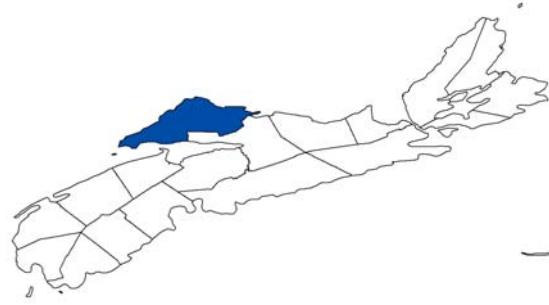


# CUMBERLAND COUNTY



## PROFILE of AGRICULTURAL LAND RESOURCES

### Overview of county land resources

Land most suitable for agricultural production (Canadian Land Inventory (CLI) classes 2,3 and 4<sup>i</sup>) covers over half of Cumberland County (see Table 1). Cumberland has 30 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 11 percent of CLI 3 and 18 percent of CLI 4. Cumberland has the largest area of arable land of any county in Nova Scotia.

Cumberland has approximately 30,500 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to over 13 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Cumberland uses about 7 percent of the county land area.

|                           | Hectares | Percent of provincial total | Percent of county land area |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL           | 232,379  | 14.8                        | 54.2                        |
| CLI 2                     | 50,235   | 30.5                        | 11.7                        |
| CLI 3                     | 107,213  | 10.8                        | 25.0                        |
| CLI 4                     | 74,931   | 17.9                        | 17.5                        |
| Agricultural land (ALIP)* | 38,775   | 16.4                        | 9.1                         |
| Agricultural land (DNR)** | 30,528   | 13.3                        | 7.1                         |
| Blueberry land (DNR)**    | 8,933    | 54.1                        | 2.1                         |

\* As indicated by the NSDA Agricultural Land Identification Project.  
 \*\* Based on forest coverage files from NS Natural Resources (blueberry land is low-bush/ wild)  
 Source: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Cumberland also has 8,900 hectares of wild blueberry production. This amounts to over half of the Nova Scotia total, making Cumberland the largest producer of wild blueberries of the 18 Nova Scotia counties.

