



**WISBECH FEN (additional survey area),
GUYHIRN, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**Agricultural Land Classification
Summary Report
July 1996**

**Resource Planning Team
Huntingdon Statutory Group
ADAS Cambridge**

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY REPORT

WISBECH FEN (additional survey area), GUYHIRN, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Introduction

1. This summary report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of 3.9 ha of land at Wisbech Fen (additional survey area), Guyhirn, Cambridgeshire. The survey was carried out during June 1996.
2. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) Land Use Planning Unit, Cambridge in connection with warehouse and office development at the site. This survey supersedes previous ALC surveys on this land.
3. The work was conducted by members of the Resource Planning Team in the Huntingdon Statutory Group in 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 land use on the site was as agricultural land, supporting a crop of winter wheat, and an area of non-agricultural land; a distribution park.

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.

Table 1: Areas of grades and other land

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% surveyed
2	0.8	12
3a	2.0	30
Other land	3.9	58
Total agricultural land	2.8	42
Total survey area	6.7	100

7. The fieldwork was conducted at an average density of one boring per hectare. A total of 4 borings were described.
be included, taken from page 3 of the Blue Book, e.g. 'Grade 1, excellent quality land'].

8. The agricultural land at the site is graded 2 (very good quality) and 3a (good quality), mainly due to a droughtiness limitation, which is most restricting on the land graded 3a. Some areas of 3a land are equally limited by wetness and workability imperfections in addition to the 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.