

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
LAND NORTH OF WIDNES**

**R D Metcalfe
Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON**

**ADAS Ref: 25/RPT/0698
Job No: 143/94
MAFF Ref: EL 06/10780**

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR LAND NORTH OF WIDNES

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	33.8	18
3b	98.8	54
Other land		
Agricultural buildings	1.6	1
Non-Agricultural Land	3.7	1
Urban	8.9	6
Not Surveyed	36.7	20

- 1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrades 3a and 3b is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team between February and April 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 183.5 ha site is situated to the north of Widnes. The northern boundary is formed by the A57 road, the western one by the A568 road and the southern one by the A5080 road. The eastern boundary is formed by a minor road. A further eastern extension is bounded by the A5080 road and a railway line.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the request for land quality information from Halton Borough Council.
- 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 grass, cereals, cabbages and fallow.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 5204887) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	825
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1427

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	198
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	85
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	72

4 SITE

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

4.2 These factors do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of the land.

5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Bunter Pebble Beds, Coal Measures and Sandstone - British Geological Survey Sheet 97 Runcorn 1:63360. This is overlain with deposits of Boulder clay and alluvium.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which have a medium clay loam texture overlying clay.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Subgrade 3a - occupies 33.8 ha (18%) of the survey area and is found to the south of Old Brook Hall, close to Cranshaw Hall, near Mill Green Farm and east of Boundary Farm.

6.1.1 The soils has either a medium clay loam or sandy clay loam texture overlying clay below 53 cm. Occasionally a sand upper subsoil is present overlying the clay. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place these soils into Wetness Class III.

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

6.2 Subgrade 3b - occupies 98.8 ha (54%) of the survey area and is widespread throughout the whole area.

6.2.1 The soil has a medium clay loam texture overlying clay by about 32 cm. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer places these soils in Wetness Class IV. Within the area of Subgrade 3b there are occasional scattered profiles of Subgrade 3a quality, but these are too small in area to map separately.

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

6.3 Other land includes agricultural buildings which occupy 1.6 ha (1%) of the survey area; urban areas occupying 8.9 ha (5%) and non-agricultural land (includes disused railway line) covering 3.7 ha (2%); not surveyed covers 36.7 ha (20%) where access to survey was denied.

6.4 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
3a	33.8	18	25
3b	98.8	54	75
Other land			
Agricultural Buildings	1.6	1	-
Non-Agricultural Land	3.7	2	-
Urban	8.9	5	1
Not Surveyed	36.7	20	-
Totals	183.5	100	100