

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The soil survey team at Soil Environment Services have a combined experience of nearly 30 years in undertaking Agricultural Land Classifications (ALCs) across England and Wales. We have surveyed sites from less than a ha. to over 1000 ha. and linear road routes of over 30 miles. In Scotland we undertake Land Capability Classification for Agriculture surveys (LCCAs).



In England and Wales, Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys are undertaken strictly in accordance with:

Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales
Guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land
(Revised guidelines 1988 and Draft second revision 1996, MAFF, London)

The classification work includes:

1. Initial desktop work to examine previously mapped soil types and to note the drift and solid geology. Flood risk is assessed.
2. The site survey includes hand augering and pits to assess the soil types on site.
3. Laboratory testing is undertaken in some cases to assess the soil texture.
4. Reporting will include soil maps, land classification maps for the grades below and all supporting data in tables and appendices.

Grade	Description
1	Excellent quality agricultural land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use.
2	Very good quality agricultural land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivation or harvesting.
3a	Good quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops or moderate yields of a wider range of crops.
3b	Moderate quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops or lower yields of a wider range of crops.
4	Poor quality agricultural land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields.
5	Very poor quality agricultural land with very severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.

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