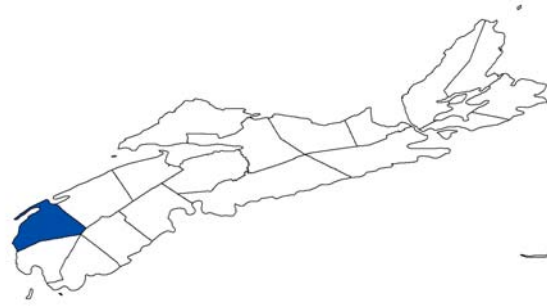


# DIGBY COUNTY



## 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 one-quarter of Digby County (see Table 1). Digby has less than 1 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 5 percent of CLI 3 and 5 percent of CLI 4.

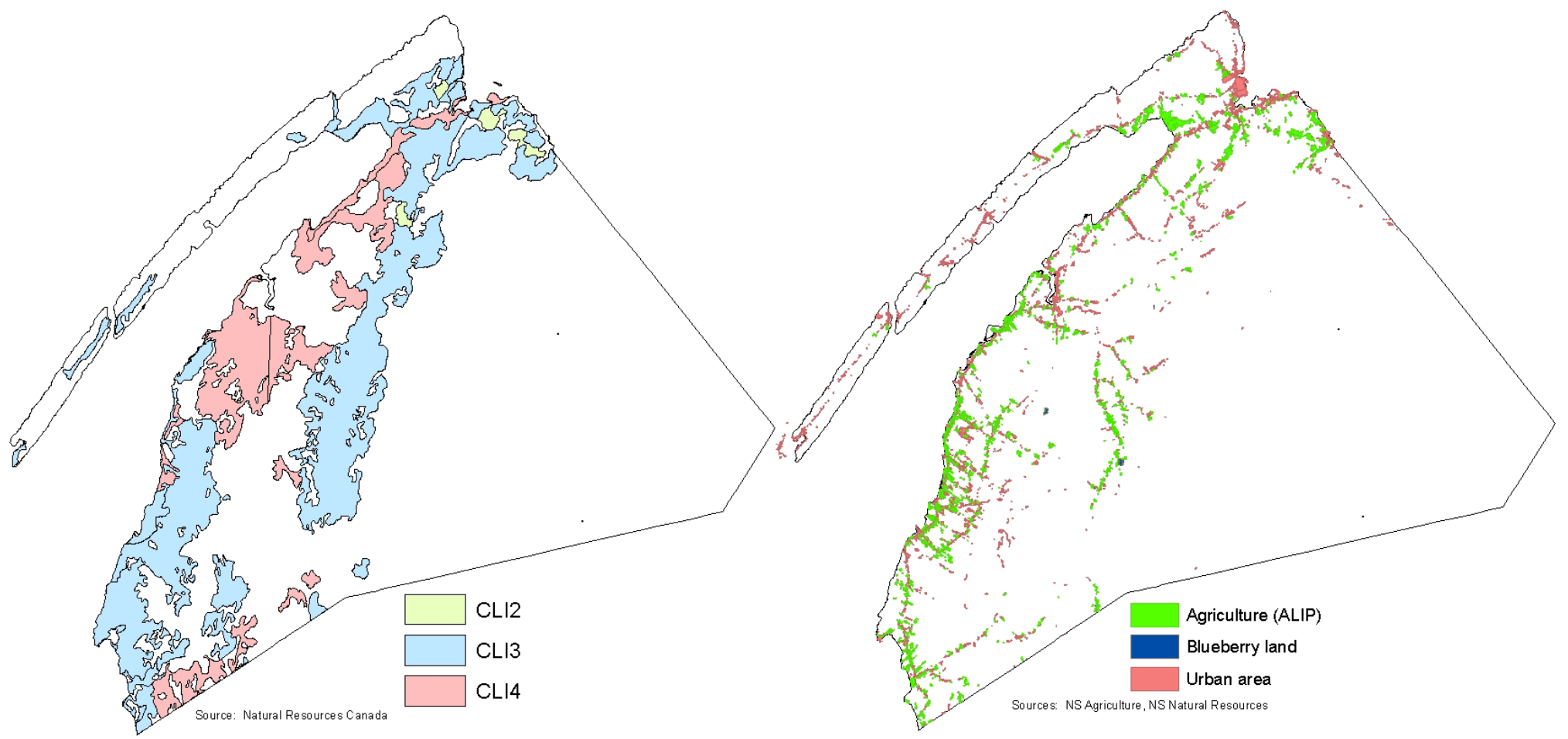
Digby has approximately 4,500 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to about 2 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Digby uses less than 2 percent of the county land area.

