

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Leegomery

The site which is subject to a planning application for an all weather horse race track and associated buildings is situated on the northern edge of Leegomery, Telford. It covers **54** hectares and is bounded by the A442 road to the south, minor roads to the east and west and the northern extent of the site is marked by the line of electricity pylons. All the site was in agricultural use at the time of survey (April 1990) and there is further agricultural land to the east, north and west.

Climate

The average annual rainfall in the vicinity of the site is about 673 mm. Rainfall is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year with a maximum in August and November and a drier period from February to April. Accumulated temperature above 0°C for the period January to June is 1405 day °C, so there is no overall climatic limitation to the agricultural use of the land. The balance between summer rainfall and evapotranspiration gives moisture deficits of 98 mm for winter wheat and 87 mm for potatoes. The median duration of field capacity is 146 days and the growing season extends to about 240 days from the end of March to late November. The mean date for the last frost is early May.

Site

The site lies at an altitude of 65 m to 73 m with the highest points in the centre and the lowest area in the east between Hurley Brook and the edge of the site. The land is level or gently sloping and there are no site limitations to the use of the land.

Geology

The solid geology in this area comprises lower mottled sandstone, but this is covered by sand and gravel drift deposits. This gives rise to mainly light sandy textured soils which are slightly stony in places.

Agricultural Land Classification

Grade 2

43 hectares, accounting for **80%** of the site has been mapped as Grade 2 land. Most of the soils are light textured with sandy loam or loamy sand topsoil over loamy sand and sand subsoils. In some profiles towards the eastern end of the site heavier layers of sandy clay loam were encountered, with clay in places below 80 cm. Topsoils are only very slightly stony, but stony layers were found, generally at about 60 cm, and these were more common towards the southern and eastern edges of the site. The lightest soils, with loamy sand over sand occur on the higher land in the north of the site and although these soils are moderately droughty, the availability of irrigation allows them into Grade 2.

Some profiles, notably towards the western end of the site (eg nos. 45, 49, 50) with deep sandy loam topsoils and loamy fine sand and fine sand subsoils are of Grade 1 quality.

Grade 3a

Grade 3a land is found at the eastern end of the site and in two lower lying areas in the south of the site. Soils are generally heavier with sandy clay loam topsoils over heavy clay loam subsoils in places. Parts of these areas are disturbed and stony, in the north east corner of the site where a pipeline passes through the site, and in the south east corner on the site of former buildings and an infilled pond. Wetness, stone content and the disturbed nature of these soils are the major limitations to the use of this land.