

# GUYSBOROUGH 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 approximately 16 percent of Guysborough County (see Table 1). Guysborough has less than 1 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 5 percent of CLI 3 and 4 percent of CLI 4.

Guysborough has approximately 2,300 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to 1 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Guysborough uses less than 1 percent of the county land area.

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

	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	64,945	4.1	16.1
CLI 2	1,217	0.7	0.3
CLI 3	49,000	5.0	12.2
CLI 4	14,729	3.5	3.7
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	1,779	0.8	0.4
Agricultural land (DNR)**	2,331	1.0	0.6
Blueberry land (DNR)**	454	2.8	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.

Guysborough also produces over 450 hectares of wild blueberries. This amounts to 3 percent of the Nova Scotia total.

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

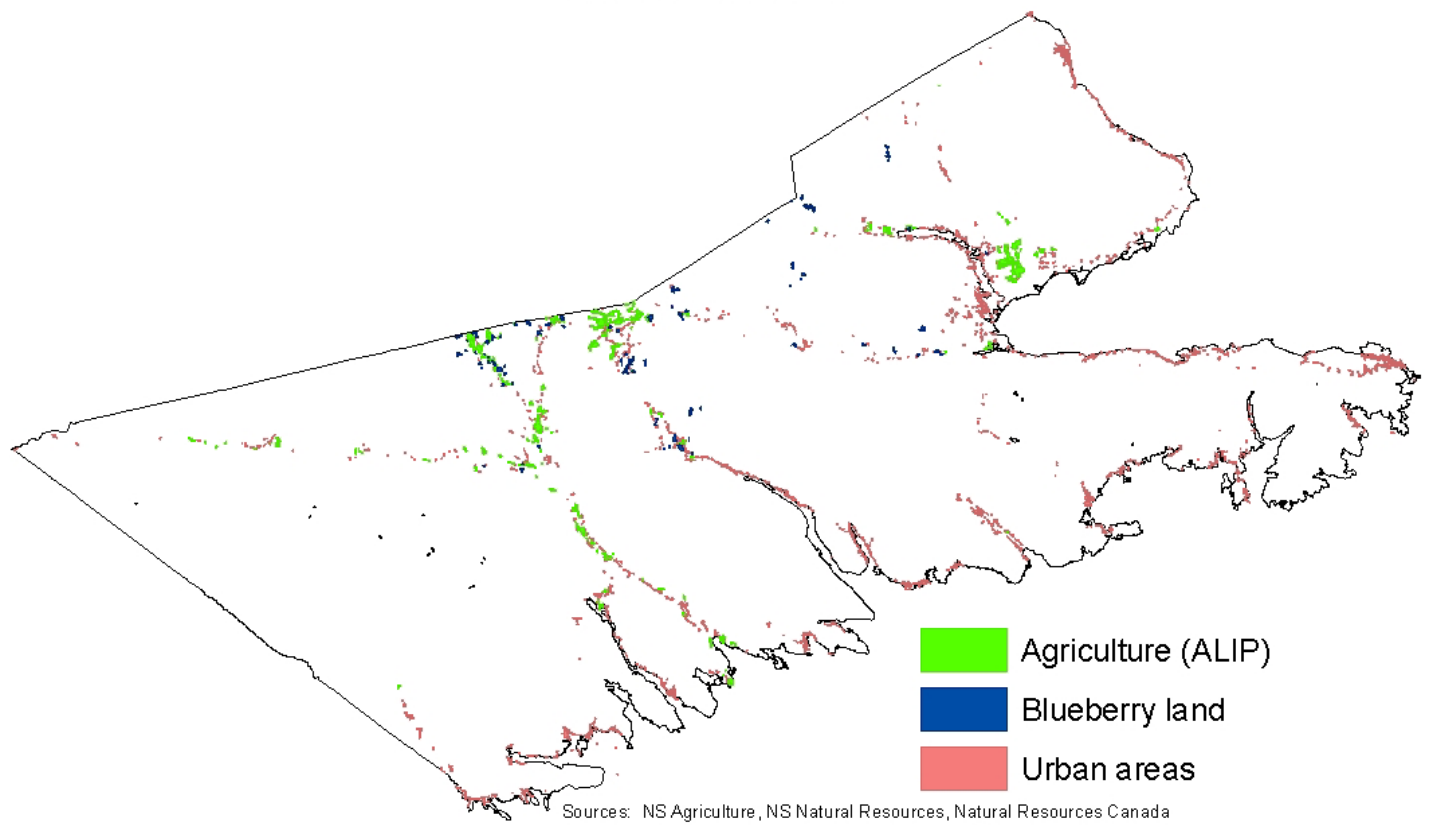
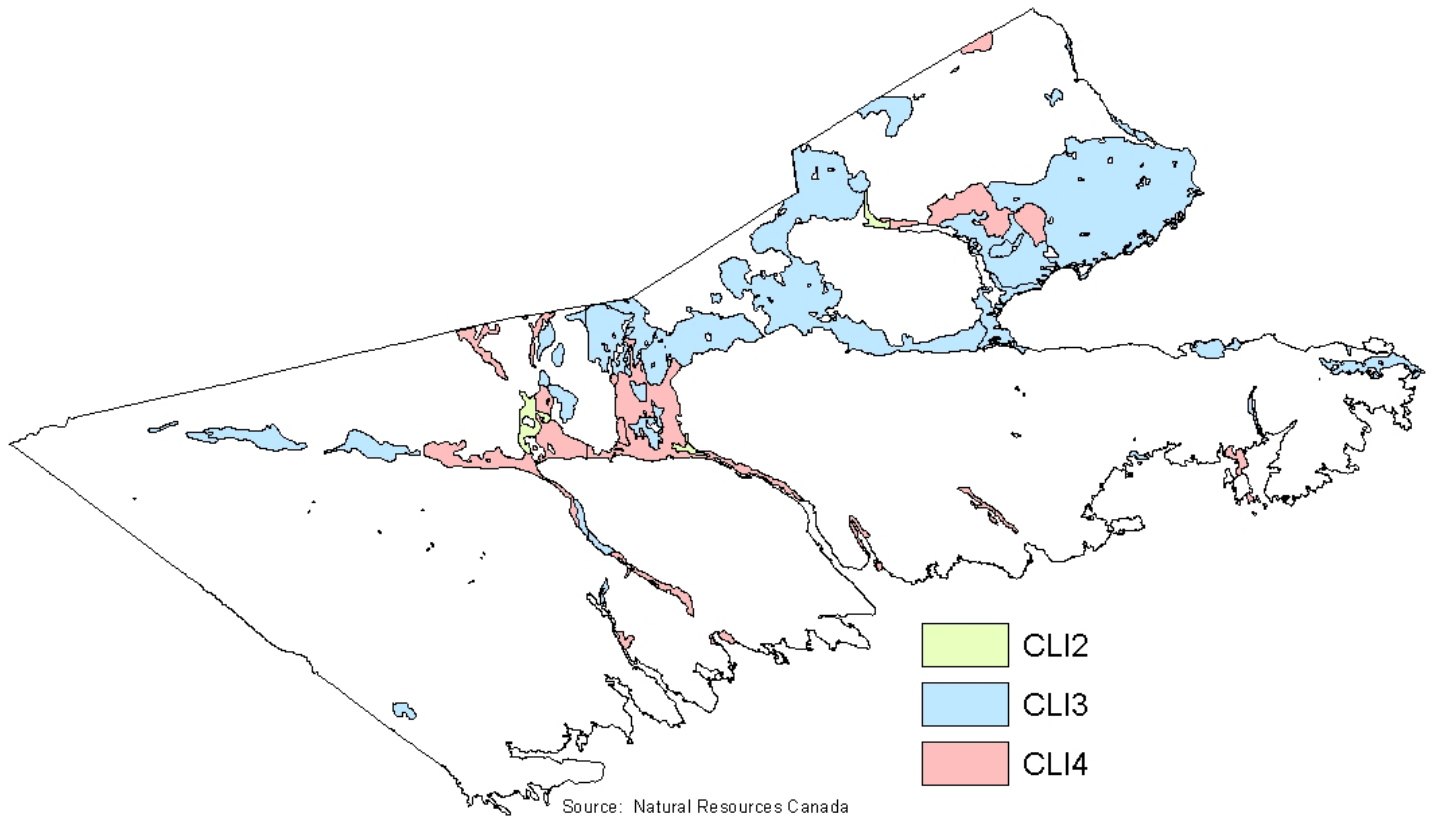
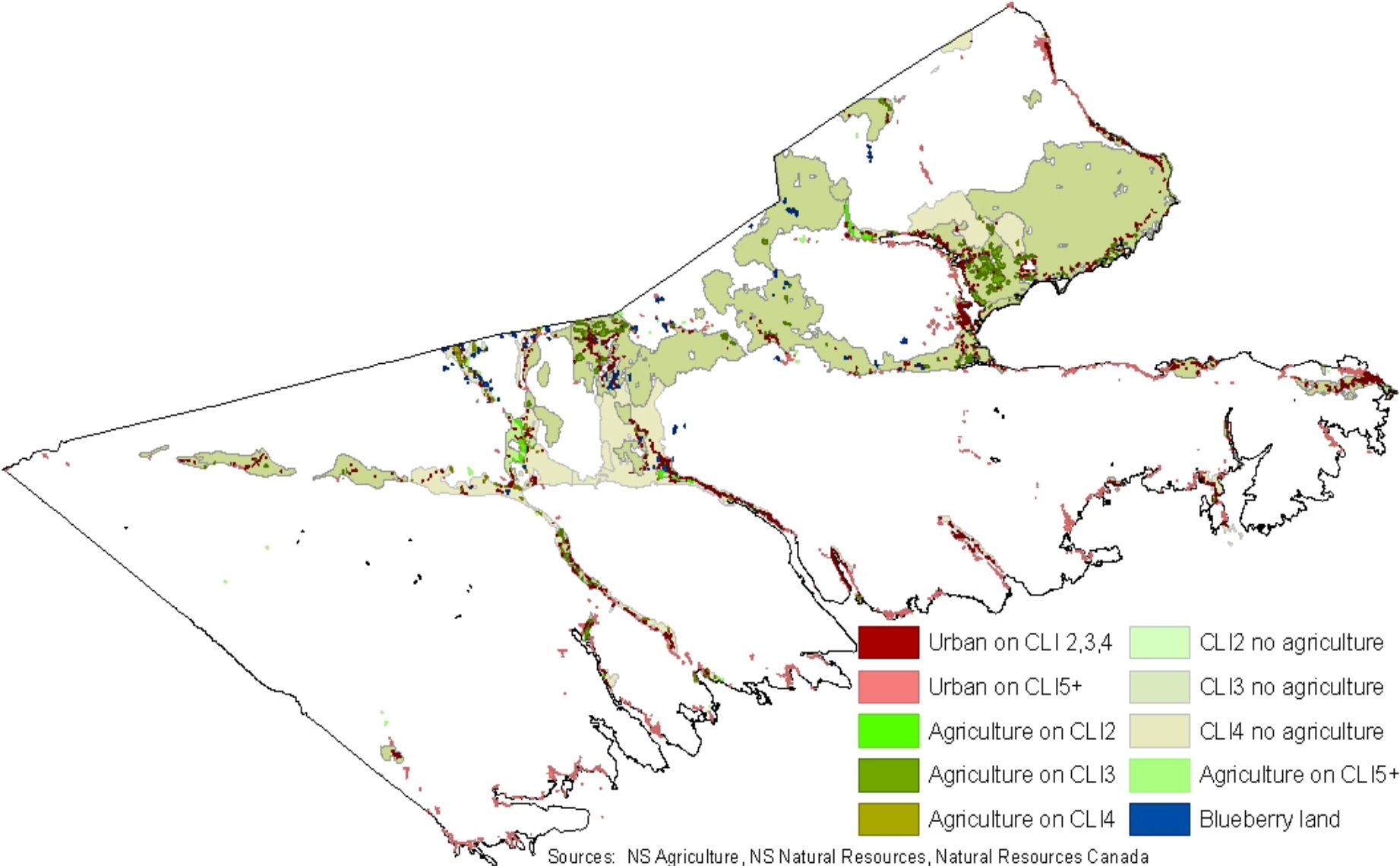