**Table 1. Agricultural land statistics- Digby County**

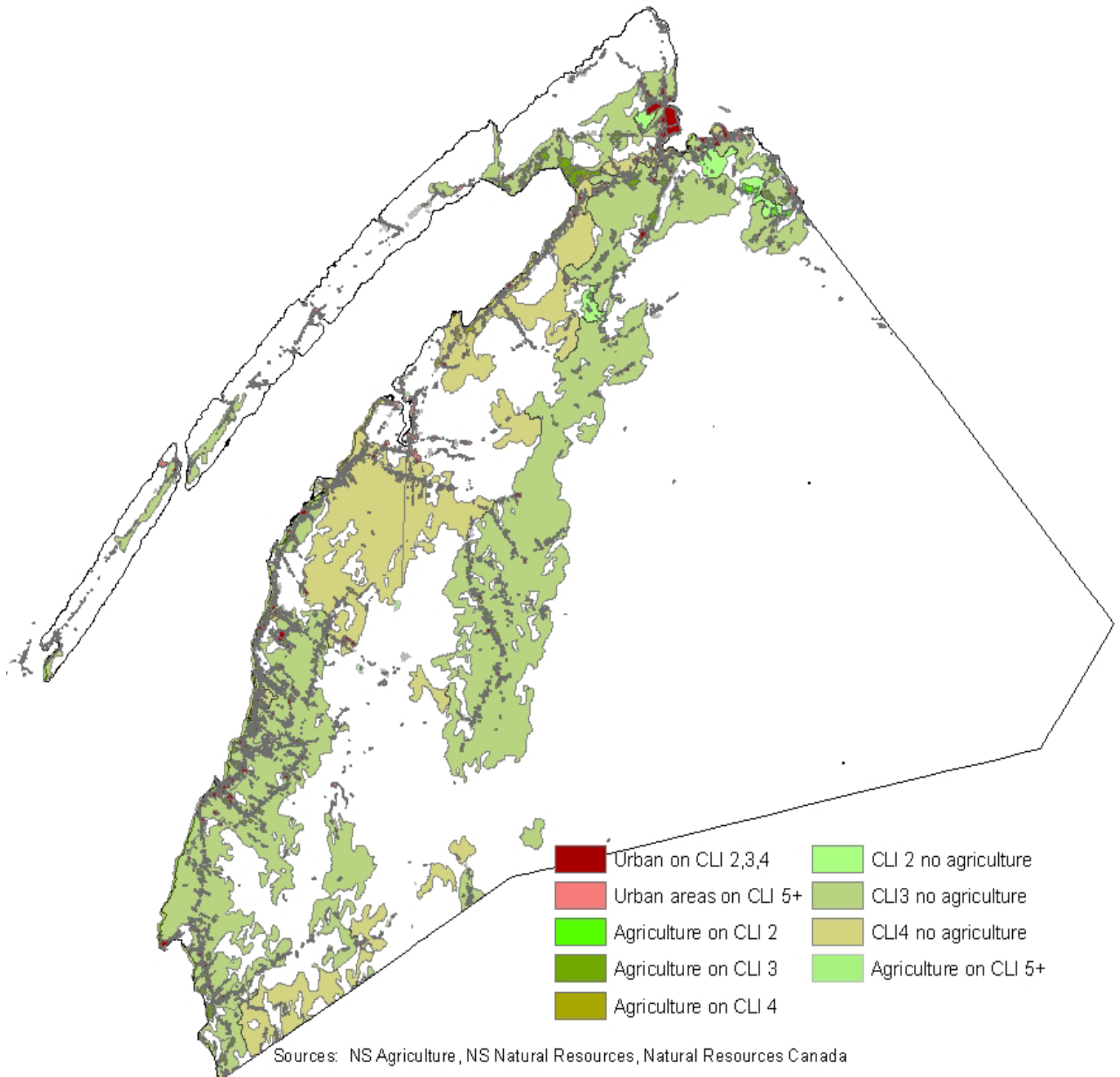
	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	68,756	4.4	27.5
CLI 2	1,282	0.5	0.8
CLI 3	47,899	4.8	19.2
CLI 4	19,574	4.7	7.8
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	4,205	1.8	1.7
Agricultural land (DNR)**	4,807	2.1	1.9
Blueberry land (DNR)**	44.6	0.3	0.02

