

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
RAMSBROOK LANE, HALE**

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR RAMSBROOK LANE, HALE

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	4.1	74.5
3b	1.4	25.5

- 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 is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in March 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 5.5 ha site is situated to the east of Hale. The land immediately to the north, south and east of the site is in agricultural use. To the west is a small area of woodland with housing and school beyond.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with development proposals for the land.
- 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 not in cultivation. The majority of the site was severely rutted as a result of the farmer applying slurry in inappropriate conditions. The damage was considerable making it difficult to find suitably undisturbed profiles to auger. However, the site has been graded according to 'the degree to which physical or chemical properties impose long-term limitations on agricultural use', and the short-term management of the land has been ignored.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 457831) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	795
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1437

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	186
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	91
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	79

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 Permo-Triassic Sandstone - British Geological Survey Sheet 97 Runcorn 1 Inch. This is overlain with deposits of Boulder Clay and Blown Sand (Shirdley Hill Sand).

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which typically have a sandy topsoil texture overlying a clay texture at depth.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Subgrade 3a - occupies 4.1 ha (74.5%) of the survey area and is found to the centre and south of the site.

6.1.1 The soil has either a sandy loam or sandy clay loam texture overlying variable subsoils ranging from sand to clay. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place these soils in Wetness Class III.

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

6.2 Subgrade 3b - occupies 1.4 ha (25.5%) of the survey area and is found to a limited area in the north-west of the site.

6.2.1 The soil has a sandy clay loam texture overlying clay to depth, often with sandier lenses. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place these soils in Wetness Class IV.

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

6.3 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Sub-grade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
3a	4.1	74.5	74.5
3b	1.4	25.5	25.5
Totals	5.5	100.0	100.0