# Lydiard Millicent Agricultural Land Classification November 1998

Resource Planning Team Bristol FRCA Western Region RPT Job Number 91/98
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# LYDIARD MILLICENT

# AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SURVEY

# **CONTENTS**

		Page
INTRODUCTIO	PN	1
SUMMARY		1
CLIMATE		2
RELIEF		2
GEOLOGY ANI	OSOILS	2
AGRICULTURA	AL LAND CLASSIFICATION AND MAP	3
REFERENCES		5
APPENDIX I	Description of the Grades and Subgrades	6
APPENDIX II	Definition of Soil Wetness Classes	8
APPENDIX III	Survey Data	9
	Sample Point Location Map	
	Pit Descriptions	
	Boring Profile Data	
	Boring Horizon Data	
	Abbreviations and Terms used	ın Survey Data

# LYDIARD MILLICENT AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SURVEY

#### INTRODUCTION

- This report presents the findings of a semi detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of 97 7 ha of land at Lydiard Millicent Swindon Field survey was based on 40 auger borings and 3 soil profile pits and was completed in November 1998
- The survey was conducted by the Resource Planning Team of FRCA Western Region on behalf of MAFF in its statutory role in the preparation of Swindon Development Appraisal in connection with the Wiltshire Structure Plan
- Information on climate geology and soils and from previous ALC surveys was considered and is presented in the relevant sections. Apart from the published regional ALC map (MAFF 1977) which shows the site at a reconnaissance scale as Grade 3 the site had not been surveyed previously. However, the current survey uses the Revised Guidelines and Criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land (MAFF 1988) and supersedes any previous ALC survey. Grade descriptions are summarised in Appendix I.
- 4 At the time of survey land cover was primarily pasture with a little horticultural production
- The distribution of ALC grades is shown on the accompanying 1 10 000 scale ALC map. The detail of information shown at this scale is appropriate to the intensity of field survey but could be misleading if enlarged or applied to small areas. Areas are summarised in the Table 1

#### **SUMMARY**

Table 1 Distribution of ALC grades Lydiard Millicent

Grade	Area (ha)	% Surveyed Area (75 2 ha)
3b	75 2	100
Agricultural land not surveyed	5 3	
Other land	17 3	
Total site area	97 7	

All of the site has been mapped as Subgrade 3b Two types of soil were found during the survey to the north shallow soils over coral rag were found to experience a moderate droughtiness limitation whilst the soils in the south of the site were poorly drained clays experiencing a moderate wetness limitation

#### **CLIMATE**

- Estimates of climatic variables for this site were derived from the published agricultural climate dataset. Climatological Data for Agricultural Land Classification (Meteorological Office 1989) using standard interpolation procedures. Data for key points around the site are given in Table 2 below
- Since the ALC grade of land is determined by the most limiting factor present overall climate is considered first because it can have an overriding influence by restricting land to a lower grade despite more favourable site and soil conditions. Parameters used for assessing overall climate are accumulated temperature a measure of relative warmth and average annual rainfall a measure of overall wetness. The results shown in Table 2 indicate that there is no overall climatic limitation.
- Climatic variables also affect ALC grade through interactions with soil conditions. The most important interactive variables are Field Capacity Days (FCD) which are used in assessing soil wetness and potential Moisture Deficits calculated for wheat and potatoes which are compared with the moisture available in each profile in assessing soil droughtiness limitations. These are described in later sections.

Table 2 Climatic Interpolations Lydiard Millicent

Grid Reference	SU 104856	SU 105865	
Altıtude (m)	110	115	
Accumulated Temperature (day °C)	1406	1400	
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	687	690	
Overall Climatic Grade	1	1	
Field Capacity Days	155	156	
Moisture deficit (mm) Wheat	102	101	
Potatoes	92	91	

#### RELIEF

Altitude ranges from 96 metres at Washpool in the east of the site to 122 metres in the north west at Stone Lane The land slopes gently towards a stream which runs east west across the site. The slopes are not limiting to agricultural land quality

#### GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The geology of the site is shown on the published geology map (IGS 1974) Coral Rag (Upper Corallian) dominates the geology with a band of alluvium running along the stream Just to the south of the stream Kimmeridge Clay is found extending to the bottom of the site. The soils found during the recent survey are closely related to the underlying geology with shallow soils found in the north and poorly drained clayey soils in the south

- Soils were mapped by the Soil Survey of England and Wales at a reconnaissance scale of 1 250 000 (SSEW 1983) The Sherborne Association soils were found in the north of the site north of the stream. A band of soils from the Evesham 1 Association run along the stream and to the south of this are Denchworth Soils which are also found in the north east of the site.
- Sherborne Association is described as shallow well drained brashy calcareous clayey soils over limestone also associated with slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. The Evesham 1 Association is described as slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils associated with shallow well drained brashy calcareous soils over limestone. The Denchworth Association is described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils with similar fine loamy over clayey soils some of which only show slight seasonal waterlogging
- The soils found during the recent survey are typical of the mapped associations which in turn are closely related to the underlying geology as indicated above

# AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The distribution of ALC grades found by the current survey is shown on the accompanying 1 10 000 scale map and areas are summarised in Table 1. The detail of information shown at this scale is appropriate to the intensity of field survey but could be misleading if enlarged or applied to small areas.

