Roman Road Hereford

Agricultural Land Classification

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ROMAN ROAD HEREFORD

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

1 This report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of 15 ha of land at Roman Road Hereford Field survey was based on 17 auger borings and 2 soil profile pits and was completed in January 1999 During the survey one sample was analysed for particle size distribution (PSD)

2 The survey was conducted by the Resource Planning Team of FRCA Western Region on behalf of MAFF in its statutory role in the preparation of the Herefordshire Local Plan

3 Information on climate geology and soils and from previous ALC surveys was considered and is presented in the relevant section The published regional ALC map (MAFF 1977) shows the site at a reconnaissance scale as being all Grade 3 The site was previously surveyed in 1986 (ADAS 1986) showing Grades 2 3a and 3b The current survey uses the Revised Guidelines and Criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land (MAFF 1988) and supersedes any previous ALC survey Grade descriptions are summarised in Appendix I

4 The revised grading is discussed in the Agricultural Land Classification section

5 Land nearby to the West of Holmer was surveyed in 1987 (ADAS 1987) This showed mainly Grade 2 land with smaller mapping units of Subgrades 3a and 3b

5 At the time of the current survey land cover was permanent pasture and cereal

SUMMARY

6 The distribution of ALC grades is shown on the accompanying 1 10 000 scale ALC map The detail of information shown at this scale is appropriate to the intensity of field survey but could be misleading if enlarged or applied to small areas Areas are summarised in the Table 1

Table 1 Distribution of ALC grades Roman Road Hereford

Grade	Area (ha)	% Surveyed Area (15 ha)
1	15	100
Total site area	15	

7 The entire site has been mapped as Grade 1 excellent quality agricultural land There are no wetness limitations with mainly medium clay loam topsoils and permeable subsoils resulting in Wetness Class I soil profiles In addition to this the profiles show no signs of droughtiness with few stones and good moisture balance

CLIMATE

7 Estimates of climatic variables for this site were derived from the published agricultural climate dataset Climatological Data for Agricultural Land Classification (Meteorological Office 1989) using standard interpolation procedures Data for the key points around the site are given in Table 2 below

8 Since the ALC grade of land is determined by the most limiting factor present overall climate is considered first because it can have an overriding influence by restricting land to a lower grade despite more favourable site and soil conditions Parameters used for assessing overall climate are accumulated temperature a measure of relative warmth and average annual rainfall a measure of overall wetness The results shown in Table 2 indicate that there is no overall climatic limitation

9 Climatic variables also affect ALC grade through interactions with soil conditions The most important interactive variables are Field Capacity Days (FCD) which are used in assessing soil wetness and potential Moisture Deficits calculated for wheat and potatoes which are compared with the moisture available in each profile in assessing soil droughtiness limitations These are described in later sections

Table 2 Climatic Interpolations Roman Road Hereford

Grid Reference		SO 514 423	SO 520 420
Altitude (m)		65	55
Accumulated Temperature (day C)		1446	1457
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)		696	687
Overall Climatic Grade		1	1
Field Capacity Days		153	151
Moisture deficit (mm)	Wheat	105	107
	Potatoes	97	99

RELIEF

10 Altitude ranges from 55 metres at Burcott Farm to 75 metres on the west of the Holmer site with no slopes of significance to ALC

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

11 The underlying geology of the site is shown on the published geology map (BGS 1989) The majority of the area is mapped as the Raglan Mudstone formation although there is some alluvium found along the north western edge of the Holmer site and running through the centre of the Burcott Farm site

12 There does appear to be some correlation between the geology and the soils found on the site The majority of the site was found to have reddish clayey subsoils typically derived from Mudstone geology however the alluvium did not appear to influence the soils

13 Soils were mapped by the Soil Survey of England and Wales at a reconnaissance scale of 1 250 000 (SSEW 1983) as the Bromyard association

14 The Bromyard soils are described as well drained fine silty over shale and siltstone with some soils experiencing slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging Other soils in this association are well drained coarse loamy soils over sandstone

15 The soils found on the site are similar to the above soil associations in that they are well drained

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

16 The distribution of ALC grades found by the current survey is shown on the accompanying 1 10 000 scale map and areas are summarised in Table 1 The detail of information shown at this scale is appropriate to the intensity of field survey but could be misleading if enlarged or applied to small areas

Grade 1

17 The Grade 1 soils consisted of medium clay topsoils over heavy clay loam subsoils with clay at depth or medium clay loam topsoil with clay subsoils Both of these type of profiles are observed at Pits 1 and 2 The well drained subsoils resulted in Wetness Class I with no slowly permeable layer or gleying In addition to this there are no drought limitations with few stones within the soil profile and a good to moderate structural condition therefore the moisture balance for both wheat and potatoes is high This results in excellent quality agricultural land It should be noted that the topsoil texture is crucial because a heavy clay loam topsoil would result in Grade 2 land on workability However a PSD result for Pit 2 showed a medium clay loam topsoil which related well to the boring topsoil textures found in the survey

