

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION  
TOWERS FARM, POYNTON**

**S Hunter  
Resource Planning Team  
ADAS Statutory Group  
Wolverhampton**

**ADAS Ref: 025/RPT/600  
Job No: 02/94  
MAFF Ref: EL 06/10148**

# AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR TOWERS FARM, POYNTON

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey for this site shows that the following proportions of ALC grades are present.

Grade/Subgrade	Ha	% of site
2	9.8	15
3a	36.6	55
3b	16.5	24
4	3.9	6

- 1.2 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 are soil droughtiness and soil depth.
- 1.3 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a are soil wetness, soil droughtiness and soil depth.
- 1.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3b is soil wetness.
- 1.5 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Grade 4 are gradient and soil disturbance.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in March 1994. An Agricultural Land Classification survey was undertaken according to the guidelines laid down in the "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land" (MAFF, 1988).
- 2.2 The 66.8 ha site lies north east of Poynton, and is bounded to the north by Norbury Brook, the disused Park Pit lies to the south and the remainder of the site adjoins agricultural land.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with a proposal for opencast coal mining by Coal Contractors Limited.
- 2.4 At MAFF Land Use Planning Unit's request this was a detailed grid survey at 1:10000 with a minimum auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The attached map is only accurate at the base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.

2.5 At the time of survey the site was wholly under grass. Land to the east of Park Pit Cottage was severely poached and cattle were present at the time of the survey.

### 3. CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 932 853).

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	838
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1333

3.2 The site is limited to Grade 2 due to climatic factors.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	212
Moisture deficit wheat (mm)	78
Moisture deficit potatoes (mm)	62

### 4. SITE

4.1 Three site factors of gradient, micro-relief and flooding are considered when classifying land.

4.2 In the extreme south of the site east of the disused tip, along the track, land is limited by gradient to Grade 4.

4.3 Micro-relief and flooding do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of the land.

### 5. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area comprises bands of sandstone and Coal Measures, British Geological Survey Sheet 98, scale 1". This is overlain by deposits of Quaternary Glacial Till.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which generally have a clay loam topsoil texture overlying sandy clay loam and or clay subsoils to depth. Over areas with sandstone bedrock soils have a sandy silt loam texture.

### 6. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 occupies 9.8 ha (15%) of the survey area, and is found in the extreme west of the site around Long Plantation and in the central east of the site in a strip running south from Norbury Hollow.

6.1.1 The soils in the west of the site typically have a medium clay loam topsoil texture over a sandy loam or sandy clay loam subsoil which overlies sandstone and river terrace gravel.

- 6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is climate.
  - 6.1.3 The soils in the east of the site typically have a sandy silt loam topsoil texture overlying sandstone bedrock at depths of between 27cm to 45cm.
  - 6.1.4 The main limitations to the agricultural use of this land are soil depth and soil droughtiness.
- 6.2 Subgrade 3a occupies 36.6 ha (55%) of the survey area and is found distributed across the site.
- 6.2.1 These soils typically have a clay loam topsoil texture over sandy clay loam and or heavy clay loam subsoils occasionally overlying clay below 70cm.
  - 6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.
  - 6.2.3 The soils lying north east of the disused pit and south of Norbury Hollow generally have a sandy silt loam topsoil texture overlying sandstone bedrock at depths of between 30-40cm.
  - 6.2.4 The main limitations to the agricultural use of this land are soil depth and soil droughtiness.
  - 6.2.5 Within the Subgrade 3a land to the east of Park Pit Cottage there are a few isolated pockets of disturbed land which are too small to show accurately at a mapping scale of 1:10000.
- 6.3 Subgrade 3b - occupies 16.5 ha (24%) of the survey area and is found in isolated areas across the site.
- 6.3.1 The soils generally have a medium clay loam topsoil texture over a heavy clay loam or clay subsoil and clay within 57cm.
  - 6.3.2 *The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.*
  - 6.3.3 To the east of Long Plantation there is an isolated disturbed area which is classified as Subgrade 3b.
- 6.4 Grade 4 - occupies 3.9 ha (6%) of the survey area and is found in the south of the site east of the disused pit.
- 6.4.1 Gradients on the land running parallel with the track limit the land to Grade 4.
  - 6.4.2 Land in the extreme south west of this area is disturbed and limited to Grade 4.

## 6.5 Summary of Agricultural Land Classification Grades

Grade/Subgrade	Area in Hectares	% of survey area
2	9.8	15
3a	36.6	55
3b	16.5	24
4	3.9	6
<hr/>		
Totals	66.8	100.0

S Hunter  
Resource Planning Team  
ADAS Statutory Group  
Wolverhampton  
March 1994