\* 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.

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



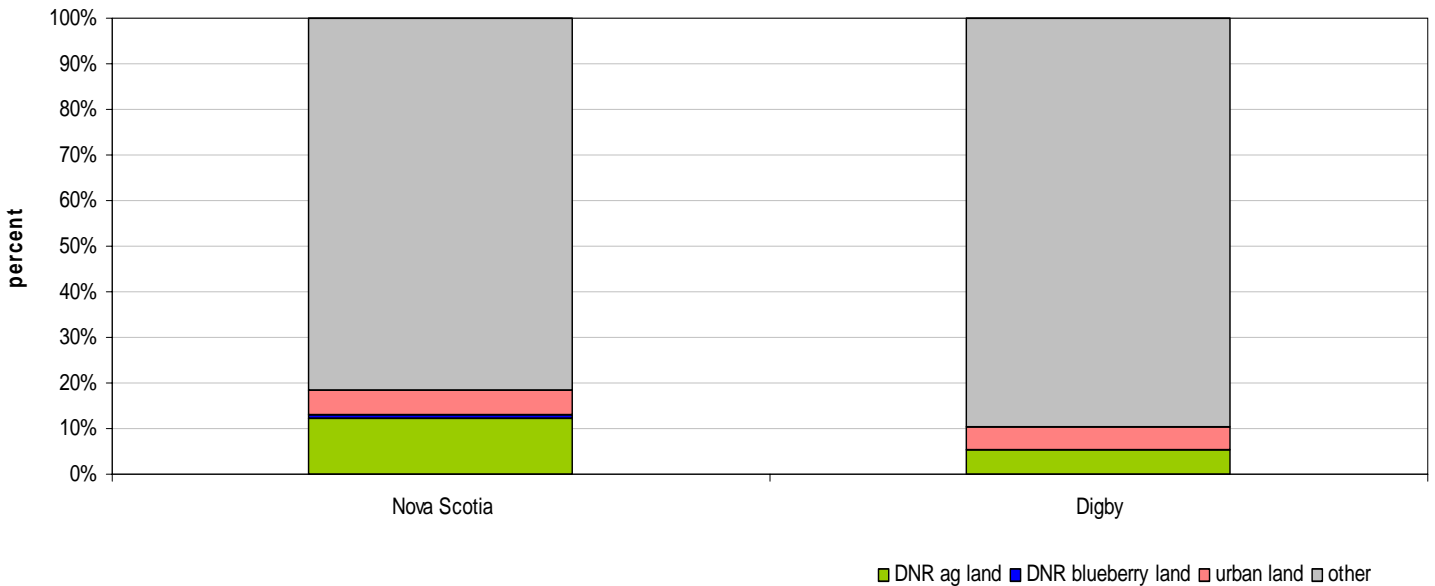
**Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Digby County (overlay)**



## Usage of arable land and composition of farmed land

Land most suitable for agricultural production (CLI classes 2, 3 and 4) are used for agriculture in Digby County at a lesser rate than the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 6 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Digby compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Digby 11<sup>th</sup> among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is not highly utilized in Digby with approximately 15 percent in agriculture (10<sup>th</sup> out of 14 counties with CLI 2 land). Provincially 29 percent of CLI 2 lands are in agriculture.

