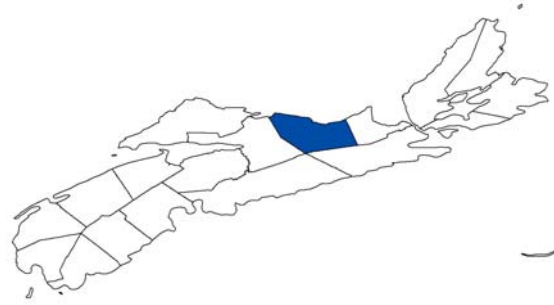


PICTOU COUNTY



PROFILE of AGRICULTURAL LAND RESOURCES

Overview of county land resources

Land most suitable for agricultural production (Canadian Land Inventory (CLI) classes 2,3 and 4ⁱ) covers half of Pictou County (see Table 1). Pictou has 12 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 8 percent of CLI 3 and 12 percent of CLI 4.

Pictou is a significant county in terms of agricultural production with approximately 20,500 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to 9 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Pictou uses about 7 percent of the county land area.

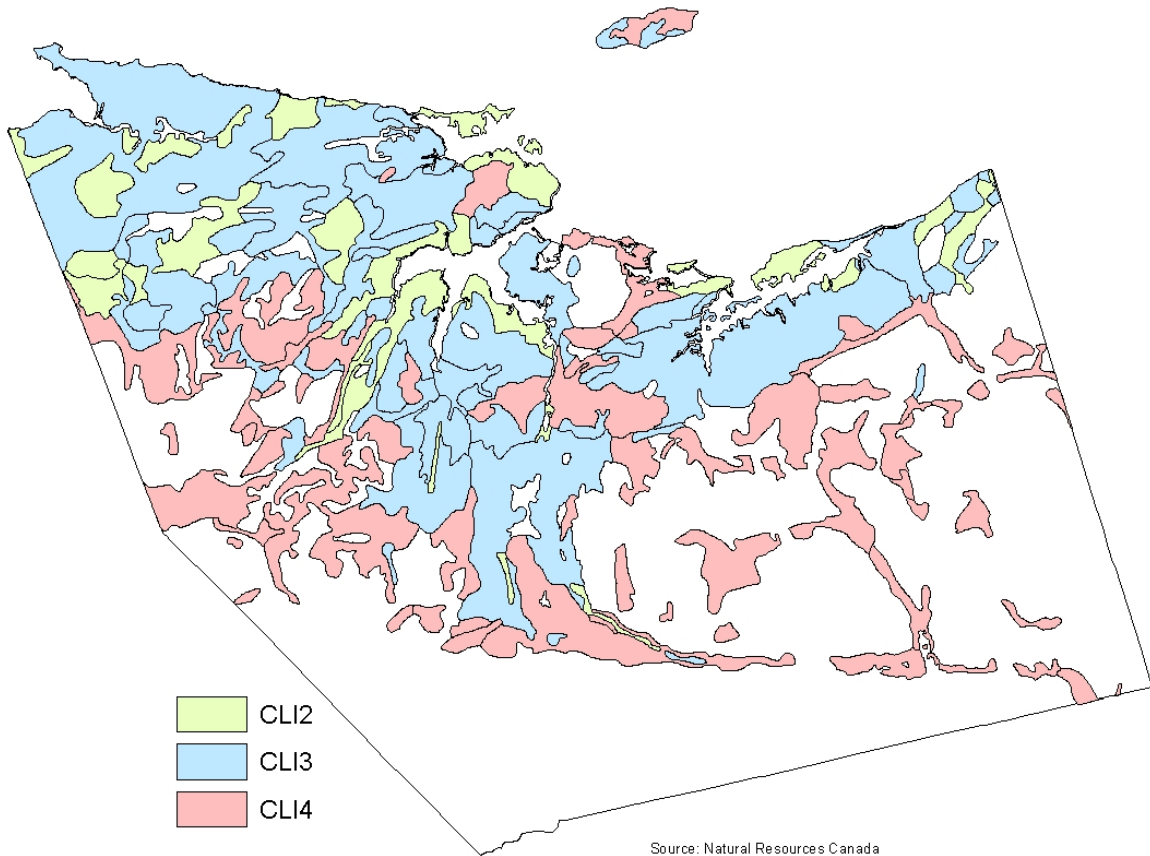
Table 1. Agricultural land statistics- Pictou County

