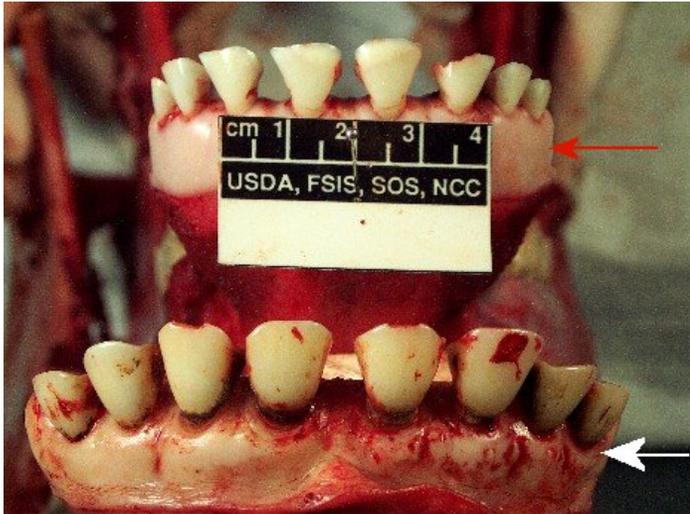


## USING TEETH TO AGE CATTLE

Taken from: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/ofotsc/bse\\_information.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/ofotsc/bse_information.htm)

Cattle dentition is generally used as an indicator of age when actual birthdates are not available. Eruption times and wear of the teeth are the major factors used to estimate bovine age. **This guidance document will base the aging of cattle on the eruption times for the permanent incisors.**

### Deciduous (temporary) incisors versus permanent incisors



Deciduous incisors differ from permanent incisors in the following ways:

Deciduous teeth are much **smaller**. The crowns (that part of the tooth that is covered with enamel) of deciduous incisors are **narrower** than permanent incisors and they **diverge more from the base** (at the gum line) of the tooth to the apex when compared to the permanent incisors.

The photo to the left compares the mandibles (lower jaws) from a young animal with deciduous incisors (red arrow) to an older animal with permanent incisors (white arrow). The difference in tooth size and shape and jaw width (and size) can be

appreciated.

The figures below represent the incisor dentition from animals that are 30 months of age and younger.

An animal **14 months of age** would have a full set of deciduous incisors as shown in **Figure 2**. All four pairs of teeth are temporary and firmly in place. The teeth are short, broad and usually have a bright, ivory color. There is usually space between the Di1 incisors. Other incisors may touch on the inside corner at the top of the tooth.

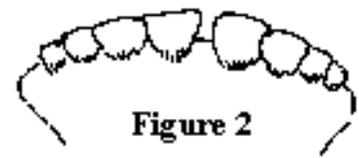


Figure 2

As the animal ages, the deciduous teeth become loosely set in the jaw, especially the central 2 incisors. The teeth appear longer and narrower (**Figure 3**) than in younger animals and the teeth may or may not be touching at the upper corners; an animal with this dentition is approximately **15 – 18 months of age**.

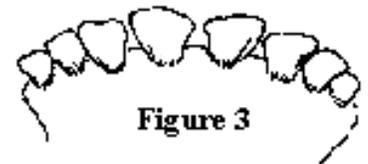


Figure 3

In **Figure 4**, a permanent central (I1) incisor has erupted; temporary incisors may or may not be present when the permanent incisor erupts. The permanent incisors usually erupt at an angle (**Figure 5**) and straighten into a definite pattern with growth. In **Figure 5**, both central (I1) incisors have erupted; they may or may not be in a straight line with the inside corners touching. The central incisors, in **Figure 6**, are in place, they have straightened and the inside corners are in line. **Animals with eruption of one or more central incisors are considered to be 18 – 24 months of age.** When one or both middle (I2) incisors erupt the animal is considered to be 24 – 30 months of age (**Figure 7**).

