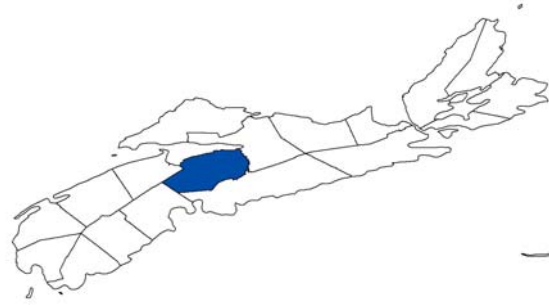


# HANTS COUNTY



## 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 almost two-thirds of Hants County (see Table 1). Hants has 12 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 13 percent of CLI 3 and 10 percent of CLI 4.

Hants has approximately 25,000 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to over 10 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Hants uses about 8 percent of the county land area.

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

	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	188,497	12.0	62.0
CLI 2	19,630	11.9	6.5
CLI 3	125,362	12.7	41.2
CLI 4	43,506	10.4	14.3
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	24,795	10.5	8.2
Agricultural land (DNR)**	25,144	11.0	8.3
Blueberry land (DNR)**	420	2.5	0.1

\* 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.

Hants also has 420 hectares of wild blueberry production. This amounts to 2.5 percent of the Nova Scotia total.

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

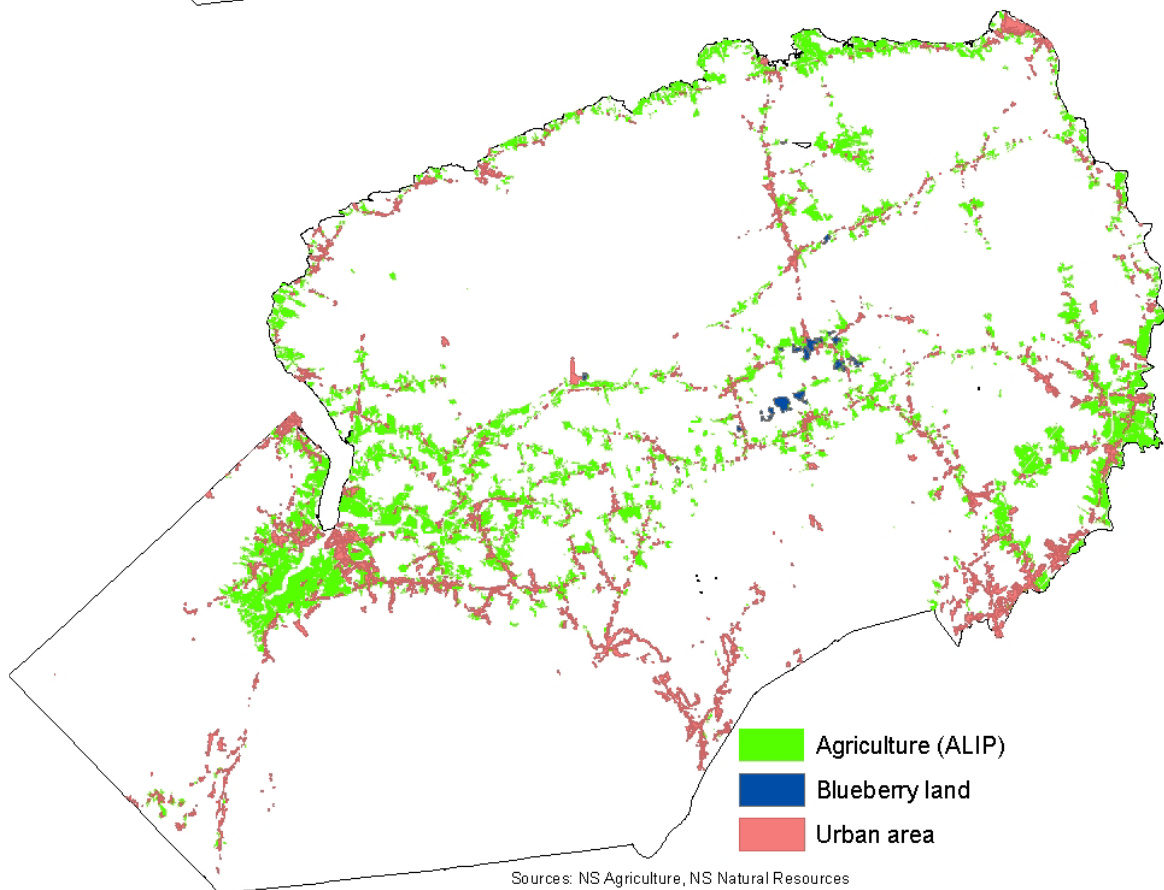
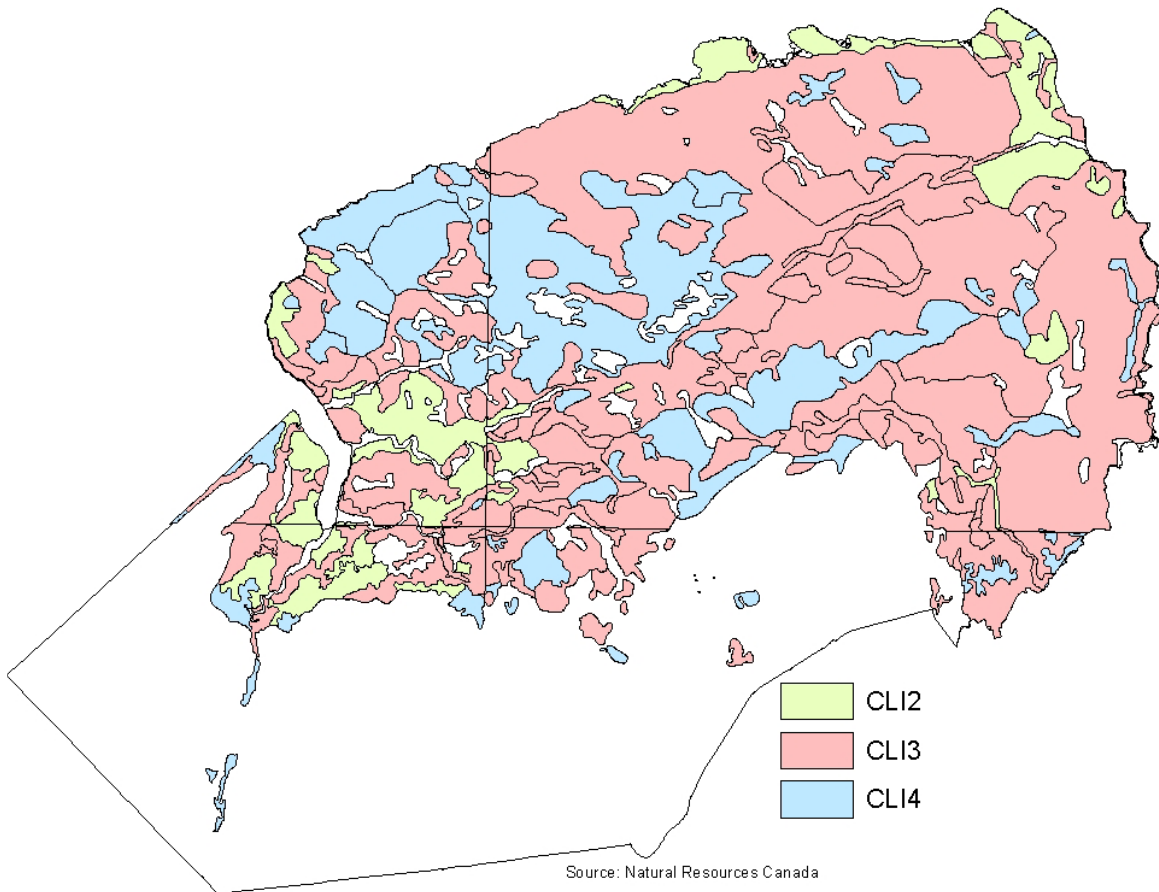
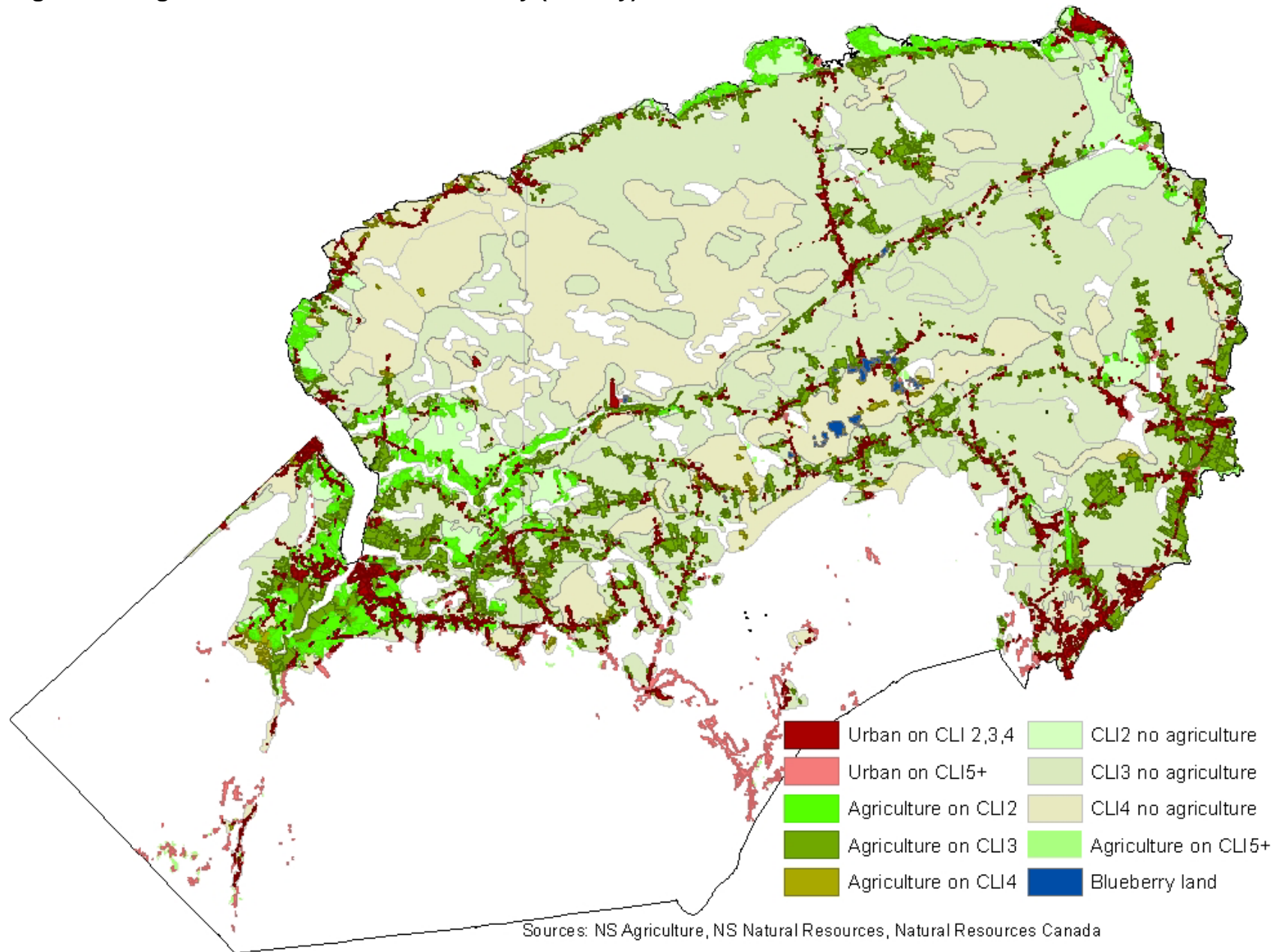