	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	144,383	9.2	50.8
CLI 2	19,061	11.6	6.7
CLI 3	75,330	7.6	26.5
CLI 4	49,992	12.0	17.6
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	20,994	8.9	7.4
Agricultural land (DNR)**	20,302	8.9	7.1
Blueberry land (DNR)**	1,931	11.7	0.7

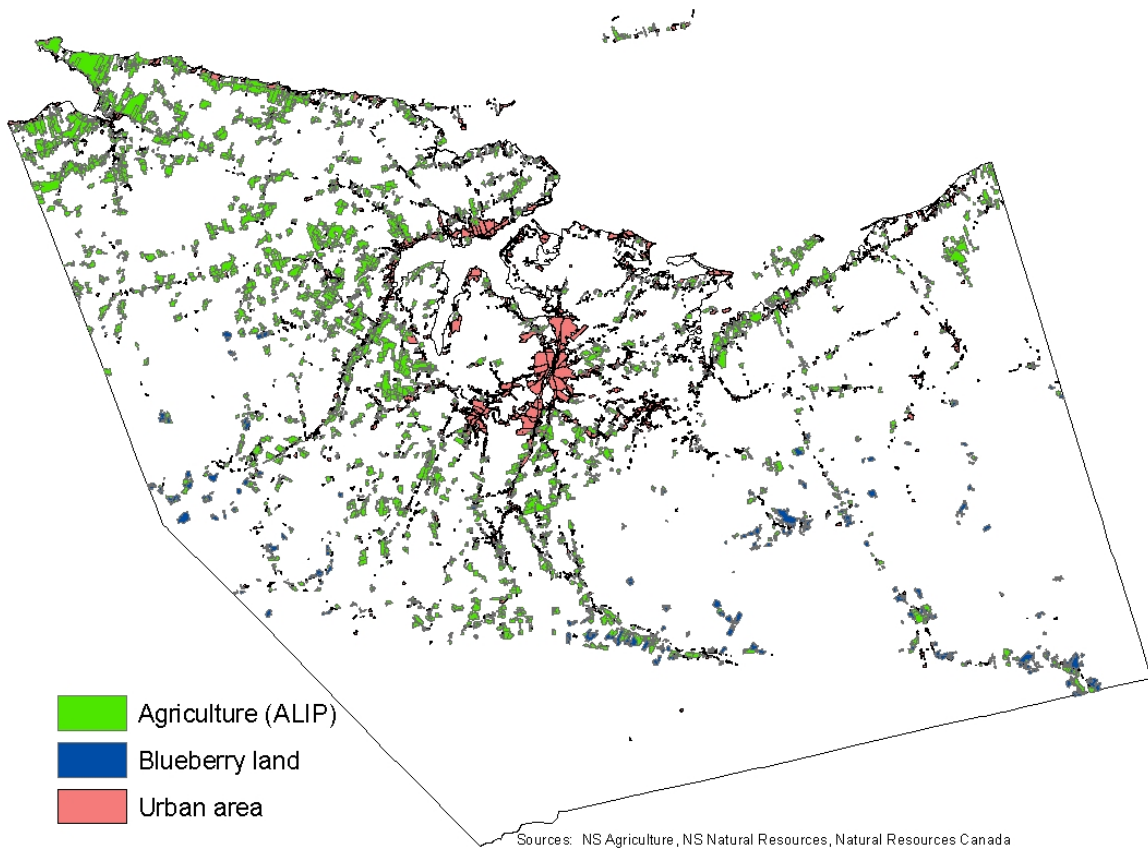
* As indicated by the NSDA Agricultural Land Identification Project.
 ** Based on forest coverage files from NS Natural Resources (blueberry land is low-bush/ wild)
 Source: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Pictou is also an important producer of wild blueberries with 1,931 hectares. This amounts to 12 percent of the Nova Scotia total.