**Figure 1a. Agricultural lands in Cumberland County**

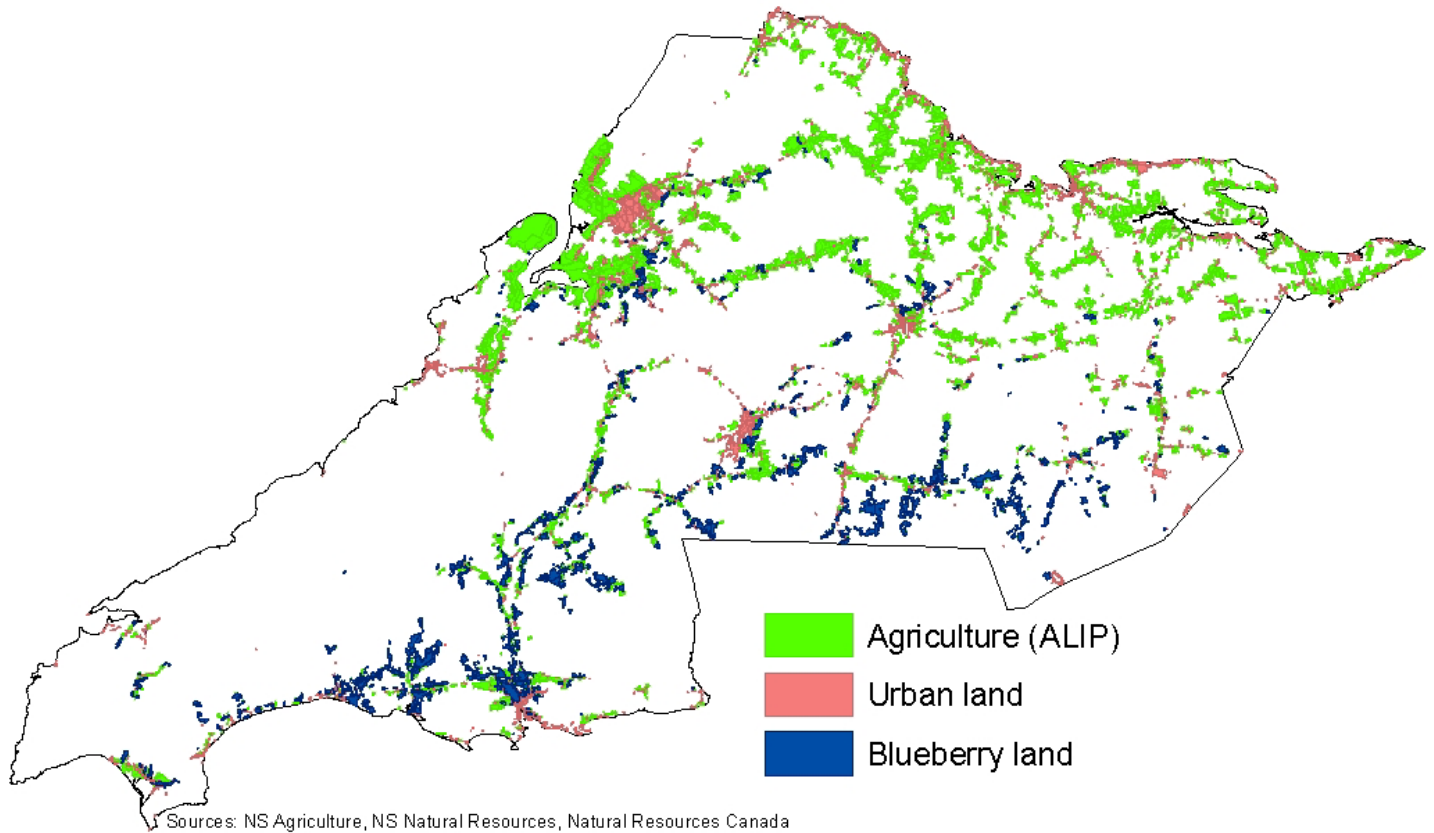
