AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
WIRRAL UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN,
SITE 5, CHINA PLATE FARM, NEWTON

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR WIRRAL UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, SITE 5, CHINA PLATE FARM, NEWTON

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	13.6	70.5
3b	5.7	29.5

1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3a and Subgrade 3b is soil wetness.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in September 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 19.3 ha site is situated to the north of Newton. The site is bounded by Saughall Massie Road to the north, China Farm Lane to the east and urban development including a school, to the south and west. Land to the north and east of the site was in agricultural use.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

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 under permanent grass.

3 CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 231 874) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	744
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1446

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	177
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	100
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	90

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 Bunter, Upper Mottled Sandstone, overlain by Glacial Boulder Clay - British Geological Survey Sheet 96, Liverpool, 1:50 000.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which have a clay loam texture.

6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Subgrade 3a - occupies 13.6 ha (70.5%) of the survey area and is found to the north, west and east of the site.

6.1.1 The soil has a clay loam texture overlying a sandy clay loam or clay loam subsoil and clay to depth. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer places these soils into Wetness Class II and III.

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

6.2 Subgrade 3b - occupies 5.7 ha (29.5%) of the survey area and is found in the central south of the site.

6.2.1 The soil typically has a clay loam texture overlying a sandy clay loam or clay loam subsoil and clay to depth. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer places these soils in Wetness Class IV.

6.3.2 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	13.6	70.5	70.5
3b	5.7	29.5	29.5
Totals	**19.3**	**100**	**100**