

Sheep – the wool producers

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Sheep are **domestic animals** raised for their wool, meat and milk. Sheep belong to a group of animals called **mammals**.

Sheep are ruminants, which means they have four stomachs.

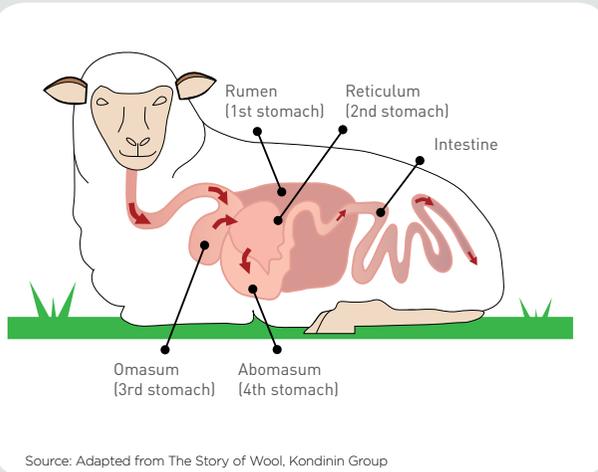
The first stop is the rumen (first stomach), which starts to break down the food.

About an hour later the rumen pushes the food (now called cud) back to the mouth to be chewed again. The sheep swallows the cud, which goes into the reticulum (second stomach).

The reticulum stores juices from the cud, which then goes into the omasum (third stomach) where it is squeezed to remove any remaining liquid.

The food then moves to the abomasum (fourth stomach) and passes into the intestine where nutrients are absorbed. The remaining waste is passed out as urine and manure.

The digestive process



Did you know?

- Humans are **mammals**, but we only have one stomach.
- Sheep are **herbivores** (only eat plants) and humans are omnivores (we can eat plants and meat).
- Sheep manure can be used on gardens as fertiliser because it contains lots of nutrients that help plants grow.
- A group of sheep is called a 'flock' or a 'mob'.

Glossary

Domestic animals — animals that have been tamed to live alongside humans as companions or livestock.

Mammals — milk-producing animals with an internal skeleton (bones), usually with four legs and hair or fur. Most mammals give birth to live young.

Herbivores — animals that get their energy from eating plants, and only plants.

More information

To find out more about sheep, take a look at:

- learnaboutwool.com
- Beyond the Bale magazine: beyondthebale.wool.com

Fun facts about wool

- There are more than 70 million sheep in Australia. That's more than three sheep for every person.
- Other ruminants include cattle, goats, giraffes, deer, gazelles, moose and antelopes.
- Sheep can graze (eat pasture) for about seven hours every day.

