Determination of Age

- General age ranges can be determined by assessing the dental pattern of ruminants
  - Age determination is based on eruption and wear of deciduous and permanent teeth
  - Dentition can be affected by diet and unusual wear and therefore the assessments made are only an estimate of age
- Cattle have eight incisors that are located in the lower jaw
- Incisor teeth meet with the dental pad of the upper jaw:
  - Two middle teeth are central incisors
  - Pair next to the central incisors are the middle incisors
  - Incisors next to the middle are the lateral incisors
  - Incisors next to the lateral incisors are the corner incisors
Determination of Age Cattle: 0-12 Months

- Calves are borne with or without teeth
- Calves 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 erupt around 5 months
  - It is difficult to use premolars as a reference for age because the time of eruption is inconsistent
Determination of Age Cattle: 1 - 2 years

- Between the first and second year of life cattle the deciduous central incisors will be replaced by permanent incisors.
- Central molars tend to erupt between 12 – 18 months.

Less than 18 months

20 - 24 months
Determination of Age Cattle: 2 - 3 years

- 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 months

Less than 24 - 30 months

30 - 36 months
Determination of Age Cattle: 3 - 4 years

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

36 – 42 months
### Determination of Age 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Sheep</th>
<th>Dental Pattern</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 1.5 years</td>
<td>Central permanent incisors erupt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 – 2 years</td>
<td>Middle permanent incisors erupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 – 3 years</td>
<td>Lateral permanent incisors erupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4 years</td>
<td>Corner permanent incisors erupt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determination of Age Sheep and Goats