

ACTIVITY SHEET 2

THINGS WE CAN LEARN FROM A COW AND A WORM

NAME _____

MORE ABOUT RUMINANTS

Directions

Examine the information on this page and underline or highlight information that is new to you.

Almost half of the land in the contiguous 48 states is classified as grazing land. At least 90 percent of that land cannot be used for farming or growing crops because it is too high, too rough, too dry or too wet. Grass from these lands contains cellulose which is indigestible by humans. Because they are ruminants, cattle can eat grasses and convert them to beef and dairy products that humans *can* eat.

Cattle producers are responsible for managing cattle and land in ways that will protect the environment. This is in the producers' best interests, since caring for the land will allow the land to care for the cattle on which they depend.

About 85 percent of nutrients consumed by cattle comes from sources not suitable as food for humans. Many beef cattle go from grazing lands to feedlots. There they are fed roughage and cattle feed concentrates (mostly grains only suitable for animal feed) for about 100 days. Feedlots help to keep supplies of beef constant, making beef available year-round and keeping prices stable.

Cattle producers also use their animals as recyclers by feeding them food processing by-products that would otherwise be shipped to landfills. More than half of by-products of fruit, vegetable and grain processing goes into livestock feed.

Cattle Eat:

- almond hulls
- barley or hops hulls
- canola seed pulp
- cereal by-products
- citrus pulp
- corn and other grains
- corn gluten
- (a by-product of corn processing)*
- corn stalks
- cotton seed husks
- culled vegetables
- dried or wet tomato pulp
- grasses
- molasses
- potato peels
- soy hulls
- sugar beet pulp
- shrubs
- weeds
- wheat middlings
- (a by-product of wheat processing)*

Foods from cattle provide high-quality protein, calcium, and vitamins such as iron, zinc, and B-vitamins that humans need to maintain a healthy diet. Equally important are the other products from cattle that humans use every day.

Products from Cattle:

- butter
- cheese
- hamburgers
- hot dogs
- ice cream
- milk
- roast beef
- steaks
- cosmetics
- glue
- leather for: shoes, gloves and coats
- some medicines
- soap
- pet foods
- fertilizer

Processing Information

Explain in your own words how cattle are nature's model for environmental conservation.

Application

List items you can conserve on the back of this sheet. Place a check next to those you currently conserve or recycle. Circle those items you plan to start conserving. Write an explanation next to those things you don't plan to reuse, recycle or reduce.

Find Out

1. What other ruminants are nature's model for conservation?

2. Explain why you listed the animals you did for number 1.
