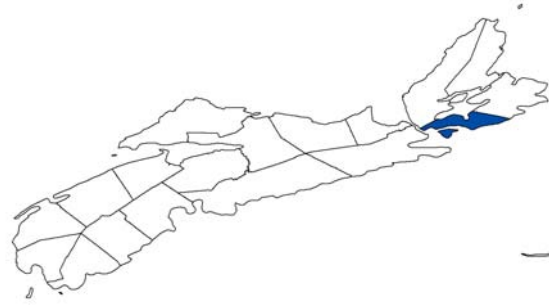


# RICHMOND COUNTY



## 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 slightly more than one-third of Richmond County (see Table 1). Richmond has 1.5 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 3 percent of CLI 3 and 2 percent of CLI 4.

Richmond has approximately 1,200 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to less than 1 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Richmond uses approximately 1 percent of the county land area.

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

	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	43,220	2.8	34.6
CLI 2	2,408	1.5	1.9
CLI 3	32,733	3.3	26.2
CLI 4	8,080	1.9	6.5
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	1,132	0.5	0.9
Agricultural land (DNR)**	1,259	0.6	1.0
Blueberry land (DNR)**	0.0	0.0	0.0

\* 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 Richmond County**

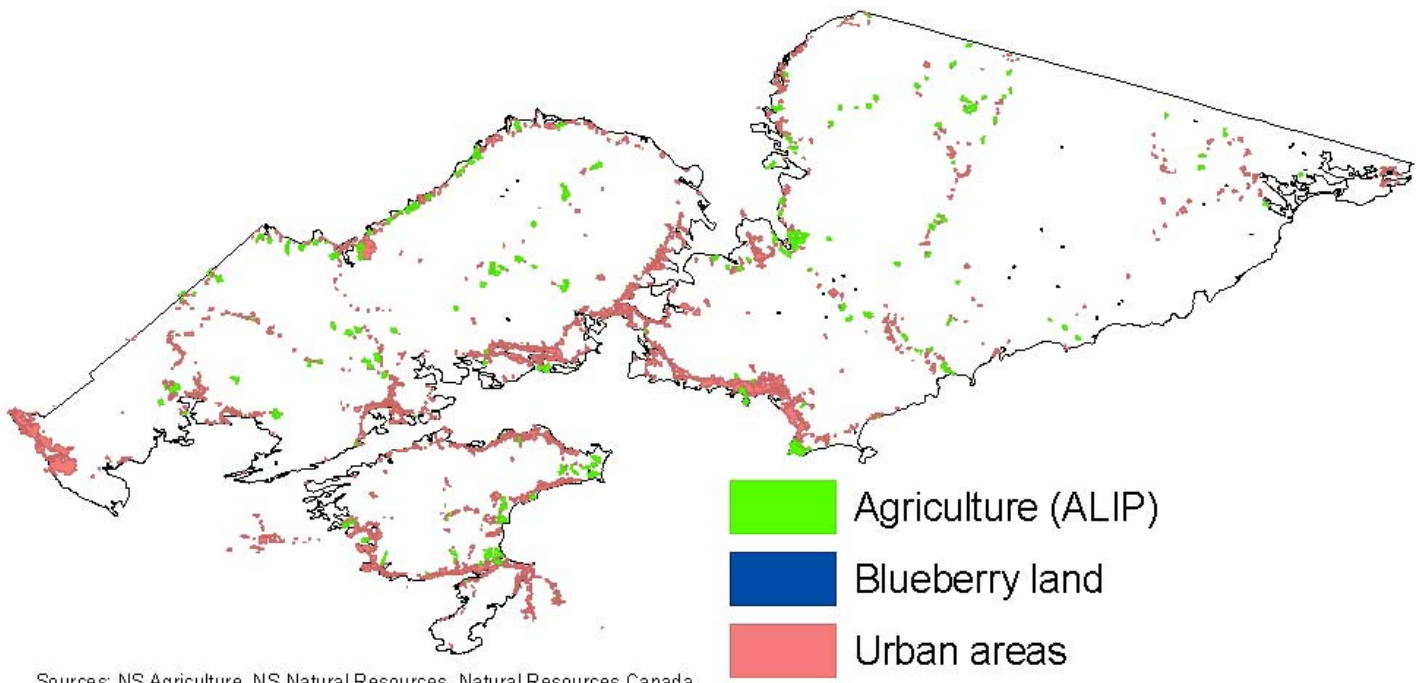
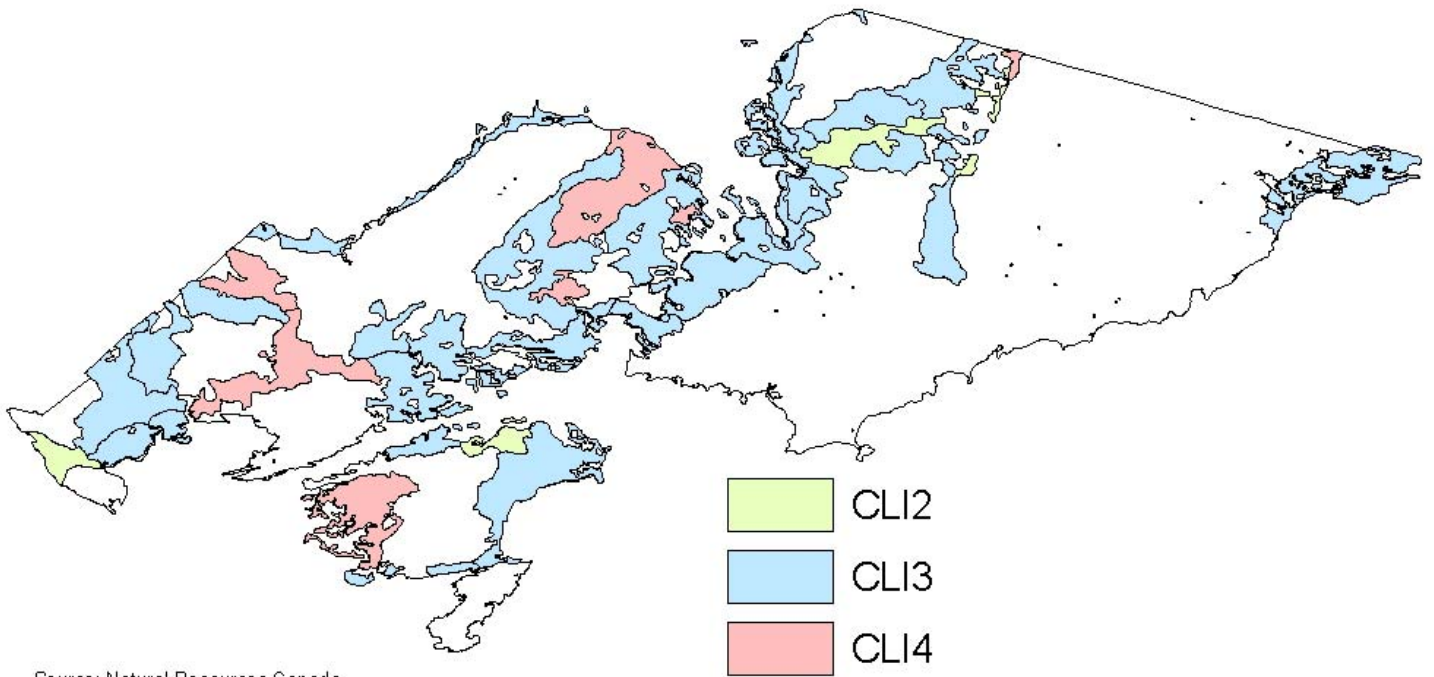
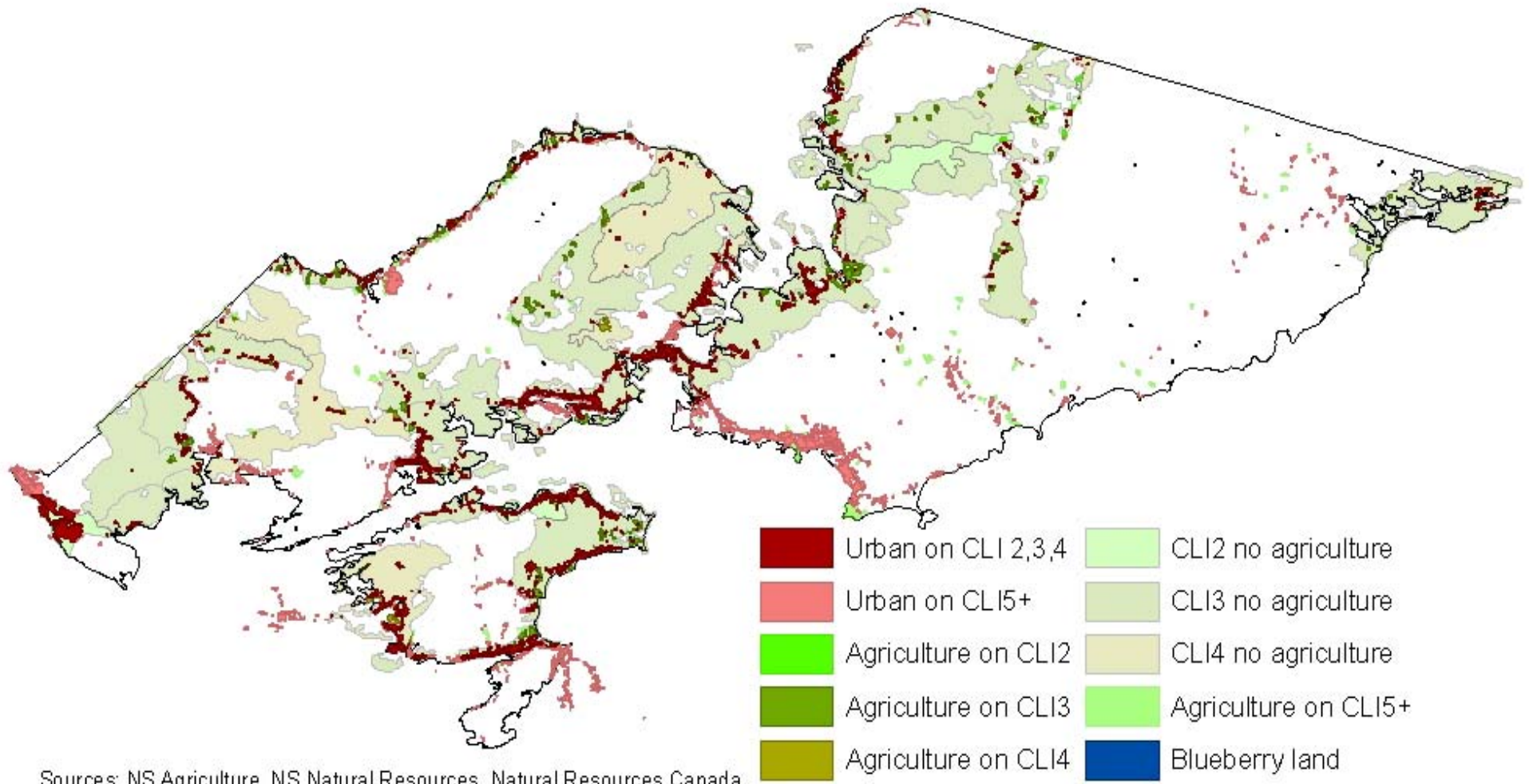


Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Richmond County (overlay)

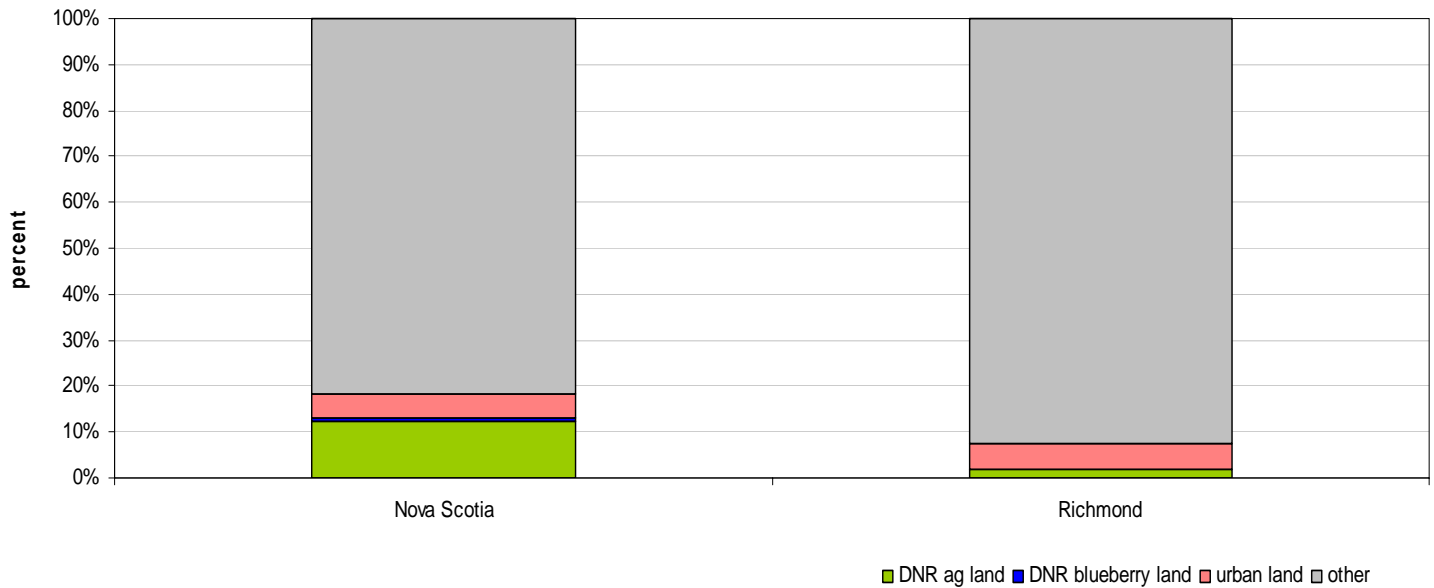


Sources: NS Agriculture, NS Natural Resources, Natural Resources Canada

## 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 Richmond County at a significantly lower rate than the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 2 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Richmond compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Richmond 17<sup>th</sup> among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Richmond has about 6 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development ranking Richmond as the 8<sup>th</sup> highest county in terms of urban development of arable land. This is comparable to the provincial average of 5.4 percent.

<b>Table 2. Use of agricultural soils (CLI classes 2,3,4) in Richmond County and Nova Scotia</b>								
	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Richmond	Nova Scotia	Richmond	Nova Scotia	Richmond	Nova Scotia	Richmond	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	1.1	29.3	2.1	12.0	0.9	7.9	1.8	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	n/a	0.5	n/a	0.3	n/a	1.8	n/a	0.7
Urban area	16.2	6.9	5.7	5.4	2.8	4.6	5.8	5.4
Other	82.8	63.3	92.1	82.3	96.3	85.7	92.4	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.								

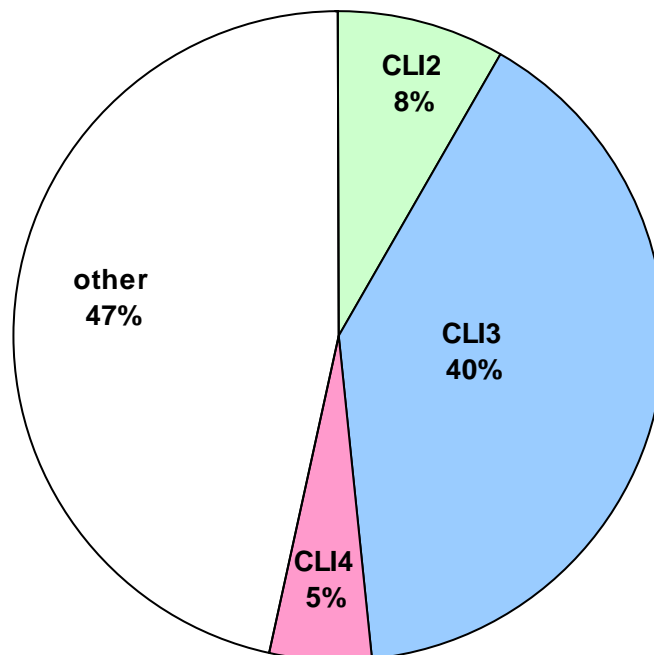
Looking at the land base from a slightly different perspective (the composition of lands in agriculture, Table 3) it is apparent that Richmond County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, although at a significantly lower rate than the provincial average. Over half of agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 2 percent is on class 2 and 6 percent on class 4 land. Over one-third of Richmond's agriculture is on poorer than class 4 soils.

<b>Table 3. Composition of lands in agriculture- Richmond County</b>						
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Richmond	Nova Scotia	Richmond	Nova Scotia	Richmond	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	1.9	20.5	2.1	21.1	n/a	4.7
CLI 3	55.2	49.4	54.7	51.8	n/a	16.4
CLI 4	5.6	16.3	5.6	14.5	n/a	44.5
Other	37.4	13.8	37.6	12.7	n/a	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, over half of urban development in Richmond is on good agricultural soils, while 47 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 and more pronounced (16 percent on CLI2, 6 percent on CLI3 and 3 percent on CLI4) than is the case for Nova Scotia as a whole.

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



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Richmond County has 145 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 113 hectares, 88 of which are on ALIP.