Figure 1a. Agricultural lands in Pictou County

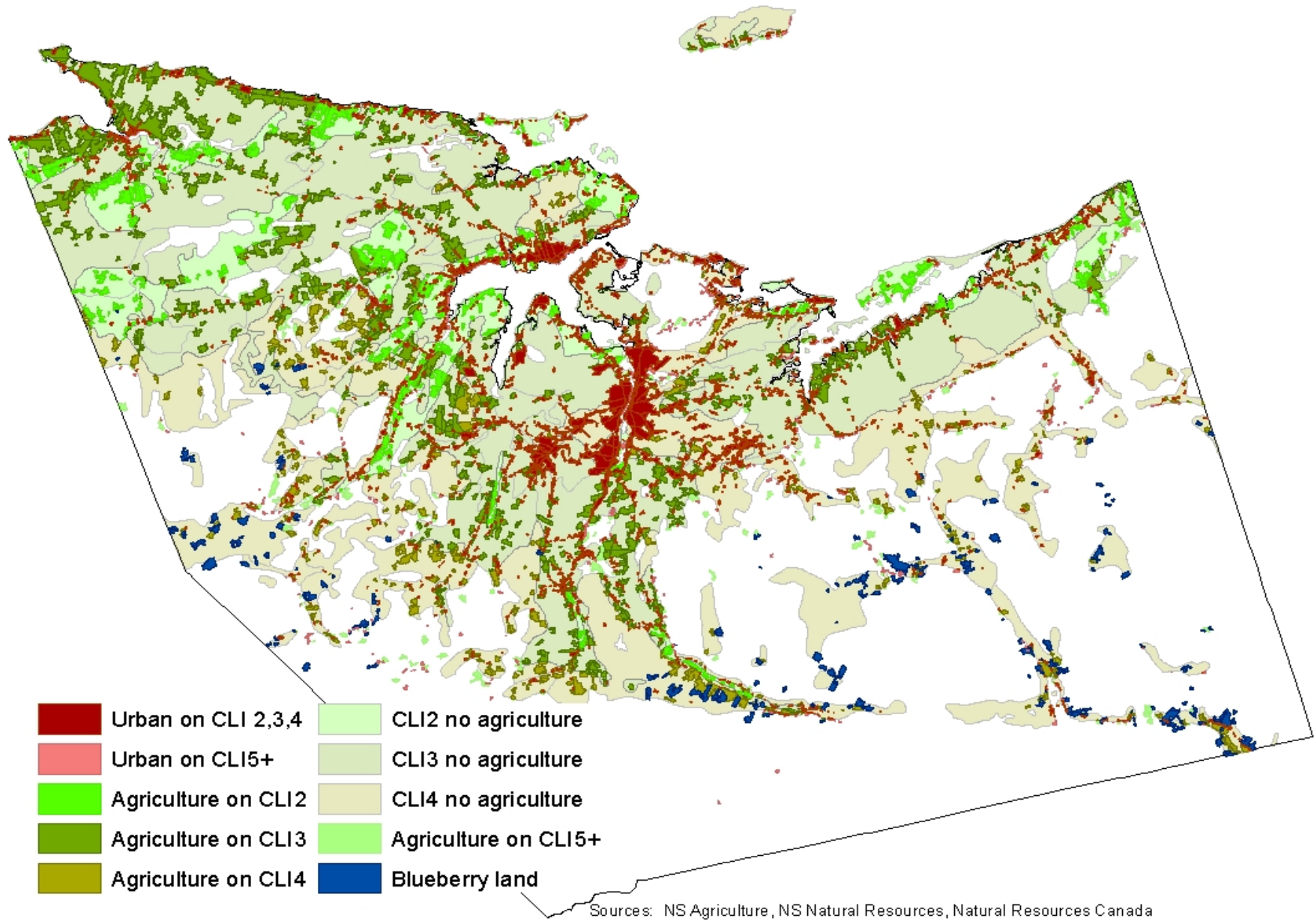


Source: Natural Resources Canada



Sources: NS Agriculture, NS Natural Resources, Natural Resources Canada

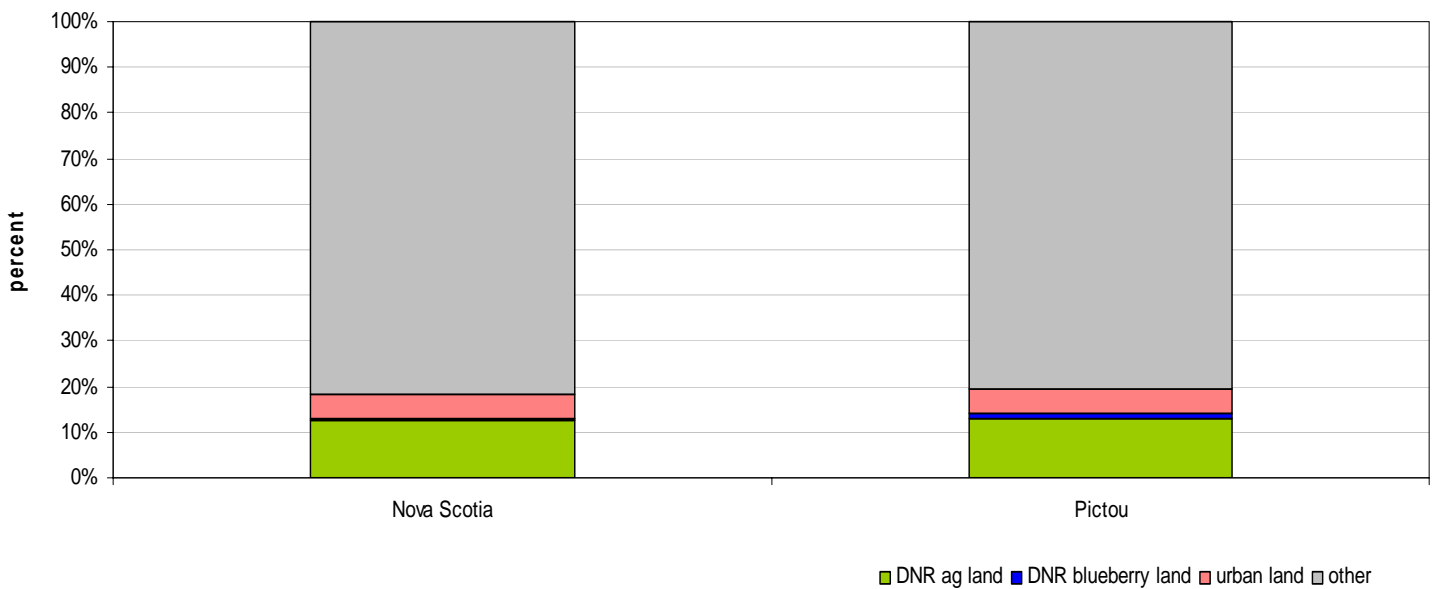
Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Pictou County (overlay)



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 Pictou County at a rate nearly identical to the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2) with a small amount of farming substituted for blueberry production in the case of Pictou. About 13 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Pictou compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Pictou 5th among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is not highly utilized in Pictou with approximately 20 percent in agriculture (9th out of 18 counties). This is lower than the Nova Scotia average of 29 percent of CLI 2 lands used for agriculture.

Pictou has about 5 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development ranking Pictou tied for 9th with Victoria County. This compares to the provincial average of 5.4 percent.

