

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR BRIDGEFORD HURST FARM, GREAT BRIDGEFORD

Summary

8.1 ha of land to the north west of Stafford were graded under the Revised Agricultural Land Classification system. 67.9% of the land was found to be grade 2, a further 8.6% to be sub-grade 3a with the remainder of the site classified as non-agricultural, urban, agricultural buildings and open water.

Introduction

The 8.1 ha site was visited by members of the Resource Planning Team in may 1993. An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey was undertaken using the ALC Revised Guidelines (MAFF 1988).

Location, Altitude and Relief

The site lies to the north west of Stafford and is bounded by the railway line in the east, Eccleshall Road in the west and the road to the north of Bridgeford Hurst Farm. The altitude of the site varies slightly from 80m in the east to 85m in the west. Altitude and relief are therefore non-limiting factors in the classification of the site.

Climate and Rainfall

The main parameters used to assess climatic limitations are Average Annual Rainfall (AAR) as a measure of overall wetness and Accumulated Temperature (ATO), as a measure of the relative warmth of the locality. For this site the figures are 739mm and 1380°C respectively, indicating no climatic limitation on this site. The Field Capacity Days (FCD) are 180.

Geology and Soils

The solid geology is composed of Keuper Marl with a drift geology of Fluvio Glacial Gravel. The associated soils are typically slightly stony sandy clay loam over slightly stony medium sandy loam or loamy medium sand over slightly stony medium sand at depth.

Limitations

Soil droughtiness is the main limitation on this site. A soils susceptibility to drought is measured by the amount of water a profile can hold (AP), in comparison to the potential soil moisture deficit for the area (MD). In this area the Moisture Deficit for wheat is 94mm and for potatoes 82mm. The soils on this site are medium to light textured and therefore are prone to drought. Isolated profiles over the site are equally limited by soil wetness and droughtiness.

Land Use

At the time of survey the land to the south east of Bridgeford Hurst Farm was under winter wheat and land to the north west of the farm was under grass.

Agricultural Land Quality

Grade 2

Land of this grade covers 5.5 ha and 67.9% of the site. The soils are typically sandy clay loam topsoils over medium sandy loam onto loamy medium sand or medium sand at depth. The soils are generally slightly stony throughout the profile.

Sub-grade 3a

This sub-grade covers 0.7ha and 8.6% of the site. It is found in the south west corner of the site adjacent to Eccleshall Road. The soils are typically slightly stony sandy clay loam topsoil over very stony loamy medium sand onto very stony medium sand to depth.

Urban, Agricultural buildings, open water and land in non-agricultural use

These categories combined cover 1.9 ha and 23.5% of the site and is made up of the farm out buildings, the farm house, tracks leading to the farm and an area of open water. A breakdown of this figure into each of the land use types can be seen in the table "Breakdown of Agricultural Land Classification Grades"

Breakdown of Agricultural Land Classification Grades

Grade	Area (ha)	% of total area	% of Agricultural Land
2	5.5	67.9	88.7
3a	0.7	8.6	11.3
Non agricultural	0.02	0.2	
Urban	0.8	9.8	
Agricultural Buildings	1.0	12.3	
Open Water	0.1	1.2	
Total Area	8.1	100.0	
Total Agricultural Area	6.2		100.0