

Displaced Abomasum

The abomasum is the cow's true (fourth) stomach, located near the floor of the abdominal cavity on the right side, below the omasum. The rumen and reticulum are above and to the left of the abomasum. Left

displacement (LDA) accounts in 80-90% of all displacements. It occurs when the

abomasum moves to the left of its normal position, becoming trapped between the rumen and the left abdominal wall. In some cases it will also twist. Stretching results in constriction of the entrance to and exit from the abomasum and it fills with gas. LDA is suspected when tapping the lower left side of the cow produces a hollow 'ping', indicating the presence of gas.

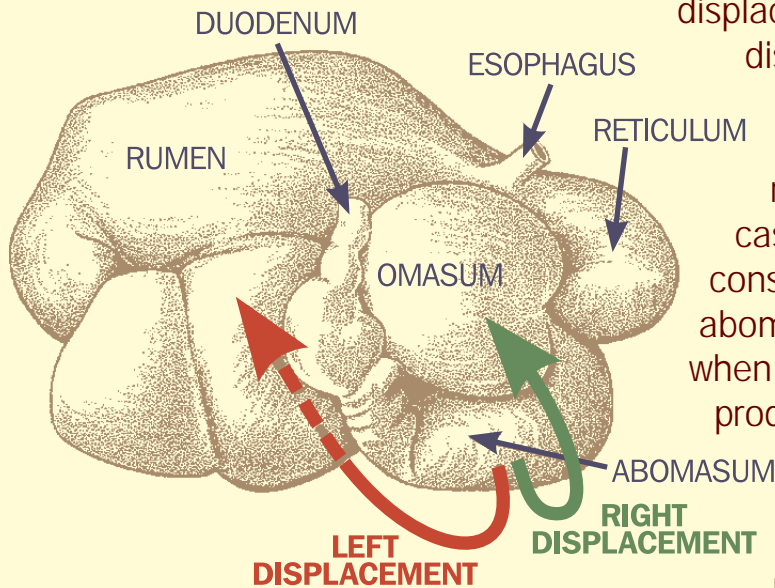
In a right displacement, the abomasum moves up the right abdominal wall and becomes trapped, often with its front end

tipped back or rotated above the omasum. Constriction of digesta flow through the abomasum results in the accumulation of fluid. Some gas may also accumulate but normally less than with LDA. Right displacement is a more serious condition than LDA and recovery rate is significantly lower.

Most displacements occur within 6 weeks of calving. Cows go off feed and become depressed. Production drops and they may stand with an arched back or kick at their abdomen. Symptoms often resemble [ketosis](#).

Although the exact cause is unknown, an association between rumen fill and abdominal capacity is commonly assumed. After calving, the void left by expulsion of the calf leaves room for the abdominal organs to move more freely. If feed (particularly forage) consumption declines before or after calving, reduced fill may allow greater movement. A strong association with other post-calving disorders has also been established. Careful feeding management during the [transition](#) period can reduce the incidence of displaced abomasum.

Although rolling a cow over on her back or running her up a steep hill may correct some mild cases, surgery is commonly required: the abomasum is repositioned and anchored in place with sutures.



for more information:

[Fresh Cow Problems: How to control them](#), *Hoard's Dairyman Books*