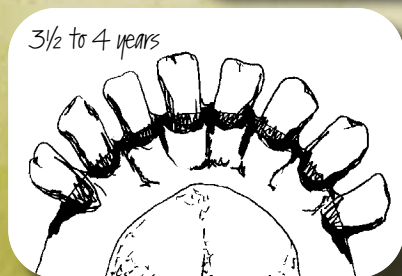
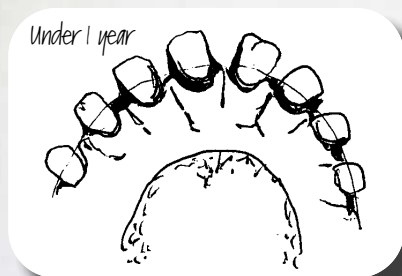


# USING TEETH

## to Determine Your Goat's Age

BY TAMSIN COOPER



**DECIDUOUS INCISORS** generally erupt one pair per week from birth, so you can reckon a kid's age as follows:

- 1st/2nd pair erupted: 0–2 weeks old;
- 3rd pair erupted: 2–3 weeks old;
- 4th pair erupted and growing: 3–4 weeks old;
- Starting to spread: 3–9 months old;
- Spread and wearing down: around 1 year old.

**THE FIRST TWO MIDDLE PERMANENT INCISORS** emerge as a yearling approaches 18 months old, quickly followed by the second pair by two years old. In the following year, the third pair erupt, while the outer pair are replaced by four years old. Adult teeth are noticeably wider and may differ in color from baby teeth, which will be showing considerable wear at this stage. We can estimate age from when adult teeth replace deciduous teeth and their subsequent wear:

- Central pair: 1–1.5 years old;
- 2nd pair: 1.5–2 years old;
- 3rd pair: 2.5–3 years old;
- 4th pair: 3.5–4 years old;
- Signs of wear: 4+ years old;
- Spreading: 5+ years old;
- Lost or broken: 6+ years old.

As growth is continuous during the first four years, and wear is dependent on circumstances, your goats may quite normally be in advance or lag behind this ready reckoner. My own goats were a case in point when I photographed them just after their birthdays. My two-year-old had her third set already growing. My hardy four- and five-year-olds showed very little wear, despite their high-fiber diet. Goats with lost or broken teeth are retired from production and need softer feeds, such as pellets and specialty products, to maintain their nutrition.