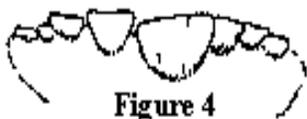


Figure 4

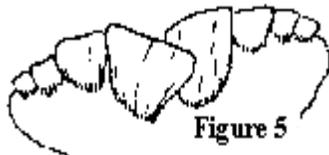


Figure 5

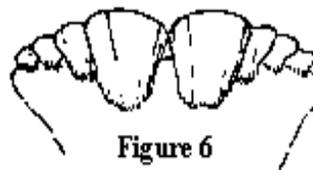


Figure 6

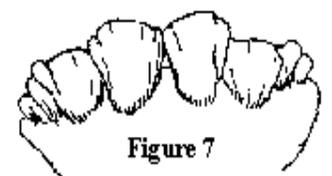
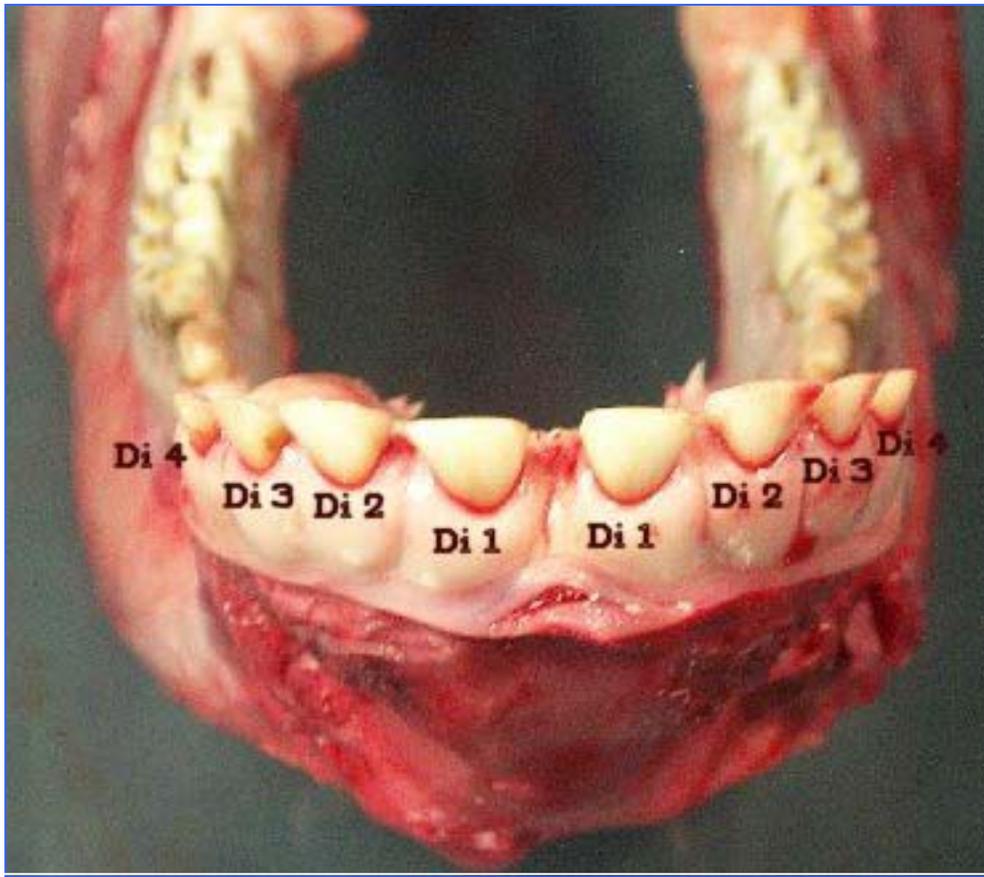
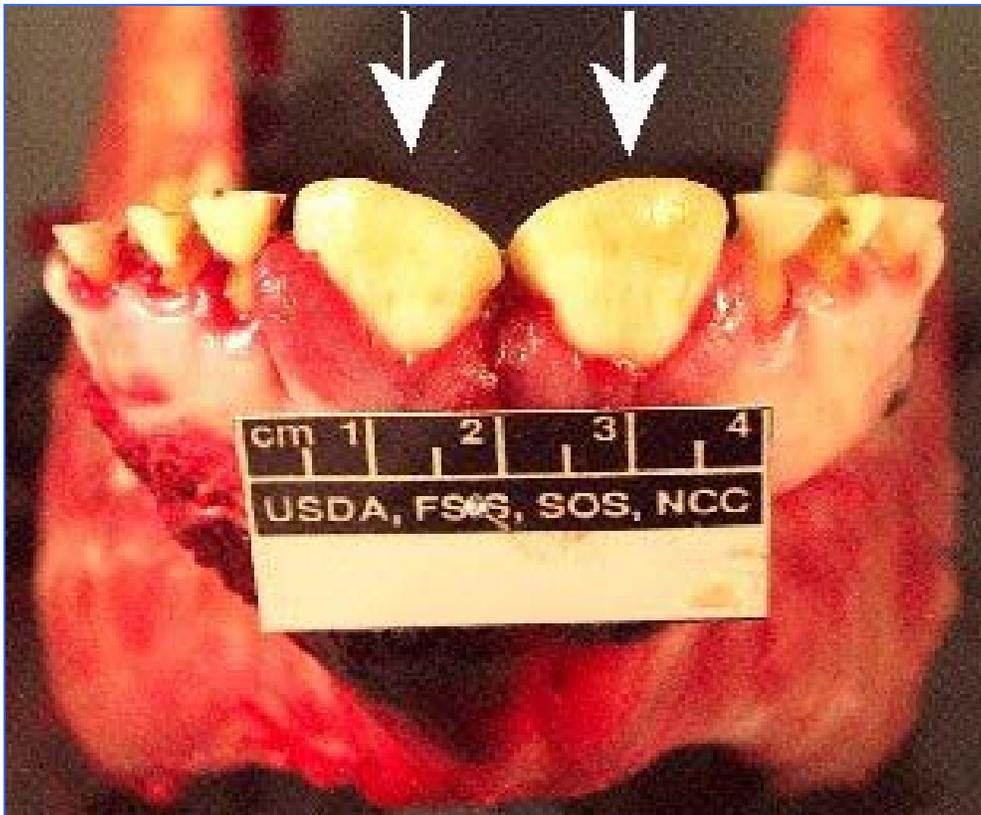