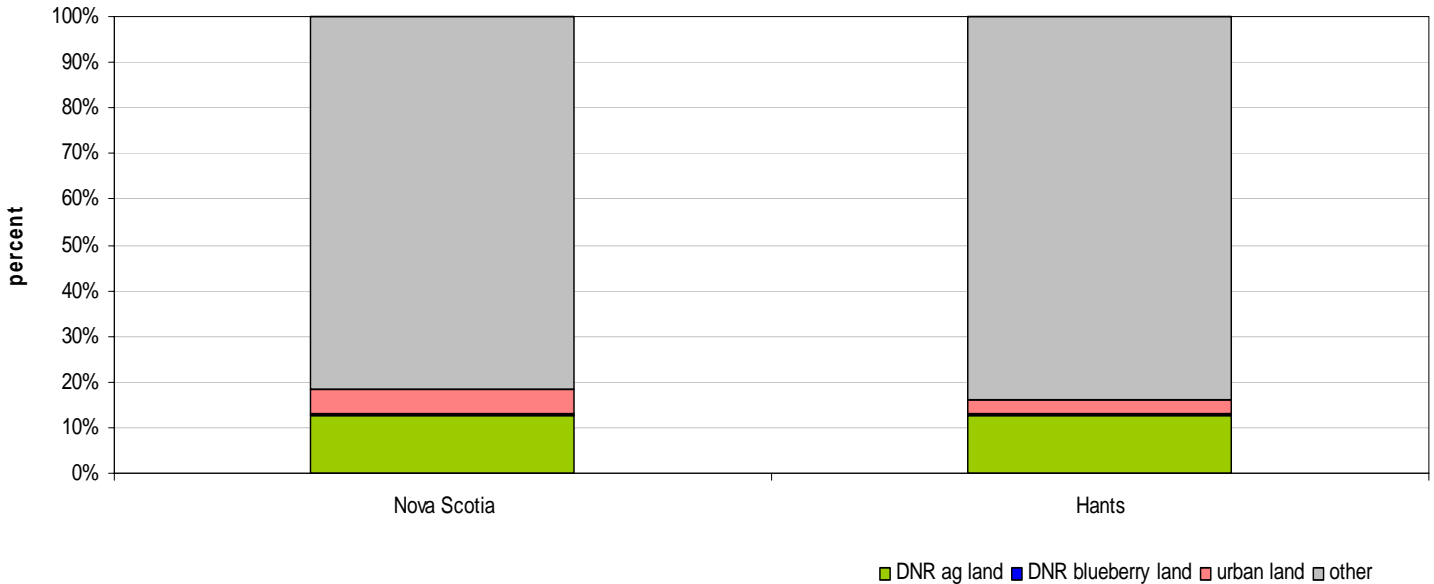
Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Hants County (overlay)



