

Agricultural Land Classes in Scotland

The Land Capability Classification for Agriculture, developed by the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Aberdeen, classifies land according to the limitations imposed on it by physical and biological factors which affect agriculture, these factors being climate, gradient, soil, wetness, erosion and vegetation.

Land is ranked on the basis of its potential productivity, cropping flexibility and ease of management. Flexibility of cropping determines the extent to which farmers and growers can respond to market forces.

The applications of the classification include:

- planning
- farm sales
- investment analysis
- rental assessments



Class 1 land near Edinburgh

CLASS
1
LAND

LAND CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A VERY WIDE RANGE OF CROPS Cropping is highly flexible and includes the more exacting crops such as winter-harvested vegetables. The level of yield is consistently high. Area 4 300 hectares (<1% of Scotland).



Class 3 land near Tarland, Aberdeenshire



Class 2 land near Laurencekirk

CLASS
2
LAND

LAND CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A WIDE RANGE OF CROPS Cropping is very flexible and a wide range of crops can be grown, but the land may be unsuited to winter-harvested crops. The level of yield is high but less consistently obtained than on Class 1 due to the effects of minor limitations affecting cultivation, crop growth or harvesting. Area 108 300 hectares (1% of Scotland).



Class 4 land in Strathdon, Aberdeenshire

Prime Quality Land in Scotland



Prime Quality Land

Prime Quality Land (Classes 1, 2 and 31) covers 440 900 hectares or 5.7% of Scotland's land surface.

Because of its high value to agriculture, and its scarcity, there is a presumption against its development. Where prime quality land would be affected by development there should be reasoned justification for doing so.

The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute

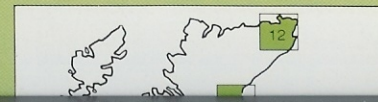


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




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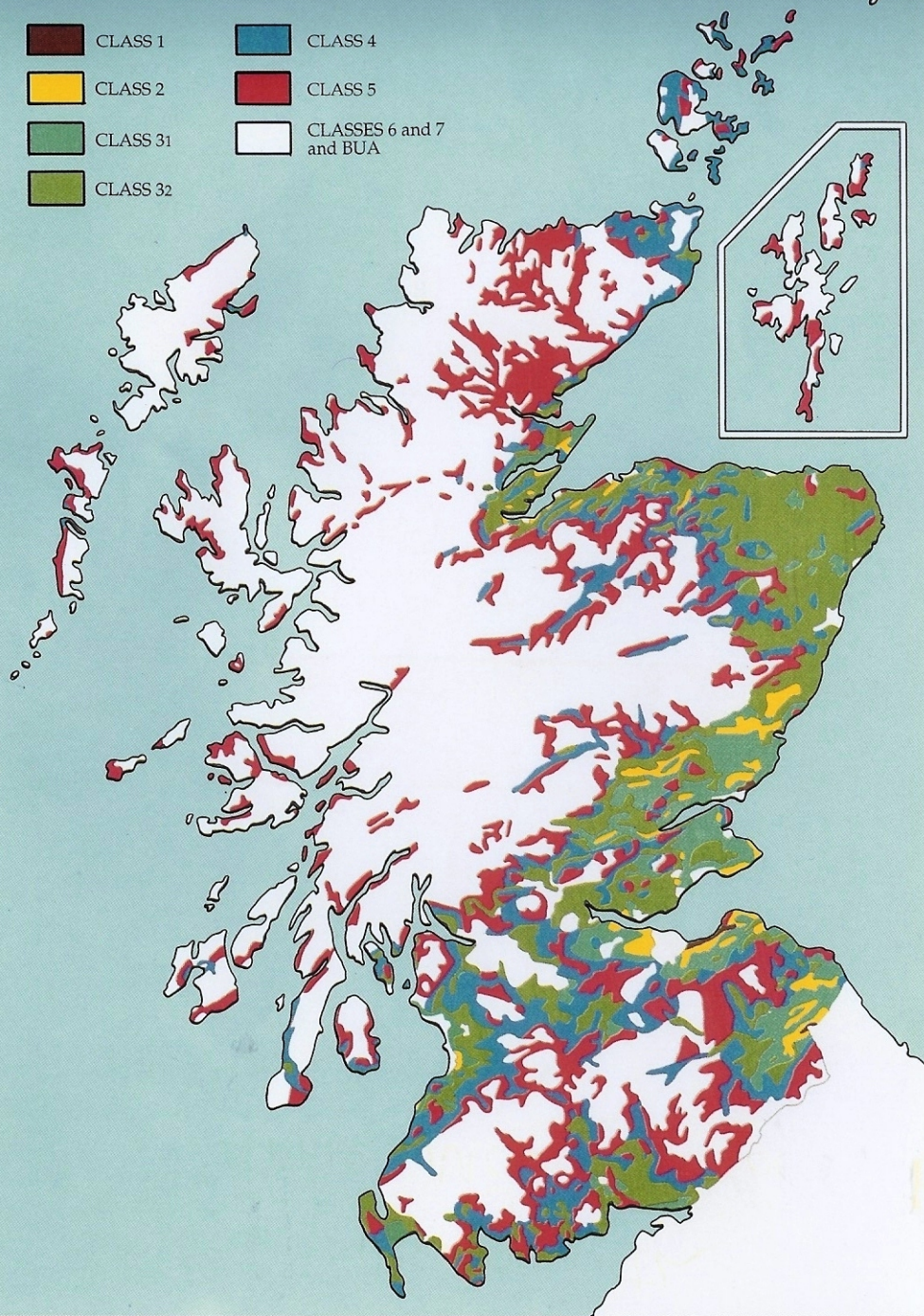
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**Agricultural land
class maps**

