

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

PROPOSED GOLF COURSE

CANTELLA FARM, ASTON CANTLOW

SUMMARY

The site surveyed at Cantella Farm consists of 63.8 ha, of this 61.5 ha is agricultural land. The agricultural land comprises 29% grade 2, 32.5% grade 3a, 34.7% grade 3b and 3.8% grade 4. The principal major agricultural limitation is wetness. Land not in agriculture consists of 0.9 ha of non-agricultural and 1.4 ha of woodland and scrub.

INTRODUCTION

The site at Cantella Farm consists of 63.8 ha of land located north-east of the village of Aston Cantlow. The site is bounded to the west by the road to Aston Cantlow, to the north by a dismantled railway and a tributary of the River Alne, and to the east by a stream and a ridge top. The site is divided into a north and south portion by the road between Little Alne and Bearley Cross.

The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in April 1993. A grid survey method was used at a scale of 1:10000 with a sampling density of 1 per hectare. Final mapping was at 1:10000 scale and enlargements of the map would be inaccurate.

At the time of survey land use was varied. The most part of the site was sown to grass for silage, and cereals. One field had been ploughed and not sown and there was a small area of fallow, presumably set-aside. The steep ridge slope was in permanent grassland.

CLIMATE

The average annual rainfall within the vicinity of the site is 649 mm and the accumulated temperature above 0°C for January to June is 1430 day °C. There are no climatic limitations to the agricultural use of the site.

RELIEF

The highest point on the site at approximately 80 m, is a flat topped hill in the south-east corner. The hill slopes steeply north and westward and the gradient is limiting to agricultural usage. The remainder of the site south of the road is nearly level or gently undulating. North of the road a broad topped hill at about 65 m altitude slopes gently in all directions, though slightly steeper on the south side. *There are no gradient limitations on this part of the site.* Information from the NRA shows that the meadow at the north end of the site is subject to flooding. However, there was no evidence of this observed during the survey.

GEOLOGY AND SOIL

The solid geology of the site mostly consists of Mercia mudstone. In the north and the west this has been overlain by river terrace deposits with alluvium occurring on the flood plain at the far north end of the site. The two elevated parts of the site are underlain by Wilmcote limestone and this is the dominant geology over the north part of the site.

The soils developed on the Mercia mudstone are heavy clay loams over red clays with a low stone content. They are moderately well drained with evidence of gleying but no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm of the surface. Over the river terrace deposits sandy clay loams overlie clay at depth. There is an increase in stone content in these soils, evident on the surface and significant in the subsoil. On the alluvium the soils are deep, silty clay loams over silty clays, poorly drained and with a low stone content.

Over the limestone olive brown coloured heavy clay loam topsoils overlie clay. The topsoil has a calcium carbonate content of greater than 1% (detected using 10% HCL) and the subsoils are gleyed. Stone fragments occur in the profile. Over the hilltop on the north portion of the site the bedrock is encountered within 1 metre of the surface.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Grade 2

This grade covers 31% of the site and occurs predominantly in the middle of the site. The soils are heavy clay loams over clays at depth and with a low stone content. Wetness is the major limitation.

Grade 3b

This grade covers 33% of the site and is found in three areas. The meadow at the north end of the site has silty clay loams over silty clays which are gleyed throughout the profile. Wetness is the major limitation to agriculture. The hilltop in the south-eastern corner of the site has clay loam topsoils over clay. Wetness is the major limitation. The remaining area in this grade has heavy clay loam or clay topsoils over clay. On the hilltop where bedrock is encountered drought is the major limitation, while wetness is the major limitation elsewhere.

Grade 4

This grade is limited to the steep slopes of the hill in the south east corner of the site. Gradient is the major limitation to agricultural use.

NON-AGRICULTURAL LAND

A dismantled railway covers 1.4% of the site along the north-western edge. A planted wood in the south of the site and an area of hawthorn scrub together occupy 2% of the site.

Grade	Area (ha)	% of Agricultural Land	% of Total Area
2	17.89	29	28.06
3a	20.01	32.5	31.37
3b	21.34	34.7	33.46
4	2.27	3.8	3.56
Non-Agricultural	0.90		1.42
Woodland/Scrub	1.36		2.13
Total	63.77		

**Resource Planning Team
Wolverhampton**

May 1993