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Published Dec 12 2011 by Guardian.co.uk

Why cows like to chew over things together

Research on cattle behaviour shows that they like to eat, stand and lie down at the same time as others

About this article This article was published on guardian.co.uk at 16.30 GMT on Monday 12 December 2011. A version appeared on p37 of the EducationGuardian...

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Quotes

The researchers "modelled the eating, lying and standing dynamics of a cow using a piecewise linear dynamical system ... We chose a form of coupling based on cows having an increased desire to eat if they notice another cow eating and an increased desire to lie down if they notice another cow lying down." This, they say, led..

Why cows like to chew over things together [Guardian.co.uk

...discovery: "[We] showed that it is possible for cows to synchronise less when the coupling is increased."

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was to realise "it is biologically plausible to view [cattle] as oscillators ... During the first stage (standing/feeding), they stand upup to graze but they strongly prefer to lie down and 'ruminate' or chew the cud for the second stage (lying/ruminating). They thus oscillate between two stages."

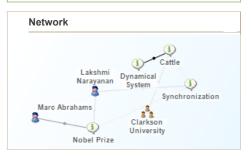
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In Focus

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In 2008, some scientists proposed that cows can sense magnetism and actually line up in fields along Earth's magnetic lines. It's the sort of paper that everybody in the media wants to talk about for, roughly, two weeks ... and then never mention ...

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