## 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 Hants County at a rate nearly identical to the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 13 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Hants compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Hants 6<sup>th</sup> among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is moderately utilized in Hants with approximately 31 percent in agriculture (6<sup>th</sup> out of 18 counties). This is again consistent with the Nova Scotia average of 29 percent of CLI 2 lands used for agriculture.

Hants has about 3 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development ranking Hants 15<sup>th</sup>. This compares to the provincial average of 5.4 percent. The relatively low urban encroachment on good agricultural soil can be attributed to both the large endowment of arable land in the county as well as Hants having some of the most stringent agricultural land protection policies in the province.

<b>Table 2. Use of agricultural soils (CLI classes 2,3,4) in Hants County and Nova Scotia</b>								
	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Hants	Nova Scotia	Hants	Nova Scotia	Hants	Nova Scotia	Hants	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	30.9	29.3	13.2	12.0	3.1	7.9	12.7	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.8	0.2	0.7
Urban area	7.5	6.9	3.2	5.4	1.7	4.6	3.3	5.4
Other	61.7	63.3	83.4	82.3	94.6	85.7	83.7	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 lands in agriculture, Table 3) it is apparent that Hants County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, and at a higher percentage than the provincial average. Two-thirds of agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 24 percent is on class 2 soils and 6 percent on class 4. Only 5 percent of Hants agriculture is on less than class 4 soils.

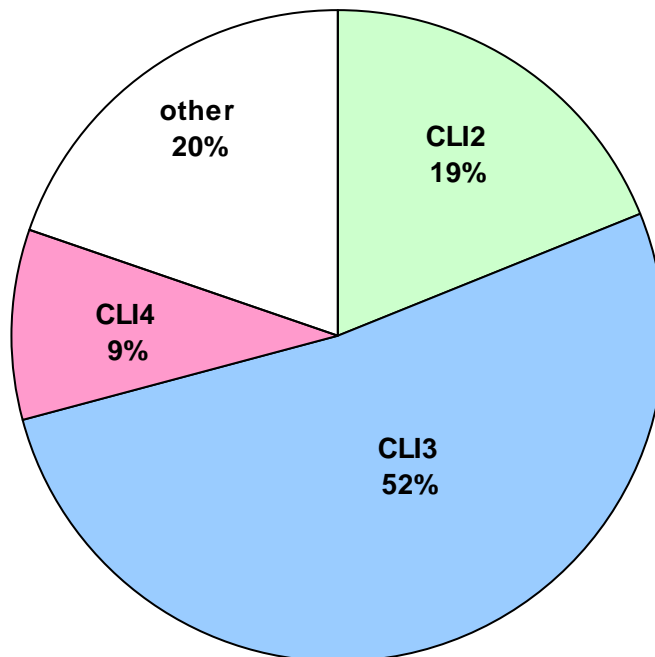
<b>Table 3. Composition of lands in agriculture- Hants County</b>						
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Hants	Nova Scotia	Hants	Nova Scotia	Hants	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	23.6	20.5	24.1	21.1	0.0	4.7
CLI 3	65.1	49.4	66.1	51.8	30.0	16.4
CLI 4	6.0	16.3	5.4	14.5	61.0	44.5
Other	5.4	13.8	4.4	12.7	9.0	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 Hants is on good agricultural soils. One-fifth of urban land in Hants is on poorer than CLI4 soil; significant in that the majority of urban land in Hants is adjacent to its arable land. Hants has agricultural zoning in place as a municipal policy; the only county other than Kings with this type of agricultural protection policy. As indicated in Table 2, the proportion of urban land encroachment on CLI soils is higher on higher quality land, consistent with the provincial average.

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



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Hants County has 1,566 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 1,237 hectares, 1,016 of which are on ALIP.