18 At borings 8 and 10 a Wetness Class I and heavy clay loam topsoil resulted in Grade 2 and at boring 4 a gleyed subsoil resulted in Wetness Class II which with a heavy clay loam topsoil results in Subgrade 3a At borings 4 and 10 a small amount of lying water was noted due to heavy overnight rainfall it is thought that the duration of the flooding would be short and not sufficient to lower the Grade of these borings further Due to the isolated nature of these borings they were included in the Grade 1 mapping unit

19 Although the previous survey showed the land as Grades 2 3a and 3b the available records indicate that the overemphasis placed on signs of wetness in the original system led to down grading however not all the field notes are available The results of the current survey supersede the 1986 survey since it uses the Revised Guidelines and it is at a more detailed level

20 The nearby site west of Holmer was mainly Grade 2 (ADAS 1987) and was described as having sandy or sandy silt loams overlying sandy sandy clay or clay loams A drainage limitation was noted in the subsoil with ochreous mottling and manganese concretions

Although some manganese was noted around areas of Tea Green Marl in Pit 1 there was no sign of ochreous concretions and the soil profile was not gleyed and did not have an SPL

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17 February 1999

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APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF 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 include 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 and horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land in the 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

Grade 3 good to moderate quality agricultural land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops timing and type of cultivation harvesting or the level of yield Where 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 which 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 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 most 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 very severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing except for occasional pioneer forage crops

Source MAFF (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land MAFF Publications Alnwick

APPENDIX II

DEFINITION OF SOIL WETNESS CLASSES

Soil wetness is classified according to the depth and duration of waterlogging in the soil profile

Wetness Class I

The soil profile is not wet within 70 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years

Wetness Class II

The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 31 90 days in most years or if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth it is wet within 70 cm for more than 90 days but not wet within 40 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years

Wetness Class III

The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 91 180 days in most years or if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth it is wet within 70 cm for more than 180 days but only wet within 40 cm depth for between 31 and 90 days in most years

Wetness Class IV

The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for more than 180 days but not within 40 cm depth for more than 210 days in most years or if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth it is wet within 40 cm depth for 91 210 days in most years

Wetness Class V

The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for 211 335 days in most years

Wetness Class VI

The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for more than 335 days in most years

Notes The number of days specified is not necessarily a continuous period

In most years is defined as more than 10 out of 20 years

Source Hodgson J M (Ed) (1997) Soil Survey Field Handbook Soil Survey Technical Monograph No 5 Silsoe

APPENDIX III

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS USED IN SURVEY DATA

Soil pit and auger boring information collected during ALC survey is held on a computer database and is reproduced in this report Terms used and abbreviations are set out below These conform to definitions contained in the Soil Survey Field Handbook (Hodgson 1997)

1 Terms used on computer database in order of occurrence

GRID REF National 100 km grid square and 8 figure grid reference

LAND USE At the time of survey

WHT	Wheat	**SBT**	Sugar Beet	**HTH**	Heathland
BAR	Barley	**BRA**	Brassicas	**BOG**	Bog or Marsh
OAT	Oats	**FCD**	Fodder Crops	**DCW**	Deciduous Wood
CER	Cereals	**FRT**	Soft and Top Fruit	**CFW**	Coniferous Woodland
MZE	Maize	**HRT**	Horticultural Crops	**PLO**	Ploughed
OSR	Oilseed Rape	**LEY**	Ley Grass	**FLW**	Fallow (inc Set aside)
POT	Potatoes	**PGR**	Permanent Pasture	**SAS**	Set Aside (where known)
LIN	Linseed	**RGR**	Rough Grazing	**OTH**	Other
BEN	Field Beans	**SCR**	Scrub		

GRDNT Gradient as estimated or measured by hand held optical clinometer

GLEY SPL Depth in centimetres to gleying or slowly permeable layer

AP (WHEAT/POTS) Crop adjusted available water capacity

MB (WHEAT/POTS) Moisture Balance (Crop adjusted AP crop potential MD)

DRT Best grade according to soil droughtiness

If any of the following factors are considered significant Y will be entered in the relevant column

MREL	Microrelief limitation	**FLOOD**	Flood risk	**EROSN**	Soil erosion risk
EXP	Exposure limitation	**FROST**	Frost prone	**DIST**	Disturbed land
CHEM	Chemical limitation				