Digby has about 5 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development ranking Digby 11<sup>th</sup>. This compares to the provincial average of 5.4 percent ranking.

<b>Table 2. Use of agricultural soils (CLI classes 2,3,4) in Digby County and Nova Scotia</b>								
	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Digby	Nova Scotia	Digby	Nova Scotia	Digby	Nova Scotia	Digby	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	14.8	29.3	5.7	12.0	4.5	7.9	5.5	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.7
Urban area	5.1	6.9	5.1	5.4	4.4	4.6	4.9	5.4
Other	80.1	63.3	89.2	82.3	91.1	85.7	89.5	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.								

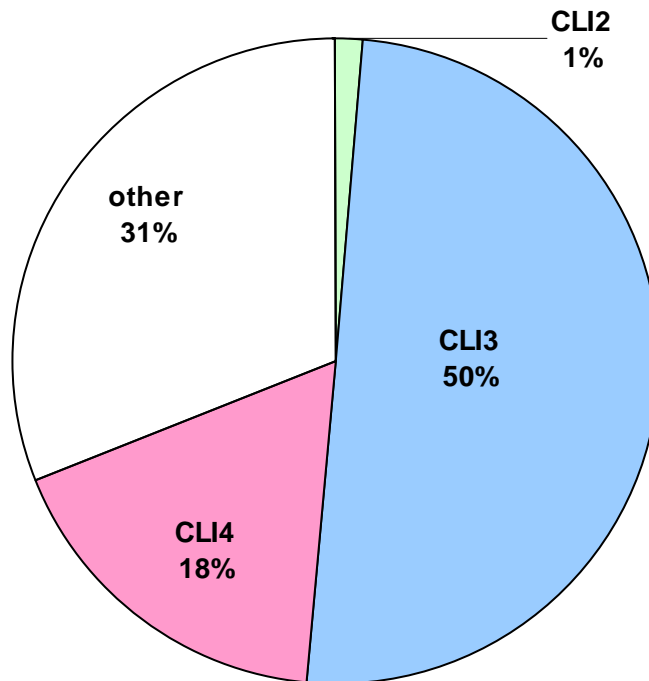
Looking at the land base from a slightly different perspective (the composition of land used for agriculture, Table 3) it is apparent that Digby County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, although less so than the provincial average. Over half of agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 4 percent is on class 2 soils and 18 percent on class 4. Just over one-fifth of Digby's agriculture is on poorer than class 4 soils.

<b>Table 3. Composition of lands in agriculture- Digby County</b>						
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Digby	Nova Scotia	Digby	Nova Scotia	Digby	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	4.3	20.5	4.0	21.1	0.0	4.7
CLI 3	62.0	49.4	56.3	51.8	59.2	16.4
CLI 4	18.9	16.3	18.3	14.5	0.0	44.5
Other	14.8	13.8	21.4	12.7	40.8	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 Digby is on good agricultural soils, while 31 percent of urban development occurs on soils that are of poorer quality than class 4. As indicated in Table 2, the proportion of urban land encroachment on CLI soils is higher on higher quality land, although this is less pronounced than for Nova Scotia as a whole.

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



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Digby County has 1,359 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 1,068 hectares, 837 of which are on ALIP.