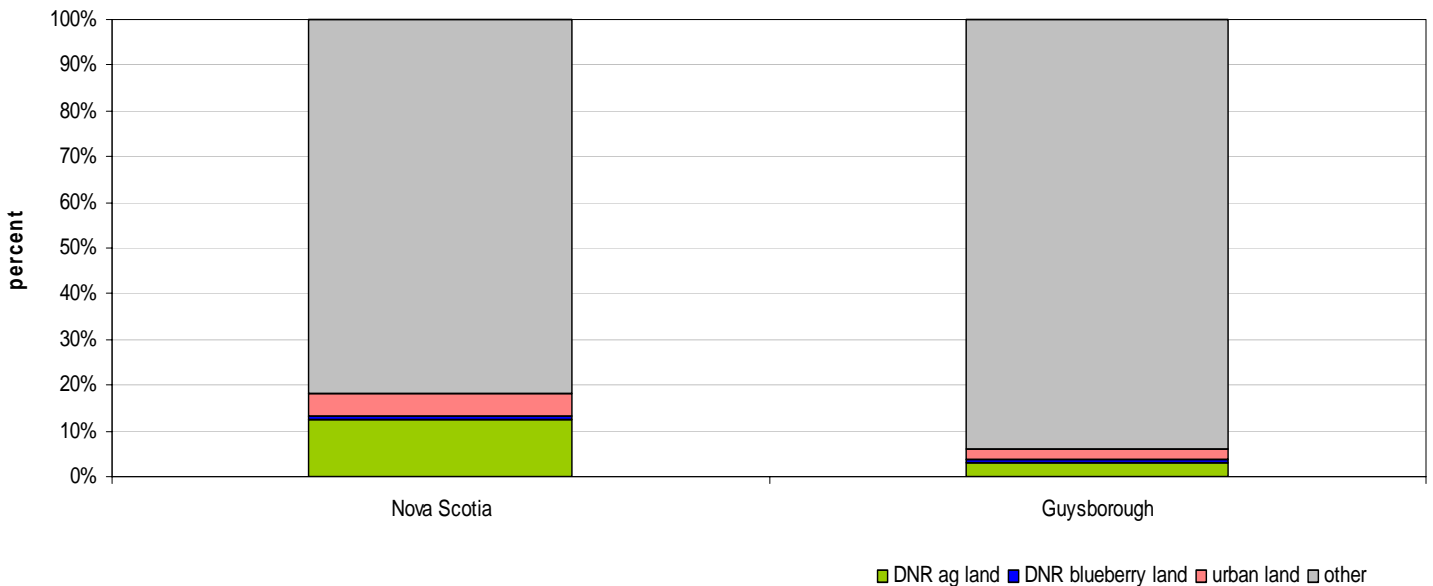
Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Guysborough County (overlay)



