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Ministry of
Agriculture
Fisheries
and Food

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
BLYTH VALLEY LOCAL PLAN
LAND AT COWPEN
NORTHUMBERLAND
MARCH 1995

ADAS
Leeds Statutory Group

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SUMMARY

A detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey of 24.3 ha of land at Cowpen, Blyth, Northumberland was carried out in March 1995.

Soils on the site are all boulder clay derived.

Topsoils are medium textured over clayey, slowly permeable subsoils. Soils are poorly drained and Wetness Class IV.

Soil wetness and workability limit all the agricultural land on the site (24.1 ha) to Subgrade 3b.

A small area of Non Agricultural land was also mapped.

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR BLYTH VALLEY LOCAL PLAN, LAND AT COWPEN, NORTHUMBERLAND

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Location and Survey Methods

24.3 ha of land at Cowpen, Blyth (grid reference NZ 293 805) were surveyed in detail in March 1995. Soils were examined by hand auger boring at 100m intervals predetermined by the National Grid. Soils were further examined at soil inspection pits.

All assessments of land quality were made using the methods described in "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land, (MAFF, 1988).

1.2 Land Use and Relief

At the time of survey the whole site was in set-aside. Slopes are level or very gentle with a slight easterly aspect. Altitude ranges from 20m AOD in the west to 15m AOD in the east.

1.3 Climate

Grid Reference	: NZ 293 805
Altitude (m)	: 20
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January - June)	: 1331 day °C
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	: 643
Climatic Grade	: 1
Field Capacity Days	: 161
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat	: 100
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes	: 88

1.4 Geology; Soils and Drainage

Soils on the site are all developed from boulder clay drift. Carboniferous Coal Measure deposits do not occur within 1.2m of the soil surface.

Soils are poorly drained (Wetness Class IV). Topsoils are generally medium clay loam over a clayey, gleyed, slowly permeable subsoil.

2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The ALC grades occurring on this site are as follows:

Grade/Subgrade	Hectares	Percentage of Total Area
1		
2		
3a		
3b	24.1	99.2
4		
5		
(Sub total)	(24.1)	(99.2)
Urban		
Non Agricultural	0.2	0.8
Woodland - Farm		
- Commercial		
Agricultural Buildings		
Open Water		
Land not surveyed		
(Sub total)	(0.2)	(0.8)
TOTAL	24.3	100

2.1 Subgrade 3b

This subgrade dominates the site. Soils are poorly drained (Wetness Class IV) and usually gleyed and slowly permable at between 25 and 35cm depth. Topsoils are typically medium clay loam.

Severe soil wetness and workability problems limit the ALC grade of the land.

2.2 Non Agricultural

A small wet depression towards the centre of the site containing rushes was classed as Non Agricultural.

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MAP