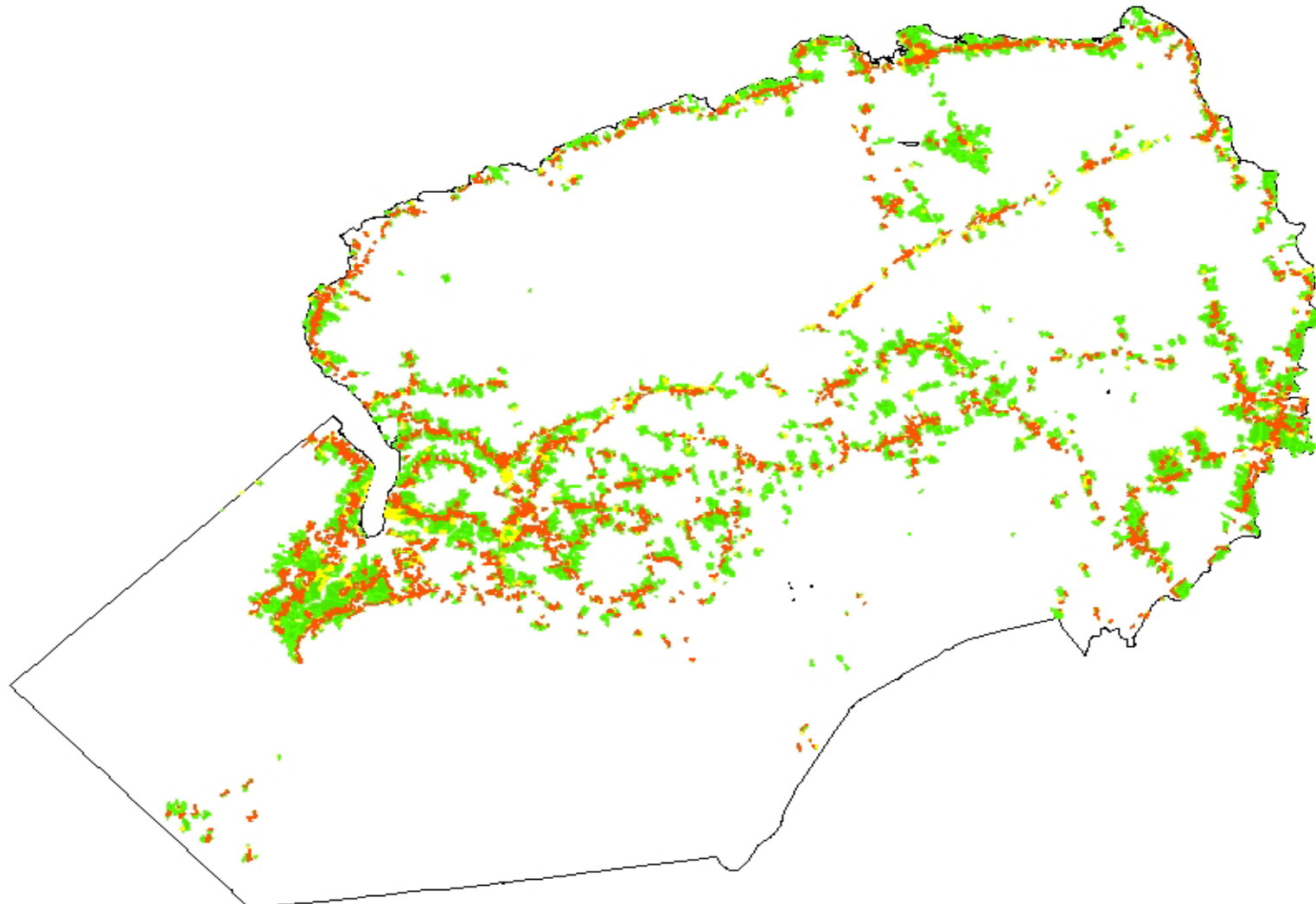
<b>Table 4. Analysis of small properties (&lt; 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Hants County, Nova Scotia</b>						
	<b>Vacant properties</b>		<b>Properties with civic address</b>		<b>TOTAL of small properties (&lt; 2 ha)</b>	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
<b>Centered in ALIP farmland</b>	708	526	858	711	<b>1,566</b>	<b>1,237</b>
<b>Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP</b>	707	447	858	568	<b>1,565</b>	<b>1,016</b>
<b>Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland</b>	1,438	990	3,222	2,028	<b>4,660</b>	<b>3,019</b>
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 4,660 properties less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 69 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 19 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Hants, the county has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland (3<sup>rd</sup> in absolute terms).

Ultimately, approximately 294 hectares (1.2 percent) of ALIP lands in Hants have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Hants tied for 10<sup>th</sup> with Halifax in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 4<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). Hants has approximately 29 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, tied for 9<sup>th</sup> in the province with Colchester (4<sup>th</sup> highest in absolute terms). Approximately 22 percent of Hants 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)



- Agriculture (ALIP) within 300ft of small properties with civic address
- Agriculture (ALIP) within 300ft of other small properties
- Other agriculture (ALIP)

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.