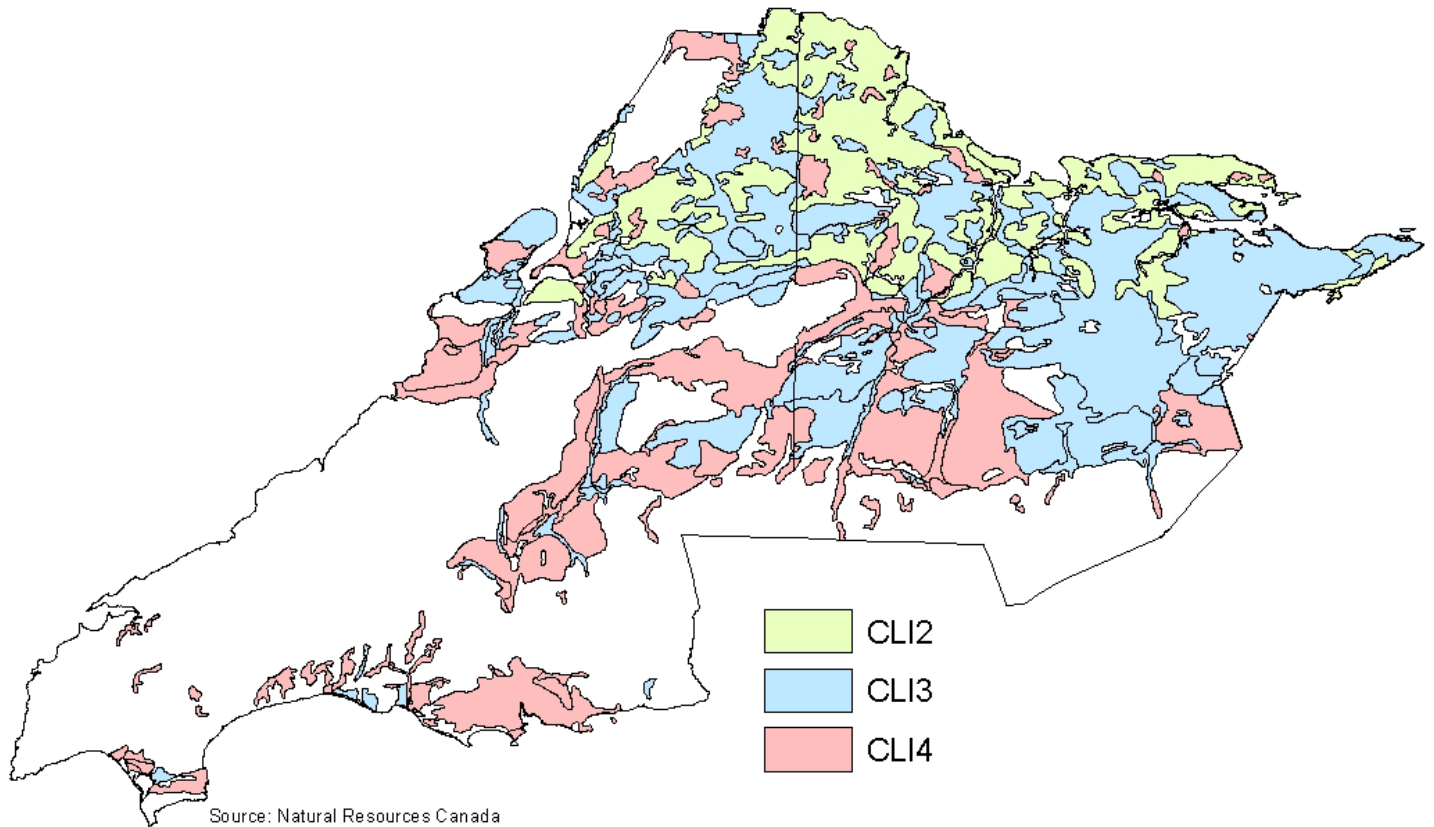
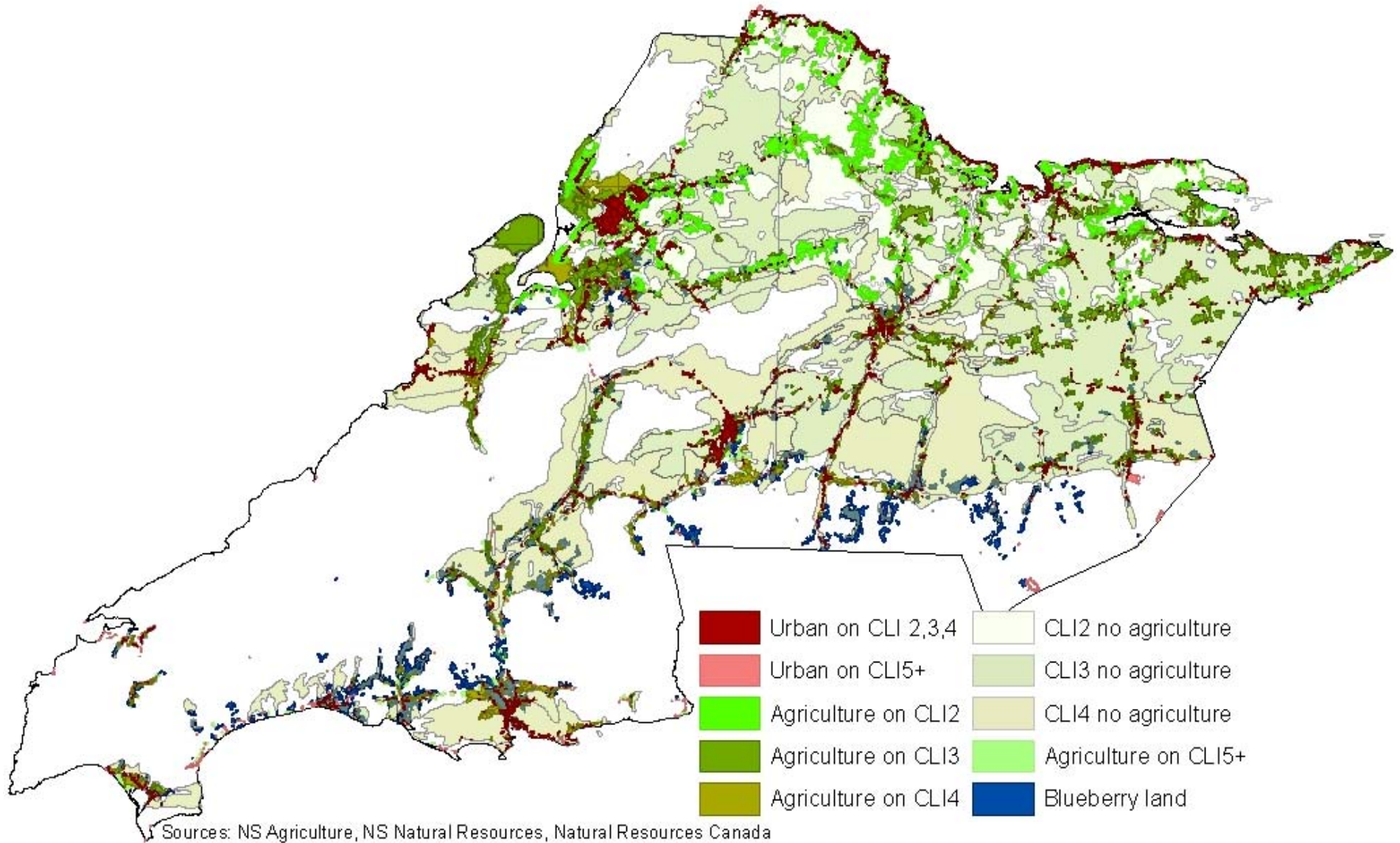


