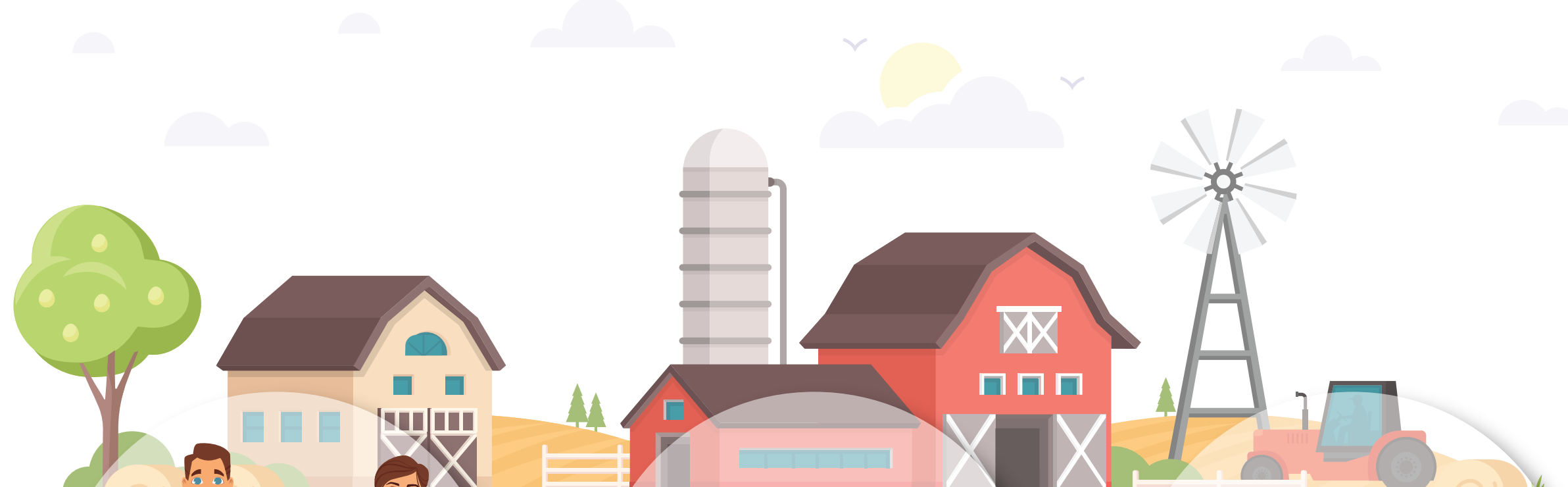


What Do Cows Eat?

Do you eat the same things you did when you were a baby? Probably not. Cows are the same way. Just like your parents want you to eat healthy foods, dairy farmers want the same thing for their cows. So, farmers talk to nutritionists—special people who know what cows need to eat at each stage of life—to decide what they should feed their growing cows. This helps keep cows healthy as they grow so they can make milk for you to drink!



The amount of water a cow drinks each day could fill a bathtub!

Cows spend 6.5 hours per day eating.

A milking cow eats 100 pounds of food per day.

Babies

Up to 3 Months

CALVES

A baby cow, called a calf, drinks a special kind of milk that's a lot like baby formula. Like human babies, calves drink this milk from a bottle. But that doesn't last long! Cows grow much faster than people, and after a few weeks, they start drinking milk out of a bucket.

Teens

Up to 2 Years

HEIFERS

Once they're about three months old, teenage cows—called heifers—stop drinking milk and start eating grains, hay, and corn silage, which is a whole corn plant chopped up. Just like people, cows can be picky eaters. Sometimes, farmers top their cows' food with molasses, like putting syrup on a pancake, to make it taste sweeter.

Adults

2+ Years

COWS

It takes a cow only about two years to turn into an adult and start making milk. Farmers add extra vitamins and minerals to their cows' meals so they have enough energy to make milk. Sometimes, they'll feed cows soybean meal, which is a good source of protein that gives cows extra nutrients to stay strong.