MAFF Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
BLACKER GRANGE FARM
PLATTS COMMON
SOUTH YORKSHIRE
AUGUST 1995

ADAS
Leeds Statutory Group

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SUMMARY

A detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey of 18 ha of land at Blacker Grange Farm, Platts Common was carried out in August 1995. At the time of the survey 98% of the land was in agricultural use and 8.4 ha of this falls in Subgrade 3a. Very slightly stony medium clay loam or medium sandy loam topsoils overlie very slightly to slightly stony medium sandy loam subsoils. Weathering sandstone bedrock occurs at between 40 cm and 80 cm depth in many cases and the ALC grade is limited by soil droughtiness and a pattern restriction.

Subgrade 3b land covers 9.2 ha in the south of the site. The soils are poorly drained with medium clay loam or medium silty clay loam topsoils overlying medium silty clay loam, heavy silty clay loam or silty clay subsoils. The subsoils become gleyed and slowly permeable within 40 cm depth and the ALC grade is restricted by soil wetness.

A small area of scrubby woodland covering 0.4 ha occurs in the east of the site.

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT ON LAND AT BLACKER GRANGE FARM, PLATTS COMMON, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Location and Survey Methods

This site lies 5½ km south-east of Barnsley town centre and covers 18 ha. Survey work was carried out in August 1995 when the soils were examined by hand auger borings at 100 m intervals predetermined by the National Grid. Two soil pits were dug to allow the soils to be described in greater detail. The land quality was assessed using the methods described in "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land" (MAFF, 1988).

1.2 Land Use and Relief

At the time of the survey, 98% of the land was in agricultural use, growing ley grass or maize. The remainder consists of a small block of woodland in the east.

Altitude varies from 135 m AOD in the north of the site to 170 m AOD in the south and the land is gently to moderately sloping (2-6°) with a northerly aspect in most cases.

1.3 Climate

Grid Reference	: SE 366 013
Altitude (m)	: 150
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C (January - June)	: 1260 day °C
Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	: 730
Climatic Grade	: 2
Field Capacity Days	: 164
Moisture Deficit (mm) Wheat	: 87
Moisture Deficit (mm) Potatoes	: 72

1.4 Geology, Soils and Drainage

The area is underlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures consisting of interbedded sandstones and shales, and, with the exception of locally derived Head deposits, there is no drift cover on the site.

The soils in the north are typically well drained (Wetness Class I) and consist of medium clay loam or medium sandy loam topsoils overlying medium sandy loam subsoils. Weathering sandstone bedrock occurs in places at around 50 cm depth.

The soils in the south of the site are generally poorly drained, falling in Wetness Class IV, with medium clay loam or medium silty clay loam topsoils overlying medium silty clay loam, heavy silty clay loam or silty clay subsoils.

The soils on this site correspond to the Dale Association as mapped by the Soil Survey and Land Research Centre.

2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The ALC grades occurring on this site are as follows:

Grade/Subgrade	Hectares	Percentage of Total Area
1		
2		
3a	8.4	46.7
3b	9.2	51.1
4		
5		
(Sub total)	(17.6)	(97.8)
Urban		
Non Agricultural		
Woodland	0.4	2.2
Agricultural Buildings		
Open Water		
Land not surveyed		
(Sub total)	(0.4)	(2.2)
TOTAL	18.0	100

2.1 Subgrade 3a

The north of the site has been mapped as Subgrade 3a. Generally the soils overlie weathering sandstone at between 40 cm and 80 cm depth, and the profiles are well drained, falling in Wetness Class I. The topsoils are very slightly stony and consist of medium clay loams or medium sandy loams, while the subsoils are very slightly to slightly stony medium sandy loams. Although some profiles meet the requirements for Grade 2, these cannot be mapped as a separate unit and so the ALC grade is restricted both by soil droughtiness and by a pattern limitation.

2.2 Subgrade 3b

The southern half of the site falls in Subgrade 3b, where the soils have formed over Coal Measures shales. The profiles are poorly drained, falling in Wetness Class IV, and medium clay loam or medium silty clay loam topsoils overlie medium silty clay loam, heavy silty clay loam or silty clay subsoils. The subsoils are gleyed and slowly permeable within 40 cm depth and soil wetness is the factor restricting this land to Subgrade 3b.

2.3 Woodland

A small area of scrubby woodland occurs in the east.

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MAP