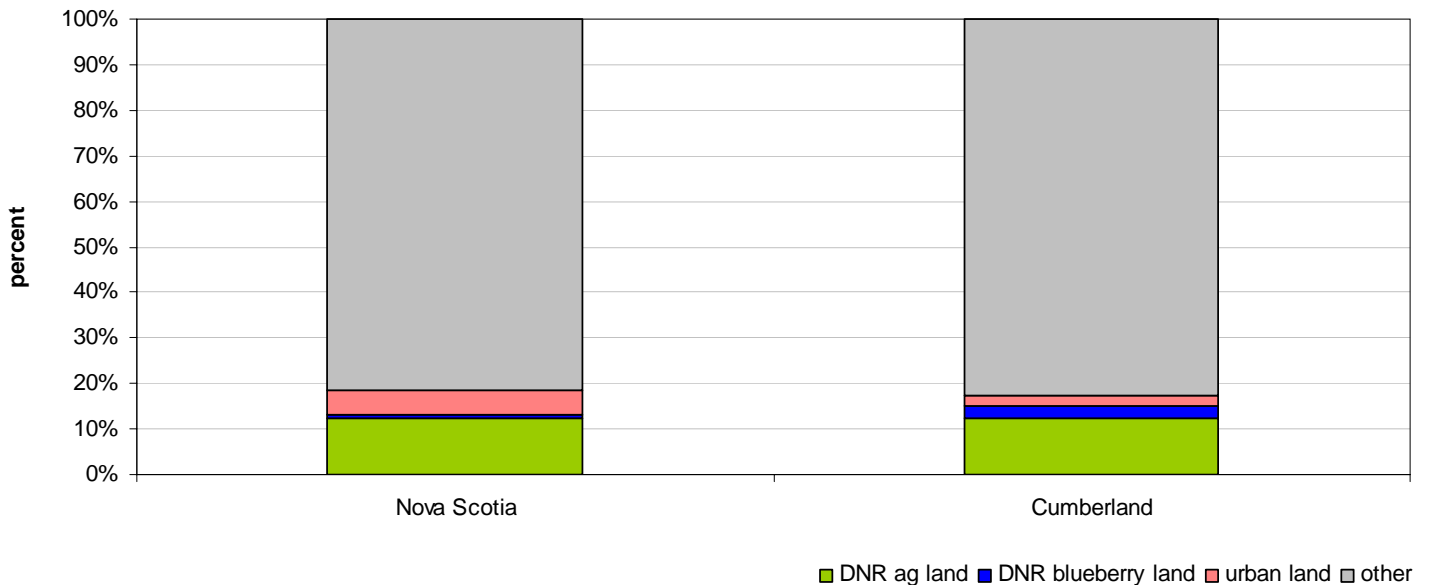
Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Cumberland County (overlay)



