than animals with one stomach compartment, such as humans. Each stomach compartment has a unique feature that helps to break down and absorb the digested food.



- 1 Food first goes into the **rumen** and **reticulum**.
COOL FACT - The rumen occupies up to one third of the weight of an adult milking cow and may contain 150 to 200 kg of plant material and water.
- 2 The cow regurgitates a small amount of food (called cud) so that she can chew it again into smaller, more digestible pieces.
- 3 The cud is then swallowed and it goes into the third chamber -the **omasum**- where water and some nutrients are absorbed.
COOL FACT - The inside of the omasum looks like pages of a book.
- 4 Then it moves into the fourth chamber -the **abomasum** (similar to our stomach)- where digestion actually occurs.
- 5 Udder and Teats - Milk production occurs in the udder in four separate compartments.
COOL FACT - The average cow produces approximately 30 L of milk a day.

fast facts:

A cow produces nearly **9500 litres** of milk per year in BC.

A cow weighs between **600 - 750 kg (1400-1600 lbs)** which is the size of approximately **8 grown men**.

All dairy cows are female! Males are called bulls.

Cows spend about **10 hours a day** eating, **8 hours a day** lying down and **6 hours a day** on their feet, being milked, walking around their stalls and socializing with their herd mates.

All mammals such as water buffalo, goats, sheep, horses, reindeer and camels can also produce milk.