# Subgrade 3b

- All of the agricultural land surveyed has been mapped as Subgrade 3b moderate quality land. Two types of soil were found during the recent survey. Soils to the south of the stream were found to be poorly drained clayey soils typically with a heavy clay loam topsoil over clayey subsoils which were gleyed and slowly permeable. The presence of the slowly permeable layer was confirmed in a soil profile pit within this part of the site. These soils were assessed as Wetness Class IV (see Appendix II) and experience a moderate wetness limitation.
- 17 To the north of the stream shallow soils over Coral Rag were found Both clay and heavy clay loam topsoils were found in this area. The depth to the Coral Rag was variable across the site and in places an upper subsoil was found before the very stony horizons where encountered Two soil profile pits were dug in this stony material to assess the stone content in the subsoil. The first in the east of the site where the soils appeared shallower and one further west where deeper profiles were experienced. The shallow pit in the east revealed that there was around 9% stone in the topsoil quickly rising to over 50% stone in the subsoil The Coral Rag was hard The other soil profile pit showed a slightly lower stone content in topsoil and the upper subsoil had nearly 30% hard rock and soft limestone with a slightly stonier lower subsoil with 34% hard rock and soft limestone. The first pit was clearly Subgrade 3b with a moderate droughtiness limitation whereas the second pit was borderline Subgrade 3b/3a However because of the variable nature of these stony soils it was felt appropriate that the whole area should be mapped as Subgrade 3b Within this area there were also some deeper clayey poorly drained profiles which were Subgrade 3b due to wetness providing further evidence that this area should be mapped as Subgrade 3b

# Other Land

The small area in the south west of the site was not surveyed because ownership could not be established. It is likely that this area would also be Subgrade 3b. Other land not surveyed includes a playing field residential areas and a large block in the east of the site which has already been developed.

G M SHAW Resource Planning Team FRCA Bristol November 1998

#### REFERENCES

INSTITUTE OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES (1974) Sheet 252 Swindon 1 63 360 series Solid and Drift edition IGS London

HODGSON J M (Ed) (1997) Soil Survey Field Handbook Soil Survey Technical Monograph No 5 Silsoe

MAFF (1977) 1 250 000 series Agricultural Land Classification South West Region MAFF Publications Alnwick

MAFF (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales Revised Guidelines and Criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land MAFF Publications Alnwick

METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE (1989) Climatological Data for Agricultural Land Classification Meteorological Office Bracknell

SOIL SURVEY OF ENGLAND AND WALES (1983) Sheet 5 Soils of South West England 1 250 000 scale SSEW Harpenden

SOIL SURVEY OF ENGLAND AND WALES (1984) Soils and Their Use in South West England Bulletin No 14 SSEW Harpenden

#### APPENDIX I

#### DESCRIPTION OF GRADES AND SUBGRADES

# Grade 1 excellent quality agricultural land

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly include top fruit soft fruit salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality

# Grade 2 very good quality agricultural land

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land in the grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1.

# Grade 3 good to moderate quality agricultural land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops timing and type of cultivation harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2

#### Subgrade 3a good quality agricultural land

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops especially cereals or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals grass oilseed rape potatoes sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops

# Subgrade 3b moderate quality agricultural land

Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year

# Grade 4 poor quality agricultural land

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (eg cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In most climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

# Grade 5 very poor quality agricultural land

Land with very severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing except for occasional pioneer forage crops

Source MAFF (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land MAFF Publications Alnwick

#### APPENDIX II

# **DEFINITION OF SOIL WETNESS CLASSES**

Soil wetness is classified according to the depth and duration of waterlogging in the soil profile

#### Wetness Class I

The soil profile is not wet within 70 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years

#### Wetness Class II

The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 31 90 days in most years or if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth it is wet within 70 cm for more than 90 days but not wet within 40 cm depth for more than 30 days in most years

#### Wetness Class III

The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for 91 180 days in most years or if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth it is wet within 70 cm for more than 180 days but only wet within 40 cm depth for between 31 and 90 days in most years