## Usage of arable land and composition of farmed land

Land most suitable for agricultural production (CLI classes 2, 3 and 4) is used for agriculture in Cumberland County at a rate near the provincial average, although Cumberland uses this land for significantly more blueberry production than is the case in other counties (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 12 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for non-blueberry agricultural production in Cumberland compared with 13 percent provincially. Including wild blueberries, Cumberland uses 15 percent of its arable land for agriculture. This places Cumberland 5<sup>th</sup> (7<sup>th</sup> without blueberries) among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

**Figure 2. Utilization of soils suitable for agriculture- Cumberland vs Nova Scotia**



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is not highly utilized for farming in Cumberland with approximately 22 percent in agriculture (7<sup>th</sup> out of 14 counties with class 2 land). This is significantly lower than the Nova Scotia average of 29 percent of CLI 2 lands used for agriculture.

Cumberland has about 2 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development; the second lowest of any county behind Guysborough. The provincial average is 5.4 percent. The low percentage encroachment of urban development on arable land is mostly due to the large amount of class 2,3,4 land in the county.

**Table 2. Use of agricultural soils (CLI classes 2,3,4) in Cumberland County and Nova Scotia**

|                          | CLI 2      |             | CLI 3      |             | CLI 4      |             | TOTAL CLI 2,3,4 |             |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                          | Cumberland | Nova Scotia | Cumberland | Nova Scotia | Cumberland | Nova Scotia | Cumberland      | Nova Scotia |
|                          | Percent    |             |            |             |            |             |                 |             |
| Agricultural land (DNR)* | 22.0       | 29.3        | 12.6       | 12.0        | 5.9        | 7.9         | 12.4            | 12.7        |
| Blueberry land (DNR)*    | 0.6        | 0.5         | 1.4        | 0.3         | 5.2        | 1.8         | 2.4             | 0.7         |
| Urban area               | 4.4        | 6.9         | 1.8        | 5.4         | 1.9        | 4.6         | 2.4             | 5.4         |
| Other                    | 73.1       | 63.3        | 84.3       | 82.3        | 87.1       | 85.7        | 82.8            | 81.2        |

\* Based on forest coverage files from NS Natural Resources (blueberry land is low-bush/ wild)  
Source: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture,  
Natural Resources Canada,  
Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Looking at the land base from a different perspective (the composition of lands used for agriculture, Table 3) it is apparent that Cumberland County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, and at a higher percentage than the provincial average. Over one-third of agricultural land is on class 2 soils, while 44 percent is on class 3 soils and 15 percent on class 4. Approximately 5 percent of Cumberland agriculture is on less than class 4 soils. The ALIP numbers (which include blueberries) are significantly higher than the DNR agriculture numbers due to the large area of blueberry production in Cumberland.

**Table 3. Composition of lands in agriculture- Cumberland County**

|       | Agricultural land (ALIP)* |             | Agricultural land (DNR)** |             | Blueberry land (DNR)** |             |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
|       | Cumberland                | Nova Scotia | Cumberland                | Nova Scotia | Cumberland             | Nova Scotia |
|       | Percent                   |             |                           |             |                        |             |
| CLI 2 | 29.7                      | 20.5        | 36.1                      | 21.1        | 3.2                    | 4.7         |
| CLI 3 | 37.6                      | 49.4        | 44.1                      | 51.8        | 16.6                   | 16.4        |
| CLI 4 | 20.2                      | 16.3        | 14.5                      | 14.5        | 43.2                   | 44.5        |
| Other | 12.5                      | 13.8        | 5.3                       | 12.7        | 37.0                   | 34.4        |