Table 2. Use of agricultural soils (CLI classes 2,3,4) in Pictou County and Nova Scotia								
	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Pictou	Nova Scotia	Pictou	Nova Scotia	Pictou	Nova Scotia	Pictou	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	20.8	29.3	14.9	12.0	7.7	7.9	13.2	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3	2.4	1.8	0.9	0.7
Urban area	6.5	6.9	5.5	5.4	4.5	4.6	5.3	5.4
Other	72.8	63.3	79.7	82.3	85.3	85.7	80.7	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 land used for agriculture, Table 3) it is apparent that Pictou County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, and at a higher percentage than the provincial average. Over half of farmed agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 20 percent is on class 2 soils and 19 percent on class 4. Only 6 percent of Pictou agriculture is on poorer than class 4 soils.

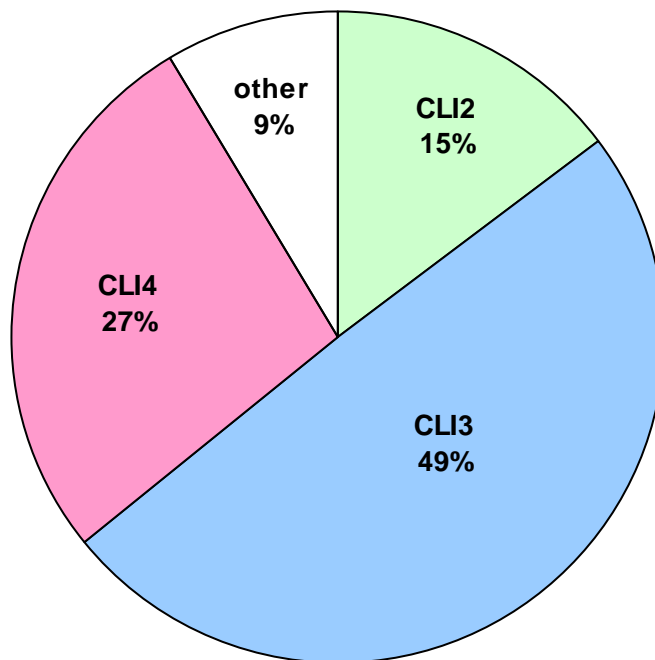
Table 3. Composition of lands in agriculture- Pictou County						
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Pictou	Nova Scotia	Pictou	Nova Scotia	Pictou	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	17.7	20.5	19.5	21.1	0.1	4.7
CLI 3	50.9	49.4	55.1	51.8	0.6	16.4
CLI 4	22.8	16.3	19.0	14.5	63.2	44.5
Other	8.6	13.8	6.4	12.7	36.1	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 Pictou is on good agricultural soils. Less than 10 percent of urban land in Pictou is on poorer than CLI4 soil; the lowest percentage in the province. 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-
Pictou**



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Pictou County has 853 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 720 hectares, 602 of which are on ALIP.