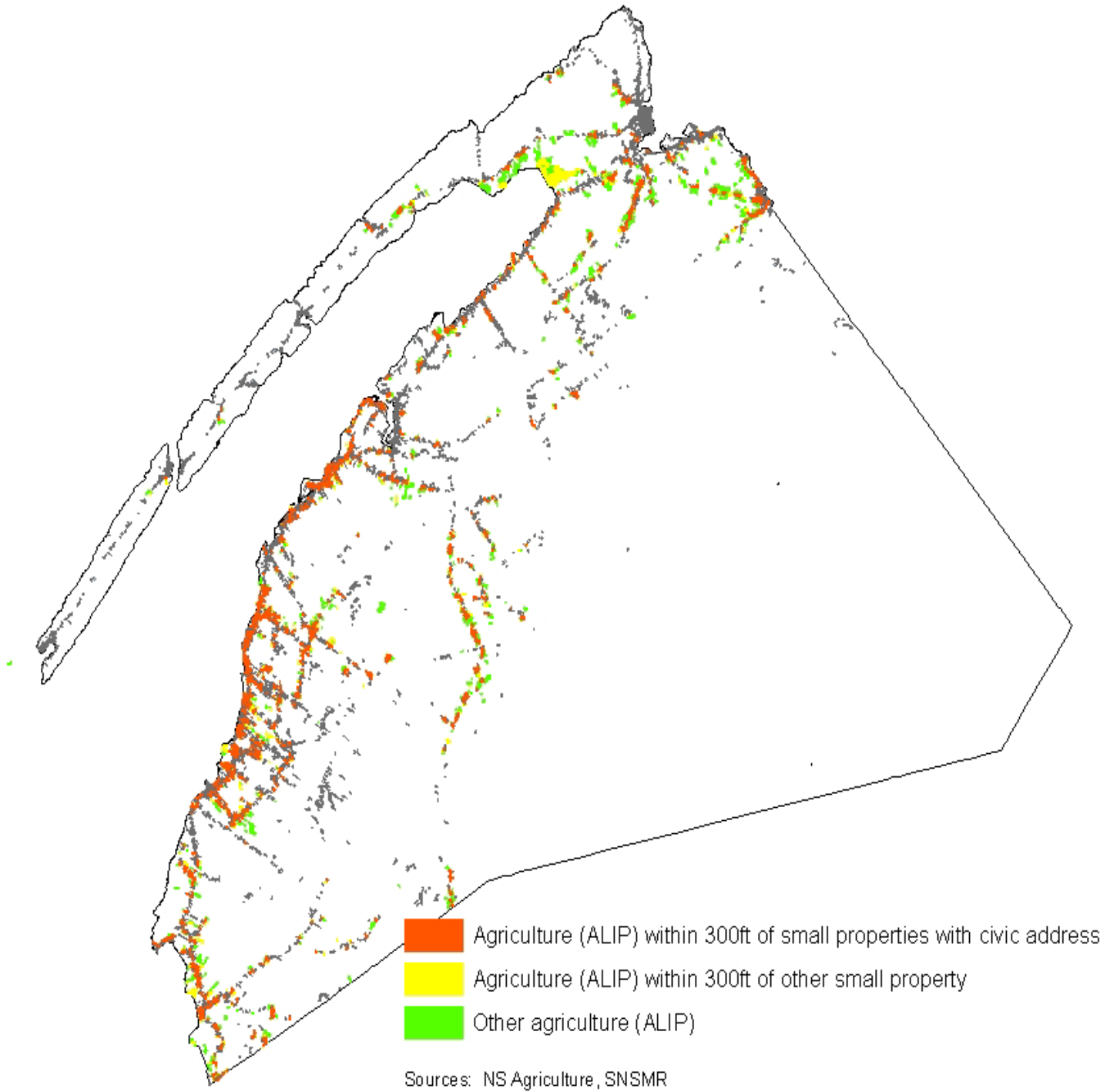
<b>Table 4. Analysis of small properties (&lt; 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Digby County, Nova Scotia</b>						
	<b>Vacant properties</b>		<b>Properties with civic address</b>		<b>TOTAL of small properties (&lt; 2 ha)</b>	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
<b>Centered in ALIP farmland</b>	692	505	667	563	<b>1,359</b>	<b>1,068</b>
<b>Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP</b>	692	424	667	413	<b>1,359</b>	<b>837</b>
<b>Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland</b>	1,389	1,014	1,724	1,216	<b>3,113</b>	<b>2,230</b>
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 3,113 properties of less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 55 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 14 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Digby, the county has the highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland.

Ultimately, approximately 256 hectares (6.1 percent) of ALIP lands in Digby have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Digby 1<sup>st</sup> in terms of percentage of farmland lost to development and 6<sup>th</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). Digby has approximately 60 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the highest in the province (9<sup>th</sup> in absolute terms). Approximately 45 percent of Digby farmland is within 300 feet of a small property with a civic address (i.e. likely developed property), also the highest in the province.

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



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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.