

## **DENTITION OF SMALL RUMINANTS**

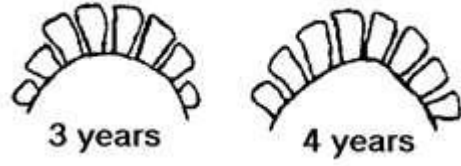
The teeth can be used to approximate the age of small ruminants and is usually most accurate up to the age of 4 years. After this, age is estimated by the amount of wear and staining on the front teeth. As they age, the teeth spread and drop out making it more difficult for them to eat properly.

Adult sheep and goats have 32 teeth which includes both molars and incisors. They have 8 incisors which are only present in the lower jaw just as in the cow, and are chisel shaped and very sharp in young animals. The hard pad on the upper jaw against which the incisors oppose is called the dental pad. The cleft upper lip and position of the incisors opposing the dental pad is what permits small ruminants to bite close to the ground when grazing. The remaining 24 teeth are molars which are found at the back of the mouth, 6 on each side of both upper and lower jaws.

There is considerable variation in the eruption times of teeth, in individual animals, as well as in certain breeds, particularly in early maturing breeds. The pasture type also has some effect on eruption time. The incisors of small ruminants grazed on soft good food will be in much better condition than those raised under more adverse conditions.

### **ERUPTION TABLE**

<i>AGE</i>	<i>INCISORS</i>	<i>REMARKS</i>
<b><i>BABY/DECIDUOUS TEETH</i></b>		
At birth to 1 week	First pair (Centrals)	Temporary
1 – 2 weeks	Second pair (Centro-laterals)	Temporary
2 – 3 weeks	Third pair (Laterals)	Temporary
3 – 4 weeks	Fourth pair (Corners)	Temporary
<b><i>ADULT/PERMANENT TEETH</i></b>		
1 to 1.5 years	First pair (Centrals)	Two tooth
1.5 to 2 years	Second pair (Centro-laterals)	Four tooth
2.5 to 3 years	Third pair (Laterals)	Six tooth
3.5 to 4 years	Fourth pair (Corners)	Full mouth



This picture above illustrates how the permanent teeth erupt and what it looks like but the true eruption ages are given in the table on page 1.