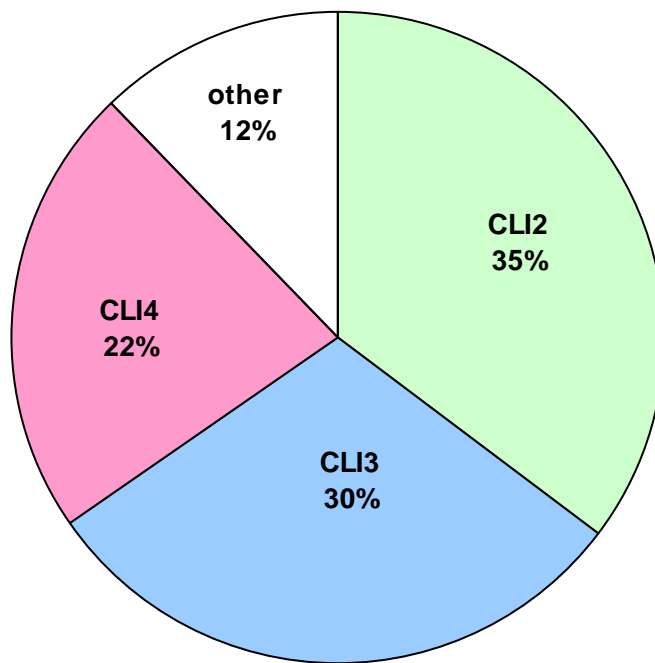
\* As indicated by the NSDA Agricultural Land Identification Project.  
\*\* Based on forest coverage files from NS Natural Resources (blueberry land is low-bush/ wild)  
Source: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Canada,  
Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.



## Urban use and property fragmentation of the agricultural land base

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of urban development in Cumberland is on good agricultural soils. Only 12 percent of urban land in Cumberland is on poorer than CLI4 soil; the fourth lowest percentage in the province. Over one-third of urban development in Cumberland has been on class 2 land (the highest of any county), while a further 30 percent is on class 3 and 22 percent on class 4 land. As indicated in Table 2, the proportion of urban land encroachment on CLI soils is highest for CLI2 land and drops off on lower quality land, consistent with the provincial average.

**Figure 3. Composition of urban land-  
Cumberland**



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Cumberland County has 1,906 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 1,463 hectares, 1,231 of which are on ALIP.