#### Wetness Class IV

The soil profile is wet within 70 cm depth for more than 180 days but not within 40 cm depth for more than 210 days in most years or if there is no slowly permeable layer within 80 cm depth it is wet within 40 cm depth for 91 210 days in most years

#### Wetness Class V

The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for 211 335 days in most years

#### Wetness Class VI

The soil profile is wet within 40 cm depth for more than 335 days in most years

Notes The number of days specified is not necessarily a continuous period

In most years is defined as more than 10 out of 20 years

**Source** Hodgson J M (Ed) (1997) Soil Survey Field Handbook Soil Survey Technical Monograph No 5 Silsoe

#### **APPENDIX III**

# ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS USED IN SURVEY DATA

Soil pit and auger boring information collected during ALC survey is held on a computer database and is reproduced in this report. Terms used and abbreviations are set out below. These conform to definitions contained in the Soil Survey Field Handbook (Hodgson 1997).

# 1 Terms used on computer database in order of occurrence

GRID REF National 100 km grid square and 8 figure grid reference

LAND USE At the time of survey

WHT	Wheat	SBT	Sugar Beet	HTH	Heathland
BAR	Barley	BRA	Brassicas	BOG	Bog or Marsh
OAT	Oats	FCD	Fodder Crops	DCW	Deciduous Wood
CER	Cereals	FRT	Soft and Top Fruit	<b>CFW</b>	Coniferous Woodland
MZE	Maıze	HRT	Horticultural Crops	PLO	Ploughed
OSR	Oilseed Rape	LEY	Ley Grass	FLW	Fallow (inc Set aside)
POT	Potatoes	PGR	Permanent Pasture	SAS	Set Aside (where known)
LIN	Linseed	RGR	Rough Grazing	OTH	Other
BEN	Field Beans	SCR	Scrub		

GRDNT Gradient as estimated or measured by hand held optical clinometer

GLEY SPL Depth in centimetres to gleying or slowly permeable layer

AP (WHEAT/POTS) Crop adjusted available water capacity

GR

MB (WHEAT/POTS)

Moisture Balance (Crop adjusted AP crop potential MD)

DRT Best grade according to soil droughtiness

If any of the following factors are considered significant Y will be entered in the relevant column

EXP CHEM	Exposure limitation		ROST	Frost prone	DIS	OSN ST	Disturbed land
LIMIT	The main limitati used	on to	o land qua	llity The foll	lowin	g abbre	viations are
ос	Overall Climate A	Æ	Aspect	E	X	Expos	ure

Gradient

MR

Microrelief

RPT272DJ 9

Frost Risk

FR

FL	Flood Risk	TX	Topsoil Texture	DP	Soil Depth
CH	Chemical	WE	Wetness	WK	Workability
DR	Drought	ER	Erosion Risk	WD	Soil
	_				Wetness/Droughtiness
ST	Topsoil Stoniness				_

TEXTURE Soil texture classes are denoted by the following abbreviations

S	Sand	LS	Loamy Sand	SL	Sandy Loam
SZL	Sandy Silt Loam	CL	Clay Loam	ZCL	Silty Clay Loam
ZL	Sılt Loam	SCL	Sandy Clay	$\mathbf{C}$	Clay
			Loam		
SC	Sandy clay	ZC	Silty clay	OL	Organic Loam
P	Peat	SP	Sandy Peat	LP	Loamy Peat
PL	Peaty Loam	PS	Peaty Sand	MZ	Marine Light Silts

For the sand loamy sand sandy loam and sandy silt loam classes the predominant size of sand fraction will be indicated by the use of the following prefixes

Fine (more than 66% of the sand less than 0 2mm)

M Medium (less than 66% fine sand and less than 33% coarse sand)

C Coarse (more than 33% of the sand larger than 0 6mm)

The clay loam and silty clay loam classes will be sub divided according to the clay content M Medium (< 27% clay) H heavy (27 35% clay)

MOTTLE COL Mottle colour using Munsell notation

MOTTLE ABUN Mottle abundance expressed as a percentage of the matrix or surface described

F few <2% C common 2 20% M many 20 40% VM very many 40%+

#### MOTTLE CONT Mottle contrast

F faint indistinct mottles evident only on close inspection

D distinct mottles are readily seen

P Prominent mottling is conspicuous and one of the outstanding features of the horizon

PED COL Ped face colour using Munsell notation

GLEY If the soil horizon is gleyed a Y will appear in this column If slightly gleyed an S will appear