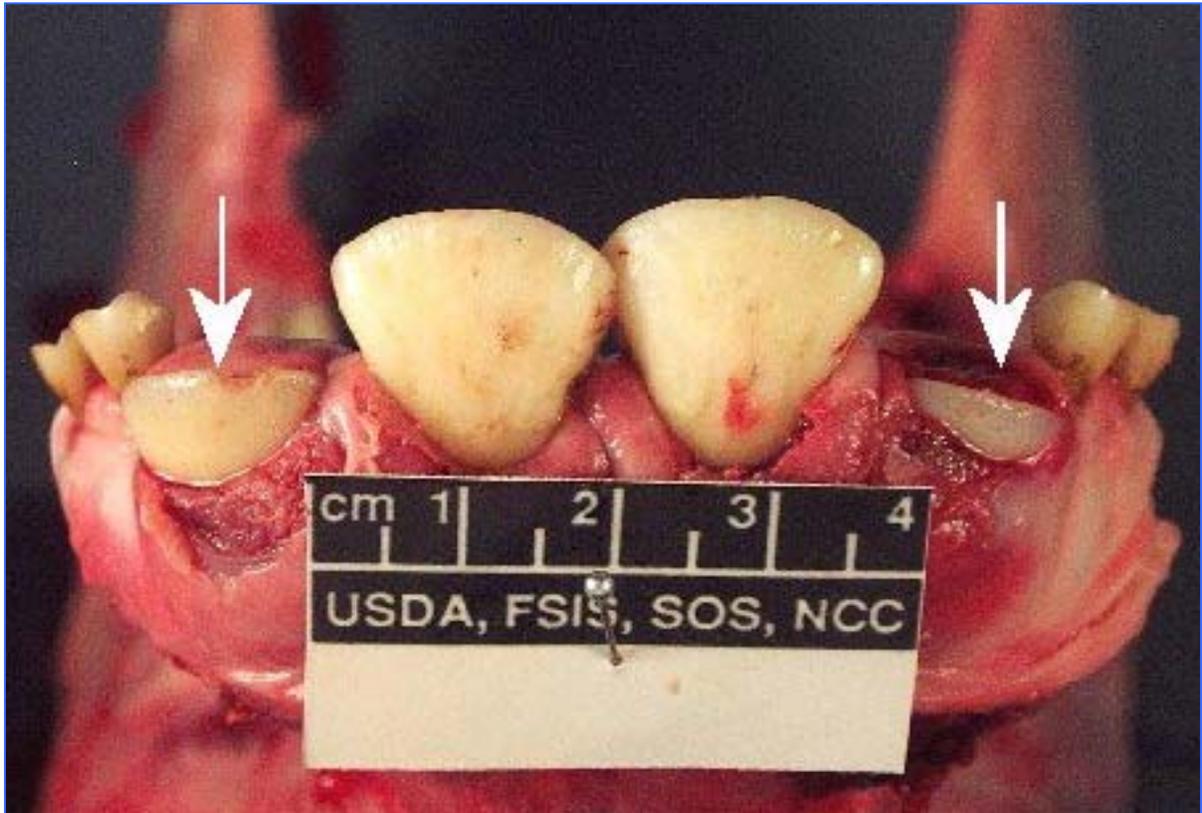
Figure 7



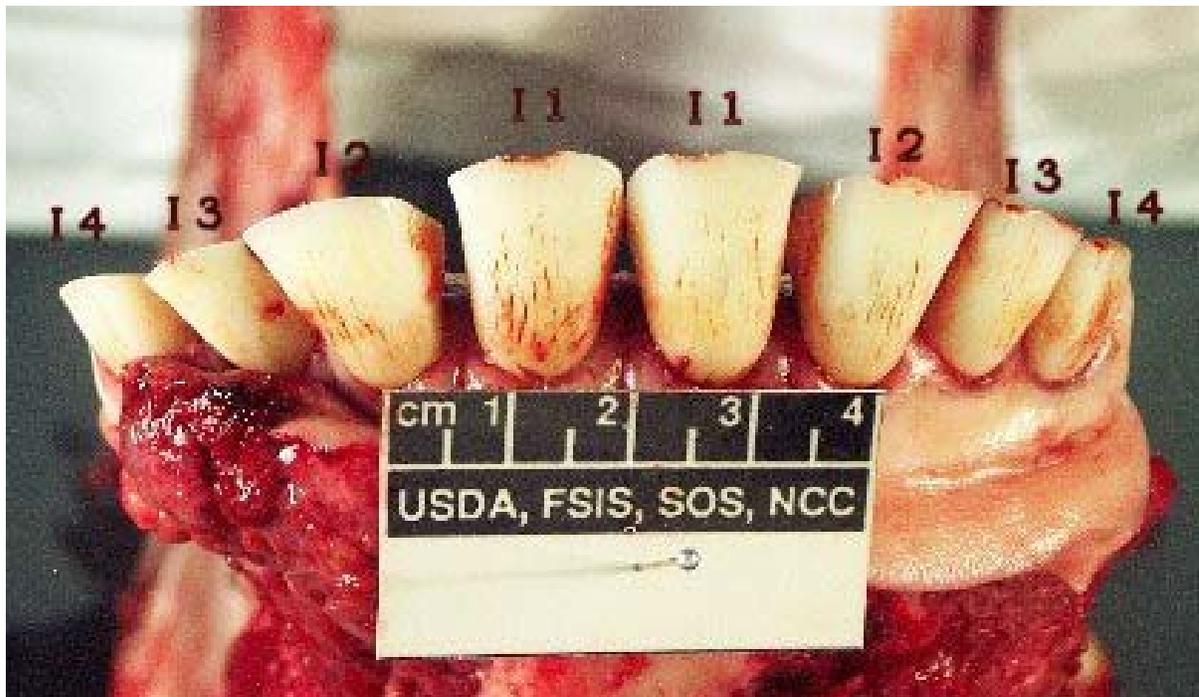
Baby teeth at 15 months of age



2 middle adult teeth at 18 months of age



2nd set of adult teeth at 30 months of age



All adult incisors (I1-I4): > 42 months of age