AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
OSWESTRY LOCAL PLAN, OAKHURST

V P Redfern
Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR OSWESTRY LOCAL PLAN, OAKHURST

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
3a	10.3	79.9
3b	1.6	12.4
4	0.9	6.9
Other land		
Water	0.1	0.8

1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a is soil wetness.

1.3 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3b and Grade 4 is gradient.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in January 1995. 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 12.9 ha site is situated to the North of Oswestry. It is bounded to the west by Oakhurst Road and to the south by housing. The land immediately to the north of the site is predominantly in agricultural use.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Oswestry Local Plan.

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 the survey the site was under permanent grass.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 289 306):

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	899
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1316

3.2 The combination of Average Annual Rainfall and Accumulated Temperature limits the site to Grade 2.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	207
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 Gradients in excess of 7° limit the area in the south east and east of the site to Subgrade 3b and Grade 4.

4.3 Flooding is not a limitation to the agricultural use of the land.

5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Upper Coal Measures - British Geological Survey Sheet 137 Oswestry 1 Inch. This is overlain by deposits of Boulder Clay.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which have a silty clay loam or clay loam texture.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Subgrade 3a - occupies 10.3 ha (79.9%) of the survey area.

6.1.1 These soils typically have a clay loam texture overlying clay loam to depth. The soils are slightly to moderately stony. The soils are gleyed but have no Slowly Permeable Layer and fall into Wetness Class III.

6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.

6.1.3 Within this Subgrade there are isolated areas of Grade 2 land which are too small to be mapped at this scale.

6.2 Subgrade 3b - occupies 1.6 ha (12.4%) of the survey area.

6.2.1 The soil has a clay loam texture over clay loam and clay. The clay forms a Slowly Permeable Layer and places these soils into Wetness Class IV.

6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil wetness.

6.2.3 Gradient is a limitation to the hill slopes in the south east and east of the site which exceed 7°.

6.3 Grade 4 occupies 0.9 ha (6.9%) of the survey area and is found in the east of the site.

6.3.1 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is gradient, which exceeds 11°.

6.4 Other land includes a pond occupying 0.1 ha (0.8%) of the site.

6.5 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
3a	10.3	79.9	80.5
3b	1.6	12.4	12.5
4	0.9	6.9	7.0
Other land			
Open Water	0.1	0.8	
Totals	**12.9**	**100.0**	**100.0**