STONE LITH Stone Lithology One of the following is used

HR All hard rocks and stones SLST Soft oolitic or dolimitic limestone

CH	Chalk	<b>FSST</b>	Soft fine grained sandstone
ZR	Soft argillaceous or silty rocks	GH	Gravel with non porous (hard) stones
MSST	Soft medium grained sandstone	GS	Gravel with porous (soft) stones
SI	Soft weathered igneous or metamo	rphic rock	-

Stone contents are given in % by volume for sizes >2cm >6cm and total stone >2mm

STRUCT The degree of development size and shape of soil peds are described using the following notation

Degree of development	WA Adher	Weakly developed rent	WK	Weakly developed
	MD develo	Moderately oped	ST	Strongly developed
Ped size	F C	Fine Coarse	M VC	Medium Very coarse
Ped Shape	S GR SAB PL	Single grain Granular Sub angular blocky Platy	M AB PR	Massive Angular blocky Prismatic

**CONSIST** Soil consistence is described using the following notation

L	Loose	VF	Very Friable	FR	Friable	FM	Fırm
VM	Very firm	EM	Extremely firm		EH	Extremely H	ard

SUBS STR Subsoil structural condition recorded for the purpose of calculating profile droughtiness G Good M Moderate P Poor

POR Soil porosity If a soil horizon has poor porosity with less than 0 5% biopores >0 5mm a Y will appear in this column

IMP If the profile is impenetrable to rooting a Y will appear in this column at the appropriate horizon

SPL Slowly permeable layer If the soil horizon is slowly permeable a Y will appear in this column

CALC If the soil horizon is calcareous with naturally occurring calcium carbonate exceeding 1% a Y will appear this column

# 2 Additional terms and abbreviations used mainly in soil pit descriptions

#### STONE ASSESSMENT

VIS Visual S Sieve D Displacement

# **MOTTLE SIZE**

EF Extremely fine <1mm M Medium 5 15mm VF Very fine 1 2mm> C Coarse >15mm

F Fine 2 5mm

MOTTLE COLOUR May be described by Munsell notation or as ochreous

(OM) or grey (GM)

ROOT CHANNELS In topsoil the presence of rusty root channels should

also be noted

# MANGANESE CONCRETIONS Assessed by volume

 N
 None
 M
 Many
 20 40%

 F
 Few
 <2%</th>
 VM
 Very Many
 >40%

C Common 2 20%

# **POROSITY**

P Poor less than 0 5% biopores at least 0 5mm in diameter G Good more than 0 5% biopores at least 0 5mm in diameter

# **ROOT ABUNDANCE**

The number of	roots per 100cm <sup>2</sup>	Very Fine and Fine	Medium and Coarse
F	Few	1 10	1 or 2
C	Common	10 25	2 5
M	Many	25 200	>5
A	Abundant	>200	

# ROOT SIZE

VF	Very fine	<1mm	M	Medium	2 5mm
F	Fine	1 2mm	C	Coarse	>5mm

# HORIZON BOUNDARY DISTINCTNESS

Sharp	<0 5cm	Gradual	6 13cm
Abrupt	0 5 2 5cm	Diffuse	>13cm
Cl	25 /		

Clear 2 5 6cm

HORIZON BOUNDARY FORM Smooth wavy irregular or broken \*

\* See Soil Survey Field Handbook (Hodgson 1997) for details

SITE NAME PROFILE NO		SLOPE	AND ASPE	ECT	LAND USE			Av R	aınfall	687 mm		PARENT MATERIAL					
Lydiard N	Aillicent	Pıt	1	0			Potatoes			АТО		1406 day C		Coral Rag			
JOB NO DATE GF		GRID I	REFERENC	E	DESCRIBED BY GMS/GMN			FC D	ays	155		PSD SAMPLES TAKEN					
91/98	1/98 14/10/98		10/98	SU 102 861					atic Grade sure Grade	1 1		None					
Horizon No	Lowest Av Depth (cm)	Texture	Matrix (Ped Face) Colours	Field M	ess Abundance ype and Contrast Method Size and Colour			Mangan Concs	Structure I Developme Size and Shape	ent	Consistence	Structural Condition	Pores (Fissures)	Roots Abundance and Size	Calcium Carbonate Content	Horizon Boundary Distinctness and form	
1	25	С	10YR32	1%HR: 4% HR>2 5%HR t				None						FVF		Clear Smooth	
2	45	С	2 5Y54	27%HR-	SLST> 2 cm +SLHT>2 mm +SLST Total			None WKCSA		В	Friable	Moderate	Good	FVF		Clear Smooth	
3	70+	С	2 5 Y 6 2		> 2 m +SLST> 2mm +SLST t t l	LST> 2mm				ed s		Assume Good	Good	FVF			
Profile Gleyed From 45 cm				Available Water Wheat 82 mm							Final ALC Grade 3b						
Slowly Permeable Horizon From No SPL  Wetness Class I			Moisture Deficit Wheat 102 m				93 mm 102 mm 92 mm			Main Limiting Factor(s) Droughtiness							
Wetness Grade 3a			Moisture E	Balance W	heat 20 mm					Remarks H3 Where less stony clay is mottled							
						Po	otatoes		+1 mm				poor draina;	ge in stonier pa	rts soil coloui	ıs 2 5Y54	
				Droughtine	ess Grade 3	Bb	(Calc	culated to 70 c	cm)		with no mottles Overall horizon seems to be well drained Pit is borderline 3a/3b droughtiness since drought calc could be taken deeper rooting continues to depth						

