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Hart District Replacement Local Plan
Site 1050 - Fox Farm
Agricultural Land Classification Survey
Summary Report
October 1996.

Resource Planning Team
Guildford Statutory Group
ADAS Reading

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION, SUMMARY REPORT

HART DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN SITE 1050 - FOX FARM

Introduction

1. This report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey on approximately 5 hectares of land situated to the south west of Yateley, Hampshire. The survey was carried out during October 1996.
2. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) from its Land Use Planning Unit, in Reading, in connection with the Hart District Replacement Local Plan. The results of this survey supersede any previous ALC information for this land.
3. The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Guildford Statutory Group of ADAS. The land has been graded in accordance with the published MAFF ALC guidelines and criteria (MAFF, 1988). A description of the ALC grades and subgrades is given in Appendix I.
4. At the time of survey the area was used as rough grazing. In certain areas scrub and woodland vegetation is encroaching the field boundaries.

Summary

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the enclosed ALC map. The map has been drawn at a scale of 1:10,000. It is accurate at this scale, but any enlargement would be misleading.
6. The area and proportions of the ALC grades and subgrades on the surveyed land are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Area of grades and other land

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% site area	% surveyed area
3b	4.4	81.5	100.0
Other Land	1.0	18.5	-
Total surveyed area	4.4	-	100.0
Total site area	5.4	100.0	-

7. The fieldwork was conducted at an average density of 1 boring per hectare. A total of 5 borings and one soil pit were described.

8. All of the agricultural land on this site has been classified as Subgrade 3b (moderate quality), the key limitation being soil droughtiness. The soil profiles comprise deep well drained sandy soils grading into clay at depth. The soils are moderately stony down to approximately 100cm.

In this local climatic regime, the combination of soil textures, structures, and stone contents acts to restrict the amount of profile available water for crops. As a result the level and consistency of crop yields is restricted. This land has therefore been classified as Subgrade 3b on the basis of a moderate soil droughtiness limitation.

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF THE GRADES AND SUBGRADES

Grade 1: Excellent Quality Agricultural Land

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

Grade 2: Very Good Quality Agricultural Land

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural or horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land of this grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1 land.

Grade 3: Good to Moderate Quality Land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, the timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. When more demanding crops are grown, yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

Subgrade 3a: Good Quality Agricultural Land

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Subgrade 3b: Moderate Quality Agricultural Land

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass, or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass that can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

Grade 4: Poor Quality Agricultural Land

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or the level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (eg. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

Grade 5: Very Poor Quality Agricultural Land

Land with severe limitations that restricts use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.