

METHODS OF DETERMINING AGE OF ANIMAL

The beef cow has a relatively short life span. After their peak productive age, breeding market value usually declines as the animal gets older.

Year branding or ear tag numbering are good methods of permanently identifying the age of cattle. The approximate age of cattle may be determined by examining the teeth. The tooth method of aging cattle involves noting the time of appearance and the degree of wear on the temporary and permanent teeth.

The temporary or milk

Teeth are easily distinguished from the permanent teeth by their smaller size and whiter color. At maturity cattle have 32 teeth, 8 of which are incisors in the lower jaw.

- The two central incisors are known as pinchers;
- The third pair are called second intermediates or laterals; and the outer pair are known as the corners.
- There are no upper incisor teeth; only the thick, hard dental pad.

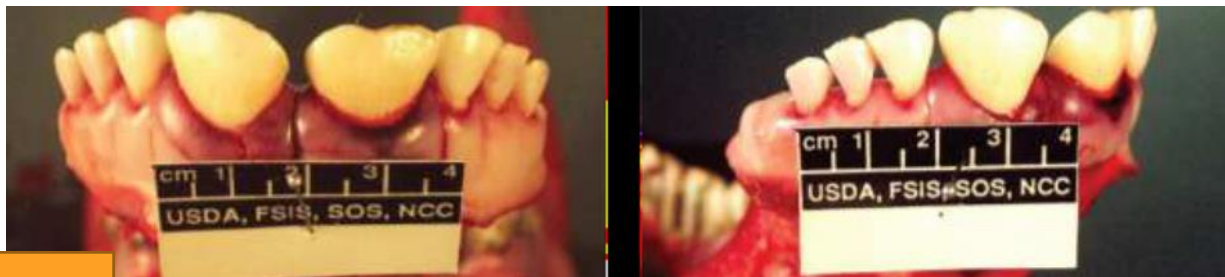
The tooth method of aging cattle is more accurate when animals are grazed for their entire life on "soft feed" (irrigated pasture). Under rough feed conditions, such as desert rangelands, teeth are worn at a much faster rate. Under rough feed conditions, accuracy of aging cattle is reduced, particularly in animals over five years of age where tooth wear is the only indicator. Becoming proficient at aging cattle by the tooth method requires practical experience and a lot of practice. It also requires theoretical knowledge of the information.

Determination of Age Cattle: 0-12 Months:

Calves are borne with or without teeth and have all of their deciduous teeth by the first month of life. Deciduous teeth are much smaller than permanent teeth

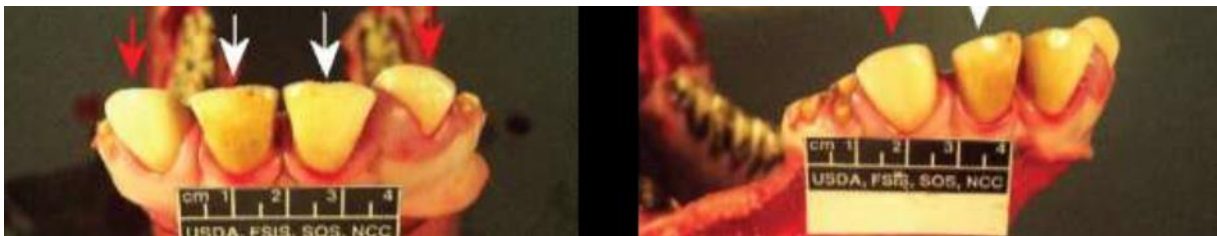
- First pair of permanent molars erupts around 5 months. It is difficult to use premolars as a reference for age because the time of eruption is inconsistent.
- Between the first and second year of life cattle the deciduous central incisors will be replaced by permanent Incisors.

Less than 18 month



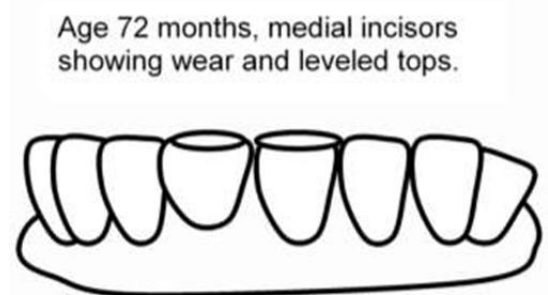
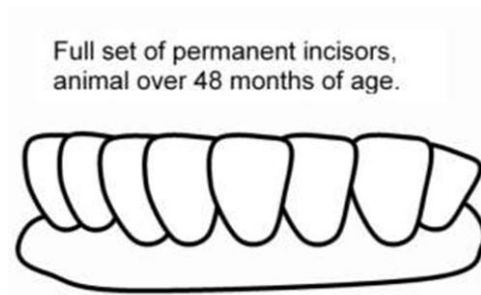
20-24 month

- Middle permanent incisors erupt at approximately 28 months
- The third pair of permanent molars appear between 24 and 30 months of age
- Lateral incisors erupt between 30 – 36





- By 48 months (4 years) cattle should have all of their permanent incisors
- At 5 – 6 years the teeth should show wear.



Determination of Age in Sheep and Goats:

Dental patterns are similar in sheep and goats and therefore age determination is the same. The pattern of eruption is similar to cattle ,Sheep and goats have eight incisors, and 12 molars, lambs and kids are born with deciduous teeth

Age of Sheep Dental Pattern

- 1 – 1.5 years Central permanent incisors erupt
- 1.5 – 2 year's Middle permanent incisors erupt
- 2.5 – 3 years Lateral permanent incisors erupt
- 3 – 4 years Corner permanent incisors erupt