## 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 Guysborough County at a rate significantly lower than the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 3 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Guysborough compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Guysborough 16<sup>th</sup> among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is not highly utilized for farming in Guysborough with approximately 16 percent in agriculture (9<sup>th</sup> out of 14 counties with class 2 land). This is lower than the Nova Scotia average of 29 percent of CLI 2 lands used for agriculture.

Guysborough has about 2 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development, making the county the least intensive user of arable land for urban development. The provincial average is 5.4 percent

	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	15.6	29.3	3.0	12.0	2.9	7.9	3.2	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.8	1.8	0.4	0.7
Urban area	4.1	6.9	1.9	5.4	3.4	4.6	2.3	5.4
Other	80.1	63.3	94.8	82.3	92.9	85.7	94.1	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 Guysborough County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, and at a rate similar to the provincial average. Almost two-thirds of farmed agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 8 percent is on class 2 soils and 19 percent on class 4. Approximately 10 percent of Guysborough agriculture is on poorer than class 4 soils.

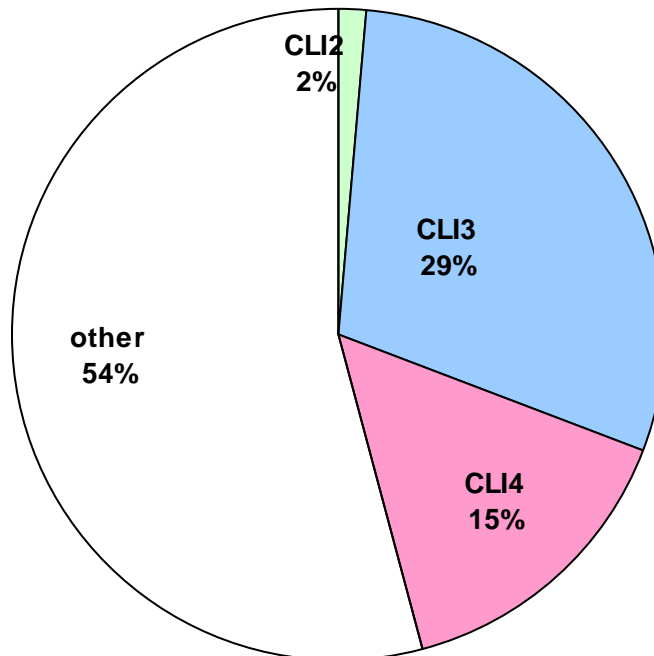
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia	Guys Co.	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	5.9	20.5	8.2	21.1	0.5	4.7
CLI 3	52.2	49.4	62.8	51.8	29.3	16.4
CLI 4	26.7	16.3	18.6	14.5	26.0	44.5
Other	15.2	13.8	10.4	12.7	44.1	34.4

\* 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, almost half of urban development in Guysborough County is on good agricultural soils. As indicated in Table 2, the proportion of urban land encroachment on CLI soils is highest on class 2 and 4 land and lowest on class 3 land. Provincially, the percentage of arable land taken by urban development is highest on the best soils (CLI2) and decreases on class 3 and class 4 land.

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



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Guysborough County has 130 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 83 hectares, 62 of which are on ALIP.