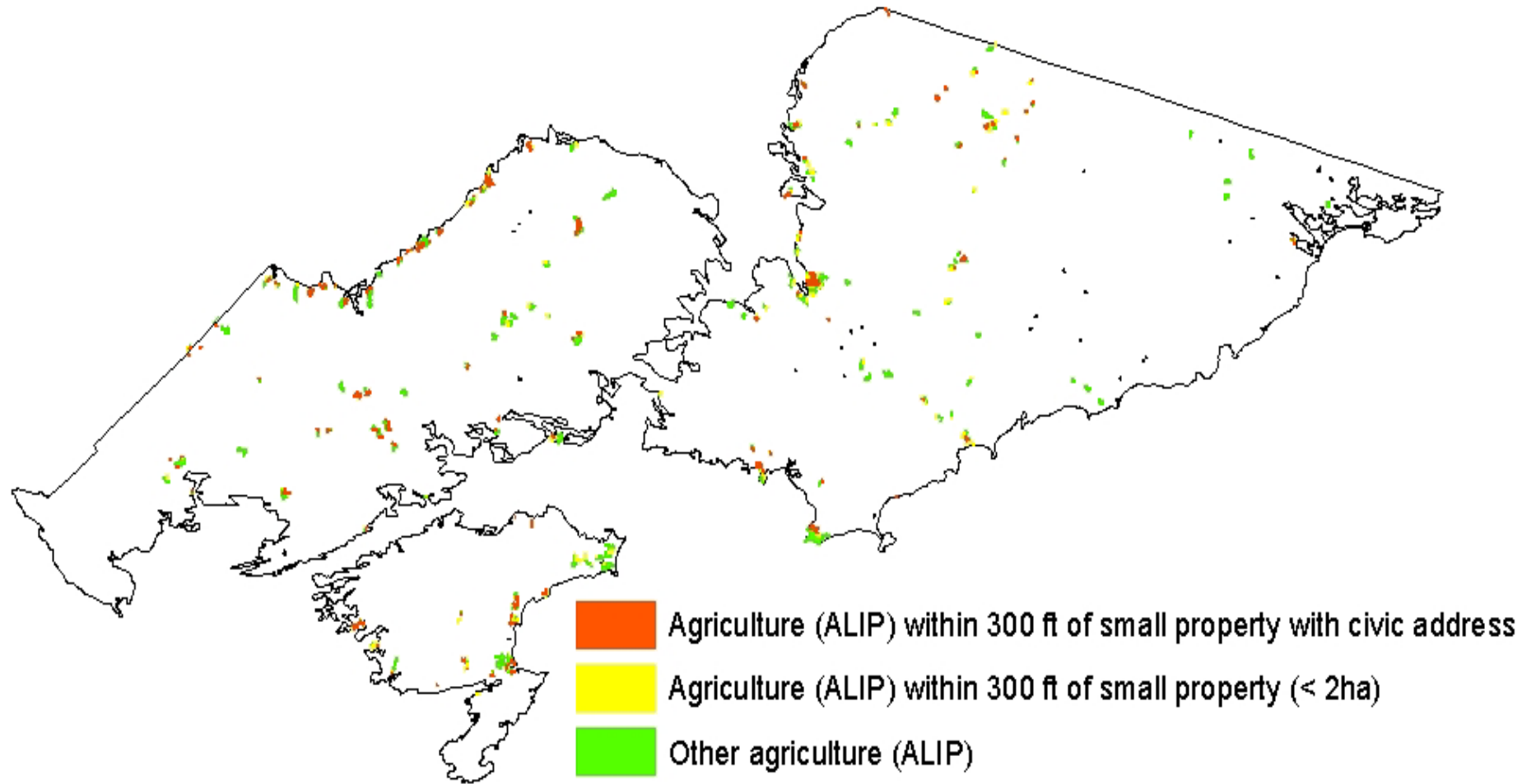
<b>Table 4. Analysis of small properties (&lt; 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Richmond County, Nova Scotia</b>						
	<b>Vacant properties</b>		<b>Properties with civic address</b>		<b>TOTAL of small properties (&lt; 2 ha)</b>	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
<b>Centered in ALIP farmland</b>	74	56	71	57	<b>145</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP</b>	74	43	71	45	<b>145</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland</b>	167	133	132	102	<b>299</b>	<b>235</b>
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 299 properties of less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 44 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 1.5 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Richmond, the county has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland.

Ultimately, approximately 25 hectares (2 percent) of ALIP lands in Richmond have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Richmond 5<sup>th</sup> in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 15<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 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). Richmond has approximately 40 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the province (tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest in absolute terms with Guysborough). Approximately 25 percent of Richmond farmland is within 300 feet of a small property with a civic address (likely developed).

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



Source: 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].

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.