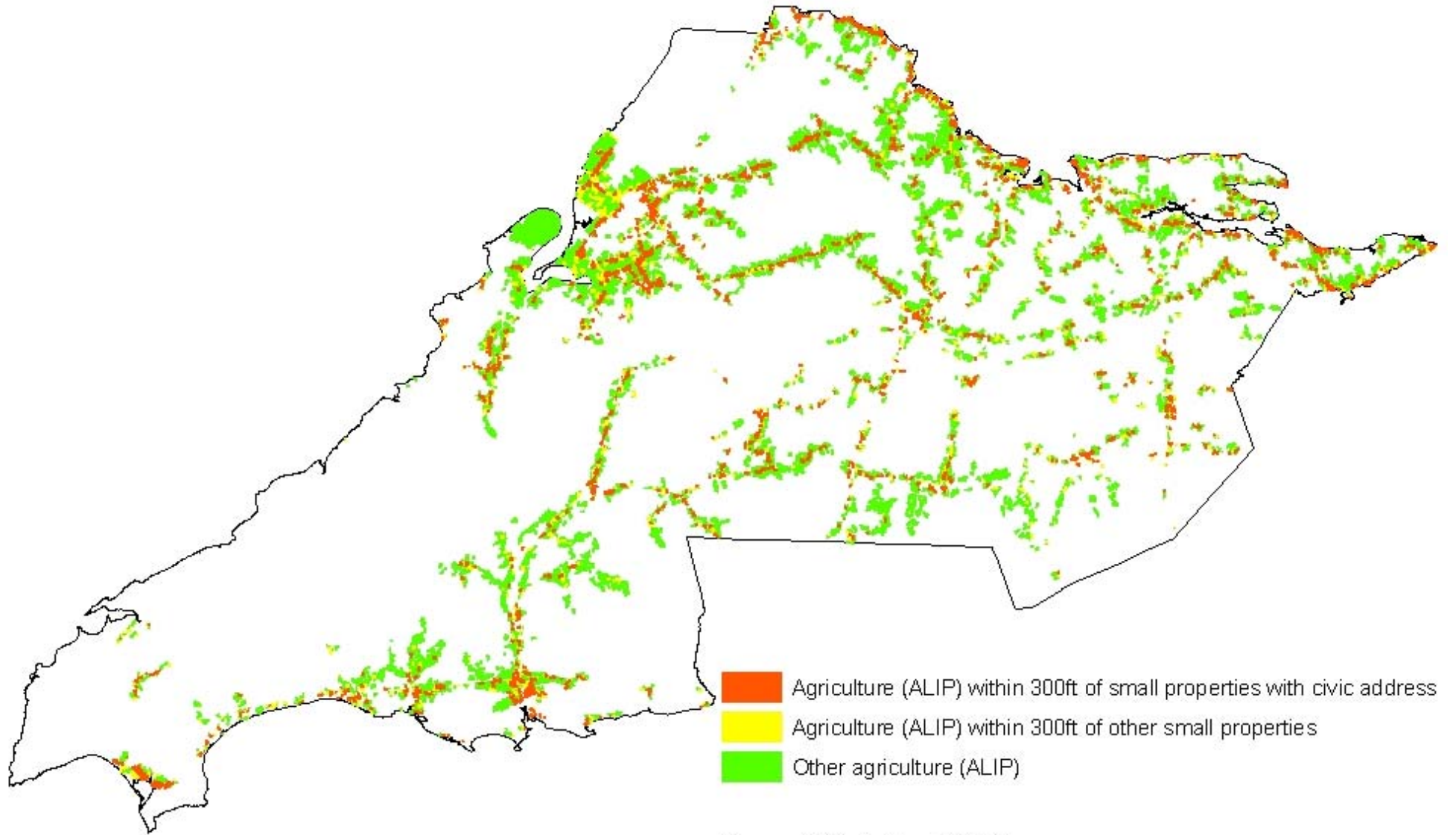
| <b>Table 4. Analysis of small properties (&lt; 2ha) encroaching on farm land-<br/>Cumberland County, Nova Scotia</b> |                          |          |                                      |          |  |              |
|--|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|----------|--|--------------|
|  | <b>Vacant properties</b> |          | <b>Properties with civic address</b> |          | <b>TOTAL of small properties (&lt; 2 ha)</b> |              |
|  | # properties             | Hectares | # properties                         | Hectares | # properties                                 | Hectares     |
| <b>Centered in ALIP farmland</b>   | 964                      | 741      | 942                                  | 722      | <b>1,906</b>                                 | <b>1,463</b> |
| <b>Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP</b>   | 966                      | 631      | 942                                  | 600      | <b>1,908</b>                                 | <b>1,231</b> |
| <b>Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland</b>   | 1,993                    | 1,342    | 3,029                                | 1,814    | <b>5,022</b>                                 | <b>3,155</b> |
| Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)  |                          |          |                                      |          |  |              |

A total of 5,022 properties less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 60 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 20 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Cumberland, the county has the lowest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland of any county in Nova Scotia.

Ultimately, approximately 597 hectares (1.5 percent) of ALIP lands in Cumberland have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Cumberland 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of area of farmland lost.

While physical occupancy of land by non-farm development or land with the potential for non-farm development can be used to estimate potential loss of land to the sector, the effect of development on adjacent agricultural lands is probably of greater significance in terms of area affected. In order to estimate the area of farmland that is at risk due to the proximity of development, a 300 ft (91.44m) buffer was drawn around each small (<2ha) property and the amount of ALIP farmland falling under this zone was calculated (Figure 4). Cumberland has approximately 22 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the lowest in the province (3<sup>rd</sup> highest in absolute terms). Approximately 14 percent of Cumberland farmland is within 300 feet of a small property with a civic address (i.e. likely developed property).

Figure 4. Agriculture (ALIP) within 300 feet of small properties (< 2ha)



Sources: NS Agriculture, SNSMR



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<sup>i</sup> Nova Scotia does not have any CLI class 1 soil. Class 2 to 4 soils have moderate to severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices or both. Class 5 soils and below have very severe limitations for agriculture.

## Sources

Natural Resources Canada. Canada Land Inventory. Available from: <http://geogratis.cgdi.gc.ca/CLI/frames.html>. Accessed [25 January 2010].

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Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. Forest Inventory - Geographic Information Systems. Available from: [www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/gis/forest-inventory.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/gis/forest-inventory.asp). Accessed [25 January 2010].

SNSMR (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations). 2009. NS Civic Address File and property polygons.