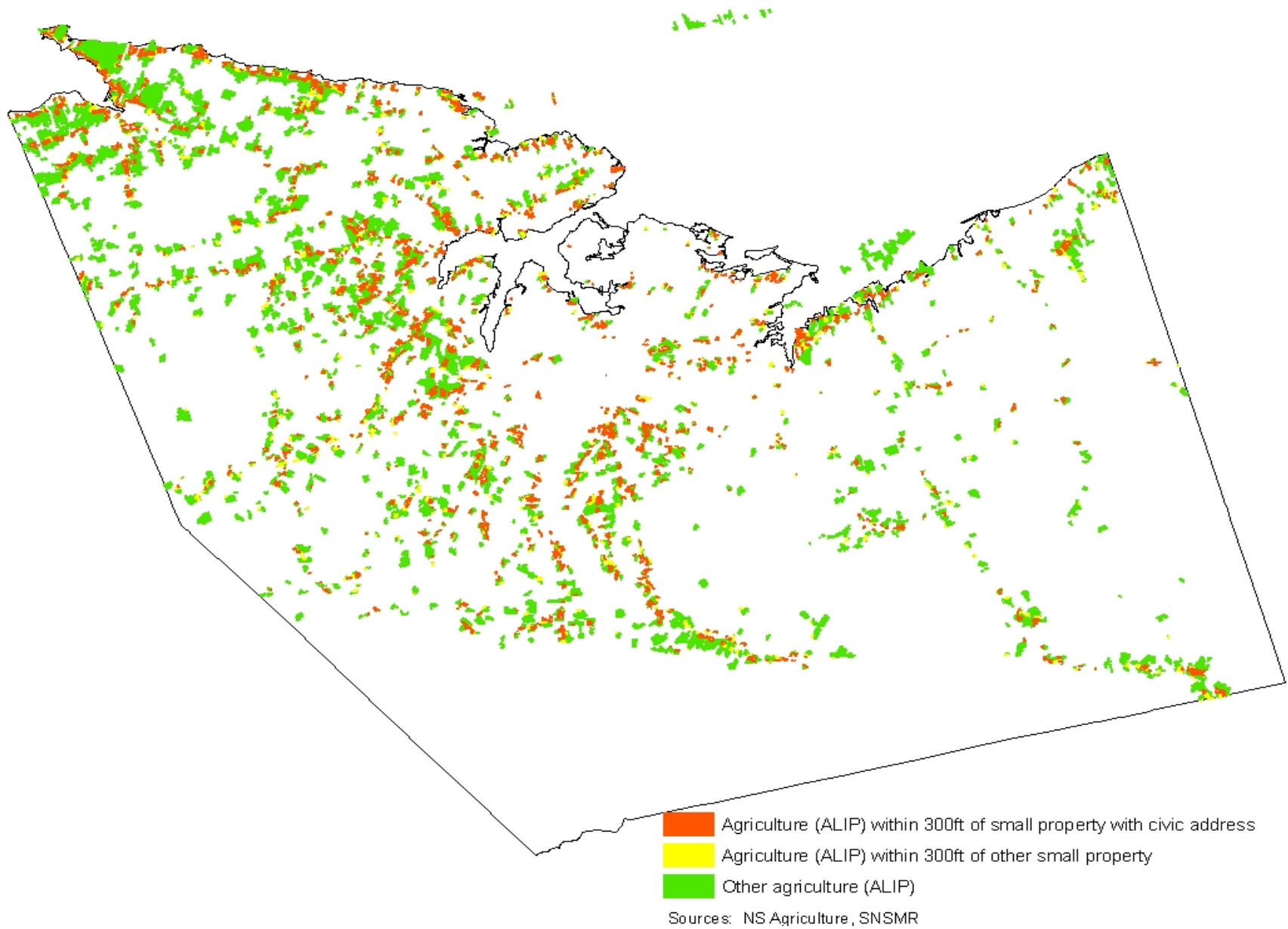
Table 4. Analysis of small properties (< 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Pictou County, Nova Scotia						
	Vacant properties		Properties with civic address		TOTAL of small properties (< 2 ha)	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
Centered in ALIP farmland	444	358	409	361	853	720
Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP	443	306	409	295	852	602
Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland	1,032	764	1,686	1,228	2,718	1,992
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 2,718 properties of less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 62 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 12 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Pictou, the county is tied with Guysborough for the 14th highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland.

Ultimately, approximately 184 hectares (0.9 percent) of ALIP lands in Pictou have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Pictou tied for 14th with Antigonish in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 7th 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 farm land 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 farm land falling under this zone was calculated (Figure 4). Pictou has approximately 23 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the 3rd lowest in the province (6th highest in absolute terms). Approximately 18 percent of Pictou 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)



ⁱ 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].

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Land Identification Project (ALIP).

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. Forest Inventory - Geographic Information Systems. Available from: 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.