LIMIT The main limitation to land quality The following abbreviations are used

OC	Overall Climate	**AE**	Aspect	**EX**	Exposure
FR	Frost Risk	**GR**	Gradient	**MR**	Microrelief
FL	Flood Risk	**TX**	Topsoil Texture	**DP**	Soil Depth

CH	Chemical	**WE**	Wetness	**WK**	Workability
DR	Drought	**ER**	Erosion Risk	**WD**	Soil Wetness/Droughtiness
ST	Topsoil Stoniness				

TEXTURE Soil texture classes are denoted by the following abbreviations

S	Sand	**LS**	Loamy Sand	**SL**	Sandy Loam
SZL	Sandy Silt Loam	**CL**	Clay Loam	**ZCL**	Silty Clay Loam
ZL	Silt Loam	**SCL**	Sandy Clay Loam	**C**	Clay
SC	Sandy clay	**ZC**	Silty clay	**OL**	Organic Loam
P	Peat	**SP**	Sandy Peat	**LP**	Loamy Peat
PL	Peaty Loam	**PS**	Peaty Sand	**MZ**	Marine Light Silts

For the sand loamy sand sandy loam and sandy silt loam classes the predominant size of sand fraction will be indicated by the use of the following prefixes

F Fine (more than 66% of the sand less than 0 2mm)
M Medium (less than 66% fine sand and less than 33% coarse sand)
C Coarse (more than 33% of the sand larger than 0 6mm)

The clay loam and silty clay loam classes will be sub divided according to the clay content **M** Medium (< 27% clay) **H** heavy (27 35% clay)

MOTTLE COL Mottle colour using Munsell notation

MOTTLE ABUN Mottle abundance expressed as a percentage of the matrix or surface described

F few <2% **C** common 2 20% **M** many 20 40% **VM** very many 40%+

MOTTLE CONT Mottle contrast

F faint indistinct mottles evident only on close inspection
D distinct mottles are readily seen
P Prominent mottling is conspicuous and one of the outstanding features of the horizon

PED COL Ped face colour using Munsell notation

GLEY If the soil horizon is gleyed a Y will appear in this column If slightly gleyed an S will appear

STONE LITH Stone Lithology One of the following is used

HR	All hard rocks and stones	**SLST**	Soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone
CH	Chalk	**FSST**	Soft fine grained sandstone
ZR	Soft argillaceous or silty rocks	**GH**	Gravel with non porous (hard) stones
MSST	Soft medium grained sandstone	**GS**	Gravel with porous (soft) stones

SI Soft weathered igneous or metamorphic rock

Stone contents are given in % by volume for sizes >2cm >6cm and total stone >2mm

STRUCT The degree of development size and shape of soil peds are described using the following notation

Degree of development	**WA**	Weakly developed Adherent	**WK**	Weakly developed
	MD	Moderately developed	**ST**	Strongly developed
Ped size	**F**	Fine	**M**	Medium
	C	Coarse	**VC**	Very coarse
Ped Shape	**S**	Single grain	**M**	Massive
	GR	Granular	**AB**	Angular blocky
	SAB	Sub angular blocky	**PR**	Prismatic
	PL	Platy		

CONSIST Soil consistence is described using the following notation

L	Loose	**VF**	Very Friable	**FR**	Friable	**FM**	Firm
VM	Very firm	**EM**	Extremely firm	**EH**	Extremely Hard		

SUBS STR Subsoil structural condition recorded for the purpose of calculating profile droughtiness **G** Good **M** Moderate **P** Poor

POR Soil porosity If a soil horizon has poor porosity with less than 0 5% biopores >0 5mm a Y will appear in this column

IMP If the profile is impenetrable to rooting a Y will appear in this column at the *appropriate horizon*

SPL Slowly permeable layer If the soil horizon is slowly permeable a Y will appear in this column

CALC If the soil horizon is calcareous with naturally occurring calcium carbonate exceeding 1% a Y will appear this column

2 Additional terms and abbreviations used mainly in soil pit descriptions

STONE ASSESSMENT

VIS	Visual	**S**	Sieve	**D**	Displacement

MOTTLE SIZE

EF	Extremely fine <1mm	**M**	Medium 5 15mm
VF	Very fine 1 2mm>	**C**	Coarse >15mm
F	Fine 2 5mm		

MOTTLE COLOUR May be described by Munsell notation or as ochreous *(OM) or grey (GM)*

ROOT CHANNELS In topsoil the presence of rusty root channels should also be noted

MANGANESE CONCRETIONS Assessed by volume

N	None		**M**	Many	20 40%
F	Few	<2%	**VM**	Very Many	>40%
C	Common	2 20%			

POROSITY

P	Poor	less than 0 5% biopores at least 0 5mm in diameter
G	Good	more than 0 5% biopores at least 0 5mm in diameter

