

**TRAINING FACILITIES AT BIRCH ROAD, CARRINGTON
GREATER MANCHESTER**

**Agricultural Land Classification Survey
ALC Map and Report
March 1997**

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**ADAS Reference: 106/96 & 25/RPT/0820
MAFF Reference: EL 44/11493
LUPU Commission: W02323**

**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT
TRAINING FACILITIES AT BIRCH ROAD, CARRINGTON
GREATER MANCHESTER**

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey on 45.2 hectares of land. The land is located at Carrington Moss, 2 miles west of Sale. The survey was undertaken by the Resource Planning Team at Wolverhampton (Northern ADAS Statutory Centre) during March 1997.
2. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) from its Land Use Planning Unit in Crewe. The survey was in connection with the proposed conversion of the land to training facilities. The results of this survey supersede any previous ALC information for this land.
3. The land has been graded in accordance with the publication "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised Guidelines and criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land" (MAFF 1988).
4. At the time of survey the agricultural land on this site was partly under winter barley and carrots. The remainder had recently been ploughed, crops of potato, cereal and carrot having been grown previously.

SUMMARY

5. The findings of the survey are shown on the attached ALC map. At the request of the Land Use Planning Unit this was a detailed grid survey at a scale of 1:10 000 with a minimum auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The ALC map is only accurate at the base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.
6. The area and proportions of the ALC grades and subgrades on the surveyed land are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Area of grades and other land

Grade/Other land	Area (hectares)	% site area	% surveyed area
2	42.8	94.7	99.1
3b	0.4	0.9	0.9
Other Land	2.0	4.4	-
Total surveyed area	43.2	-	100
Total site area	45.2	100	-

7. The agricultural land on this site has been classified as Grade 2 (very good quality) and Subgrade 3b (moderate quality), the key limitation being soil wetness in both cases.
8. Very good quality land is located across the majority of the site. The soil commonly comprises loamy peat topsoil overlying fibrous peat.
9. The area of moderate quality land is mapped towards the north east of the site. The soil in this area comprises a loamy peat topsoil overlying a gleyed sandy clay loam subsoil.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ALC GRADE

Climate

10. Climate affects the grading of land through the assessment of an overall climatic limitation and also through interactions with soil characteristics.
11. The key climatic variables used for grading this site are given in Table 2 below and were obtained from the published 5km grid datasets using standard interpolation procedures (Met. Office, 1989).
12. The climatic criteria are considered first when classifying land as climate can be overriding in the sense that severe limitations will restrict land to low grades irrespective of favourable site or soil conditions.

Table 2: Climatic and altitude data

Factor	Units	Values
Grid reference	N/A	SJ 754 913
Altitude	m, AOD	24
Accumulated Temperature	day°C	1423
Average Annual Rainfall	mm	865
Field Capacity Days	days	203
Moisture Deficit, Wheat	mm	87
Moisture Deficit, Potatoes	mm	75

13. The main parameters used in the assessment of an overall climatic limitation are average annual rainfall (AAR), as a measure of overall wetness, and accumulated temperature (AT0, January to June), as a measure of the relative warmth of a locality.
14. The combination of rainfall and temperature at this site means that there is no overall climatic limitation. The site is climatically Grade 1.

Site

15. The site lies at altitudes in the range 23-24m AOD, being generally level and is crossed by a grid of drains and trackways.

16. Three site factors of gradient, microrelief and flooding are considered when classifying the land.

17. These factors do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of this land.

Geology and soils

18. The solid geology of the area is comprised of Upper Mottled Sandstone. This is overlain with deposits of peat - British Geological Survey (1977).

19. The soil that has developed on this geology is generally of a peaty texture over sand at depth.

Agricultural Land Classification

20. The details of the classification of the site are shown on the attached ALC map and the area statistics of each grade are given in Table 1.

Grade 2

21. Land of very good quality occupies 42.8 hectares (94.7%) of the site area and extends across the majority of the site in a single unit.

22. The soil has a loamy peat texture over fibrous peat to depth with few stones within the profile. Field observations at the time of the survey and the field capacity day figure of 203 place the soil in Wetness Class III.

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

Subgrade 3b

24. Land of moderate quality occupies 0.4 hectares (0.9%) of the site area and is found in the north east of the site.

25. The soil has a loamy peat texture overlying fibrous peat and sand. Field observations at the time of the survey and the field capacity day figure of 203 place the soil in Wetness Class V.

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

Other Land

29. Other land occupies 2.0 hectares (4.4%) of the site area and is found as trackways and woodland.

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SOURCES OF REFERENCE

British Geological Survey (1977) *Sheet 98, Stockport Solid and Drift Edition. 1:50 000 Scale.*
BGS: London.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1988) *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.*
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Meteorological Office (1989) *Climatological Data for Agricultural Land Classification.*
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