SITE NAME PROFILE NO		SLOPE AND ASPECT			LAND USE			Av	v Raınfall	687 mm	687 mm		PARENT MATERIAL			
Lydiard Millicent Pit 2 0		0				PGR			го	1406 day C		Coral Rag				
JOB NO DATE GRIE		GRID F	REFERENCE			DESCRIBED BY			C Days	155		PSD SAMPLE	ES TAKEN			
91/98		14/	10/98	SU 106	0 8615	8615 GMS/GMN		imatic Grade	1 1							
Horizon No	Lowest Av Depth (cm)	Texture	Matrix (Ped Face) Colours	Size Ty Field M	toniness A Ize Type and C aeld Method S			Mangan Devel Concs Size a			Consistence	Structural Condition	Pores (Fissures)	Roots Abundance and Size	Calcium Carbonate Content	Horizon Boundary Distinctness and form
1	25	HZCL	10YR41	1%HR>2 8%HR>2 9%HR to				None						MF& VF		Clear Smooth
2	35	С	2 5Y54	27%HR	HR 2 cm None HR 2 mm HRT t I (s+d)			None	e Determin		Friable	Assume moderate	Good	CVF		Gradual Wavy
3	55+	С	2 5Y56	60%HR	( ) FFFO 10YR56				Determined by stones		Friable	Assume Moderate	Good	FVF		
Profile Gleyed From Not gleyed				Available Water Wheat 69 mm							Final ALC Grade 3b					
Slowly Permeable Horizon From No SPL  Wetness Class (I)			Potatoes 76 mm  Moisture Deficit Wheat 102 mm  Potatoes 92 mm						Main Limiting Factor(s) Droughtiness				ess			
Wetness Grade (2)			Moisture Balance Wheat				33 mm			Remarks Calc to 90 cm still gives 31 16 3b						
						Po	Potatoes 16 mm						Remarks Calc to 70 cm stm gives 31			
					Droughtine	ess Grade 3	Bb	(Calc	ulated to 70	cm)						

SITE NAME PROFILE NO		FILE NO	SLOPE AND ASPECT				ND USE		T <sub>A</sub>	Av Raınfall	687 mm		PARENT MATERIAL					
Lydiard N	fillicent	Pit 3		0	ŀ			PGR			ТО	1406 day C		Kımmerıdge Clay				
JOB NO DATE GRID		REFERENCE			DESCRIBED BY			C Days	155		PSD SAMPLE	S TAKEN						
91/98		15/10	15/10/98		SU 105 856		GMS				Climatic Grade	1						
Horizon No	Lowest Av Depth	Texture	Matrix (Ped Face) Colours	Size Ty	Mottling Abundan Contrast Field Method  Mottling Abundan Contrast Size and		ce Mangan Concs		Structure I Developme Size and Shape			Structural Condition	Pores (Fissures)	Roots Abundance and Size	Calcium Carbonate Content	Horizon Boundary Distinctness and form		
1	(cm)	HZCL	7 5YR41	N	Colour			None						MVF		Abrupt Smooth		
2	22	С	10YR42	No	CDFO 7 5YR56			None MDM+F		SAE	3 Friable	Good	Good	MVF		Clear Wavy		
3	60+	С	2 5Y52	19' HR (fl ts)	( s) MDFO 7 5YR68 10YR68		68		STCPR		Fırm	Poor	Low	CVF				
Profile G	Profile Gleyed From 18 cm				Available Water Wheat 100 n					mm			Final ALC Grade 3b					
Slowly Permeable Horizon From 22 cm  Wetness Class IV  Wetness Grade 3b			Potatoes 105 mm  Moisture Deficit Wheat 102 mm  Potatoes 92 mm						Main Limiting Factor(s) Wetness									
					Moisture B	Potatoes +13 mm						Remarks	H2 is	s transitional				
					Droughtine	ess Grade 3					n)							