ROOT ABUNDANCE

The number of roots per 100cm^2		Very Fine and Fine	Medium and Coarse
F	Few	1 10	1 or 2
C	Common	10 25	2 5
M	Many	25 200	>5
A	Abundant	>200	

ROOT SIZE

VF	Very fine	<1mm	**M**	Medium	2 5mm
F	Fine	1 2mm	**C**	Coarse	>5mm

HORIZON BOUNDARY DISTINCTNESS

Sharp	<0 5cm	**Gradual**	6 13cm
Abrupt	0 5 2 5cm	**Diffuse**	>13cm
Clear	2 5 6cm		

HORIZON BOUNDARY FORM Smooth wavy irregular or broken *

* See Soil Survey Field Handbook (Hodgson 1997) for details

SITE NAME	PROFILE NO	SLOPE AND ASPECT	LAND USE		PARENT MATERIAL
Roman Road Hereford	Pit 1 (Asp 14)	1 N	Cereal	Av Rainfall 696 mm ATO 1446 day C	Raglan Mudstone Formation
JOB NO	DATE	GRID REFERENCE	DESCRIBED BY	FC Days 153 Climatic Grade 1 Exposure Grade 1	PSD SAMPLES TAKEN
4/99	14/1/99	SU 5130 4210	GN		No

Horizon No	Lowest Av Depth (cm)	Texture	Matrix (Ped Face) Colours	Stoniness Size Type and Field Method	Mottling Abundance Contrast Size and Colour	Mangan Concs	Structure Ped Development Size and Shape	Consistence	Structural Condition	Pores (Fissures)	Roots Abundance and Size	Calcium Carbonate Content	Horizon Boundary Distinctness and form
1	37	MCL	5YR43	0	0	0					FF VF		Clear Smooth
2	80+	C	2 5YR44	0	10GY71 (Tea Green Marl banded within layer with a few distinct concretions)	Few but common around Tea Green Marl	MDCSAB Tending to predominantly MDMAB with depth	fr to fm	Good to Moderate	Good	FF VF		

Profile Gleyed From Not gleyed

Slowly Permeable Horizon From No SPL

Wetness Class 1

Wetness Grade 1

Available Water	Wheat	143 mm
	Potatoes	119 mm
Moisture Deficit	Wheat	105 mm
	Potatoes	97 mm
Moisture Balance	Wheat	+38 mm
	Potatoes	+22 mm

Droughtiness Grade 1 (Calculated to 120 cm)
Calculated using MDCAB & fm & Moderate

Final ALC Grade 1

Main Limiting Factor(s)

Remarks Augured to 120 m
H2 gradual transition in horizon to weathering mudstone material

SITE NAME	PROFILE NO	SLOPE AND ASPECT	LAND USE		PARENT MATERIAL
Roman Road Hereford	Pit 2	1 E	Permanent Grassland	Av Rainfall 696 mm ATO 1446 day C	Raglan Mudstone Formation
JOB NO	DATE	GRID REFERENCE	DESCRIBED BY	FC Days 153 Climatic Grade 1	PSD SAMPLES TAKEN
4/99	20/1/99	SO 5203 4203	GN/GMS	Exposure Grade 1	Topsoil 0 25 cm MCL/MZCL (S21 Z59 C20%)

Horizon No	Lowest Av Depth (cm)	Texture	Matrix (Ped Face) Colours	Stoniness Size Type and Field Method	Mottling Abundance Contrast Size and Colour	Mangan Concs	Structure Ped Development Size and Shape	Consistence	Structural Condition	Pores (Fissures)	Roots Abundance and Size	Calcium Carbonate Content	Horizon Boundary Distinctness and form
1	30	MCL	5YR43	0	0	0					MF VF		Gradual Smooth
2	50	HCL	5YR54 53	0	0	0	MDCSAB	FR	Moderate	G	MF VF		Clear Smooth
3	80+	C	2 5YR43	0	0	F	MDCSAB tending towards MDCAB	FR	Moderate	G	CF VF		

Profile Gleyed From Not gleyed

Slowly Permeable Horizon From No SPL

Wetness Class 1

Wetness Grade 1

Available Water	Wheat	142 mm
	Potatoes	118 mm
Moisture Deficit	Wheat	105 mm
	Potatoes	97 mm
Moisture Balance	Wheat	+37 mm
	Potatoes	+21 mm

Droughtiness Grade 1 (Calculated to 120 cm)

Final ALC Grade 1

Main Limiting Factor(s)

Remarks Augered to 120 cm