- | | |
|--|--|
|  CLASS 1 |  CLASS 4 |
|  CLASS 2 |  CLASS 5 |
|  CLASS 31 |  CLASSES 6 and 7
and BUA |
|  CLASS 32 | |



CLASS
3
LAND

LAND CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A MODERATE RANGE OF CROPS

Land in this class is capable of producing good yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass, and/or moderate yields of a wider range including potatoes, some vegetable crops and oil seed rape. The degree of variability between years will be greater than is the case for Classes 1 and 2, mainly due to interactions between climate, soil and management factors affecting the timing and type of cultivations, sowing and harvesting. The limitations are moderate in their effects. This class has two divisions: Class 31 is above-average arable land and Class 32 average arable land. Area 1 179 000 hectares (15% of Scotland).



Class 5 land near Perth

CLASS
5
LAND

LAND CAPABLE OF USE AS IMPROVED GRASSLAND

The agricultural use of land in Class 5 is restricted to grass production but such land frequently plays an important role in the economy of the British hill lands. Mechanized surface treatments to improve the grassland, ranging from ploughing through rotavation to surface seeding and improvement by non-disruptive techniques are all possible. Although an occasional pioneer forage crop may be grown, one or two severe limitations render the land unsuitable for arable cropping. There are three divisions. Class 51 land is well suited to improvement, Class 52 land is moderately suited, and Class 53 land marginally suited. Area 1 427 000 hectares (19% of Scotland).

Class 4 land in Strathdon, Aberdeenshire

CLASS
4
LAND

LAND CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A NARROW RANGE OF CROPS

The land is suitable for enterprises based primarily on grassland with short arable breaks (e.g. barley, oats, forage crops). Yields of arable crops are variable due to soil, wetness or climatic factors. Yields of grass are often high but difficulties of production or utilisation may be encountered. The moderately severe levels of limitation restrict the choice of crops and demand careful management. The limitations may include moderately severe wetness, occasional damaging floods, shallow or very stony soils, moderately steep gradients, moderate erosion risk,

moderately severe climate or interactions of these which increase the level of farming risk. There are two divisions, Class 41 and Class 42, the first having a greater capability for producing forage crops for stock feed. Area 836 900 hectares (11% of Scotland).

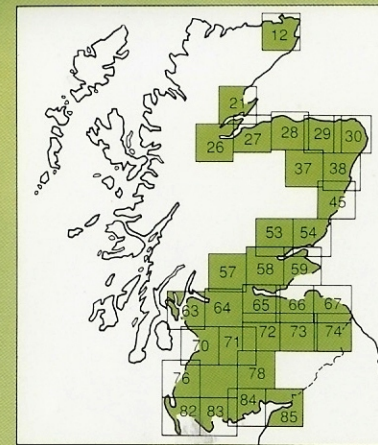


Class 6 land in the Cairngorms

CLASS
6
LAND

LAND CAPABLE OF USE ONLY AS ROUGH GRAZINGS

The land has very severe limitations which generally prevent the use of tractor-operated machinery for improvement. Reclamation of small areas to encourage stock to range is often possible. A range of widely different qualities of grazing is included from very steep land with significant grazing value in the lowland situation to moorland with a low but sustained production in the uplands. Grazing is usually insignificant on the mountain tops, but below this grazings which can be utilized for five months or longer in any year are included in the class. This class has three divisions, based on the relative grazing values of the vegetation. Class 61 land has high grazing value, Class 62 has moderate grazing value, and class 63 has low grazing value. Area 3 732 900 hectares (48% of Scotland).



Agricultural land class maps

Maps of the agricultural land classes in Scotland are published at the scale of 1:50 000 and available for the areas shown on the index map.

An earlier series (1983), at scale 1:250 000, covers the whole of Scotland.

The maps can be purchased from The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Aberdeen. Telephone (0224) 318611.



Class 7 land in the Cairngorms

CLASS
7
LAND

LAND OF VERY LIMITED AGRICULTURAL VALUE

This land has extremely severe limitations that cannot be rectified. Agricultural use is restricted to very poor rough grazing. Area 254 800 hectares (3% of Scotland).

BUILT-UP AREAS, QUARRIES, etc. Area 165 500 hectares (2% of Scotland).

The co-operation of the Colleges of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland in the production of the Land Capability maps is acknowledged