AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
WETHERBY ROAD, ACOMB, YORK

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AGRICULTURE LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT

WETHERBY ROAD, ACOMB, YORK

Introduction

The site is located around Grid Reference SE 562509 between the A1237 York Ring Road and the city boundary at chapel fields. It covers an area of approximately 35.6 hectares.

Survey work was carried out in May 1988 when soils were examined to a depth of 1 metre using a hand auger at points pre determined by the National Grid. The density of borings was approximately one per hectare. Land quality assessments were made using the revised guidelines published by MAFF in 1988.

All of the agriculture land is in arable use except for a few fields of permanent grass in the souther part of the site.

Climate

Mean annual rainfall in the area is approximately 640 mm (25.2"). Accumulated temperature above $0^{o}C$ (January to June) is $1382^{o}C$ and the land is at field capacity for approximately 143 days each year. There is no overall climatic limitation, although summer droughtiness will be slightly limiting on the lighter sandy soils.

The moisture deficits for the site are approximately 106 mm for wheat and 98 mm for potatoes.

Relief

Most of the site is virtually level at an altitude of approximately 20 metres aod. The only exception is in the southern quarter where the topography is gently undulating.

Geology and Soils

Soils over most of the site are formed on post glacial fine and medium sand which forms a cover of a metre of so in thickness over the underlying lacustrine and boulder clay.

Clay occurs within one metre of the surface in only a few places, mainly around Acomb Grange Farm.

Topsopils are generally of loamy fine sand, fine sandy loam or fine sand passing into similar or lighter subsoils. Clay may occur below 1 m. Along the extreme south western edge of the site, however, there are a few patches of silty clay loam topsoil over clay or silty clay subsoil.

Drainage

The sandy soils contain no slowly permeable layer and thus fall within Wetness Class I. The heavier textured soils around Acomb Grange Farm, however, are slowly permeable below 50 cm depth and meet the criteria for Wetness Class III.

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Grade	Area (ha)	Percentage of total Area
2	21.4	60.1
3a	7.1	19.9
3b	4.0	11.2
Urban	0.3	7.9
Non Agricultural	2.8	0.8
Total	35.6	100

Grade 2

This grade is dominant and consists mainly of freely drained loamy fine sand topsoils over similar subsoils. Droughtiness calculations suggest that those soils may have a slight droughtiness limitation only for

crops such as potatoes. Note that topsoils with a very weak structure and which are light enough to blow are excluded from this grade and fall mainly within subgrade 3b.

Subgrade 3a

Two areas of subgrade 3a land occur south of Acomb Grange. Lighter textured subsoils occur in these areas and reduce the profile available water making this land slightly droughty for wheat and potatoes. Droughtiness here is more limiting than on the adjoining grade 2 land and the area is downgraded for this reason.

Subgrade 3b

South of the main ditch which crosses the western part of the site the post glacial sand cover is thin and patchy. The resulting heavier textured soils are subject to a significant soil wetness limitation which downgrades this area to 3b.

Also included in this subgrade are very light textured soils which occur on the crests of indulations. It is likely that such soils will be subject to wind erosion (blowing) in early spring as well as summer droughtiness and they are limited to subgrade 3b for these reasons.

Non Agricultural

This consists of rough scrubland and a municipal playing field around Acomb Grange Farm.

Urban

A hard concrete play area east of the Grange is regarded as urban.

Reference

Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land MAFF (1988).