

Agricultural Land Classification Workshop

Defra has recently [published an update of the Agricultural Land Classification \(ALC\)](#). The new [Predictive ALC map](#) replaces the outdated Provisional ALC map. It has been remodelled using the best available soils data from LandIS. The ALC System for England and Wales grades the inherent quality of farmland for agricultural use.

The system was developed in the mid-60s to map the distribution of agricultural land quality, across England and Wales, to a common standard. This was to ensure scarce, high-quality land could be protected from loss to development, through the planning system - one of the first 'ecosystem services' approaches in the UK.

It provides a framework for classifying farmland from Grade 1: excellent quality, to Grade 5: poor quality. Updates to the ALC methodology in 1988 included the sub-division of Grade 3, into Sub-grades 3a and 3b, introducing the important distinction of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. BMV land comprises Grades 1, 2 and 3a, and is given a degree of protection in planning.

In this workshop we will explore the new predictive ALC map covering what has changed compared to the withdrawn Provisional ALC map, and how this new map can be used including its limitations. This workshop is aimed at users of the ALC map including Local Planning Authorities, consultants, landowners and environmental agencies.

AGENDA

10:30	Welcome and background to the Land Use for Net Zero (LUNZ) Hub – Dr Mike Morecroft, Natural England
10:45	A brief history of the ALC – Dr Eleanor Reed, Natural England
11:05	The provisional ALC and the new predictive ALC map – Professor Jack Hannam, University of Greenwich; Dr Kriti Mukherjee, Cranfield University
11:45	Opportunity for questions and discussion on the morning session
12:15	Lunch (will be provided)
13:15	Appropriate use of the new Predictive ALC map in planning – Dr Eleanor Reed, Natural England
13:30	Understanding differences from the Provisional ALC map - Professor Jack Hannam, University of Greenwich; Dr Joanna Zawadzka, Cranfield University
13:50	Discussion session on use of the new map and differences with the provisional
14:15	Coffee break
14:30	Predictive ALC Mapping in practice – Dr Bruce Lascelles, Arcadis
15:00	The Land Use Framework and development of the Land Use Unit – Dr Elie Kent, Defra
15:30	Wrap up and close – Dr Mike Morecroft, Natural England