

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION**

**WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN -  
SKELMERSDALE**

**M Wood  
Resource Planning Team  
ADAS Statutory Group**

**ADAS Ref: 25/RPT/0626  
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# AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN - SKELMERSDALE

## 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
2	30.0	40
3a	23.8	31
3b	10.4	14
Other land		
Agricultural buildings	1.3	2
Non-agricultural	1.8	2
Woodland	0.6	1
Urban	8.5	8.5
Open water	0.3	0.5
Not surveyed	1.0	1

- 1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a is soil droughtiness.
- 1.3 The main limitations to the agricultural use of land in Subgrade 3b are soil wetness in the west and topsoil texture in the east.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in April 1994. 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 75.6 ha site is situated to the north west of Skelmersdale and the A577 road. The land immediately to the north and west of the site is predominantly in agricultural use, whilst land immediately to the south and east is in urban use.
- 2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the West Lancashire Local 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 majority of the site was under cereals, grass and horticultural crops. The remainder of the land was fallow.

### **3 CLIMATE**

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site:

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	957
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1387

3.2 The site is climatically limited to Grade 2.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	219
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	74
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	58

### **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 Middle Coal Measures and Millstone grit - British Geological Survey Sheet 84 Preston 1 inch. This is overlain with deposits of Shirdley Hill sand.

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

### **6 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION**

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 30 ha (40%) of the survey area and is found to the east of the site.

6.1.1 These soils typically have a loamy sand texture overlying loamy sand and sand to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. Occasionally there may be heavier material at depth and topsoil textures may be "organic mineral" in nature. The moisture balance places these soils into Grade 2.

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

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 23.8 ha (31%) of the survey area and is found to the west of the site.

6.2.1 The soil has loamy sand texture over sand to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. Occasionally there may be heavier material at depth and topsoil textures may be "organic mineral" in nature. The moisture balance places these soils into Subgrade 3a.

6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use is soil droughtiness.

6.3 Subgrade 3b - occupies 10.4 ha (14%) of the survey area and is found in the north west and north east of the site.

6.3.1 The soil in the north west typically has a loamy sand texture overlying sand and clay to depth. Observations of gleying and the depth to the slowly permeable layer place these soils in Wetness Class IV.

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

6.3.3 The soil in the north east typically has a sand topsoil overlying sand to depth.

6.3.4 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is topsoil texture.

6.4 Other land includes agricultural buildings which occupy 1.3 ha (2%) of the survey area and are found at Cock and Slate Farms; woodland and non-agricultural occupying 2.4 ha (3%) of the survey area in the north and south of the site; open water which occupies 0.3 ha (0.5 %) of the survey area and urban-covering 6.4 ha (8.5%) of the survey area as roads and housing. The remainder (1 ha) was not surveyed.

## 6.5 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Subgrade	Area in Hectares	% of Survey Area	% of Agricultural Land
2	30.0	40	47
3a	23.8	31	37
3b	10.4	14	16
Other land			
Agricultural buildings	1.3	2	-
Non-agricultural	1.8	2	-
Woodland	0.6	1	-
Urban	6.4	8.5	-
Open water	0.3	0.5	-
Not surveyed	1.0	1.0	-
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>