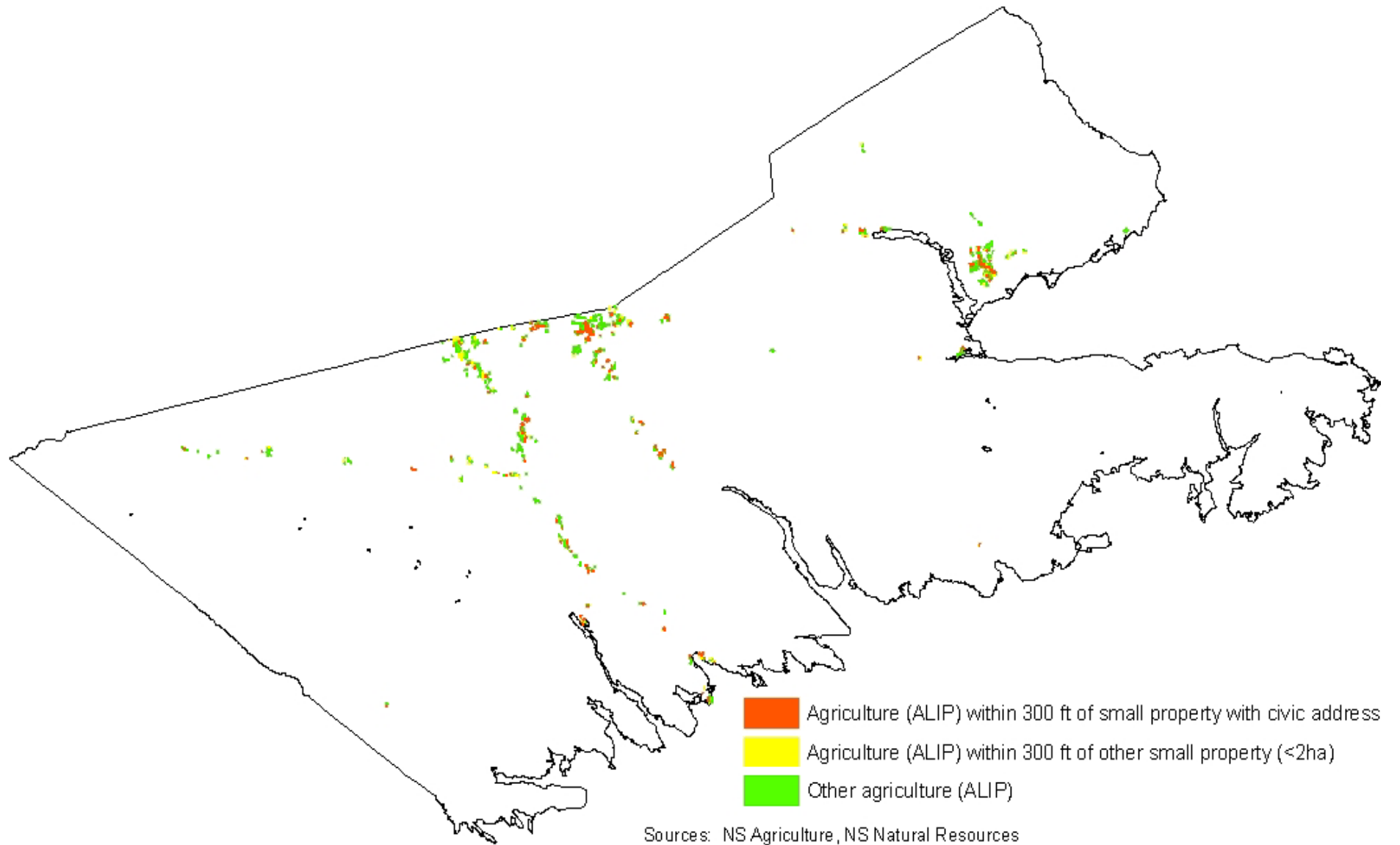
<b>Table 4. Analysis of small properties (&lt; 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Guysborough County, Nova Scotia</b>						
	<b>Vacant properties</b>		<b>Properties with civic address</b>		<b>TOTAL of small properties (&lt; 2 ha)</b>	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
<b>Centered in ALIP farmland</b>	65	32	65	51	<b>130</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP</b>	65	23	65	39	<b>130</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland</b>	143	85	138	104	<b>281</b>	<b>189</b>
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 281 properties less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 49 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 1 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Guysborough, the county is tied with Pictou for the 14<sup>th</sup> highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland.

Ultimately, approximately 35 hectares (2 percent) of ALIP lands in Guysborough have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Guysborough tied for 6<sup>th</sup> with Lunenburg in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 14<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). Guysborough has approximately 26 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest in the province (tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest in absolute terms with Richmond). Approximately 17 percent of Guysborough 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)**



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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].

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](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.