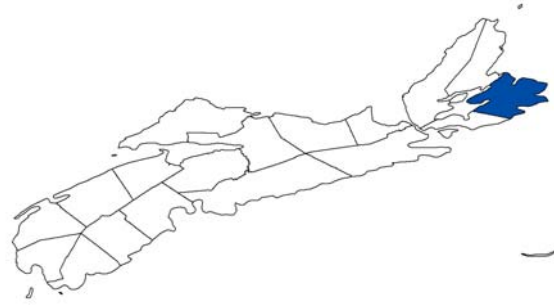


CAPE BRETON COUNTY



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 slightly less than one-third of Cape Breton County (see Table 1). Cape Breton has 2 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 6 percent of CLI 3 and 4 percent of CLI 4.

Cape Breton has approximately 5,600 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to 2.5 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Cape Breton uses about 2 percent of the county land area.

	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	78,220	5.0	32.0
CLI 2	3,589	2.2	1.5
CLI 3	59,983	6.1	24.5
CLI 4	14,647	3.5	6.0
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	5,584	2.4	2.3
Agricultural land (DNR)**	5,635	2.5	2.3
Blueberry land (DNR)**	108	0.7	0.04

* 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.

Cape Breton also produces over 100 hectares of wild blueberries. This amounts to just under 1 percent of the Nova Scotia total.

Figure 1a. Agricultural lands in Cape Breton County

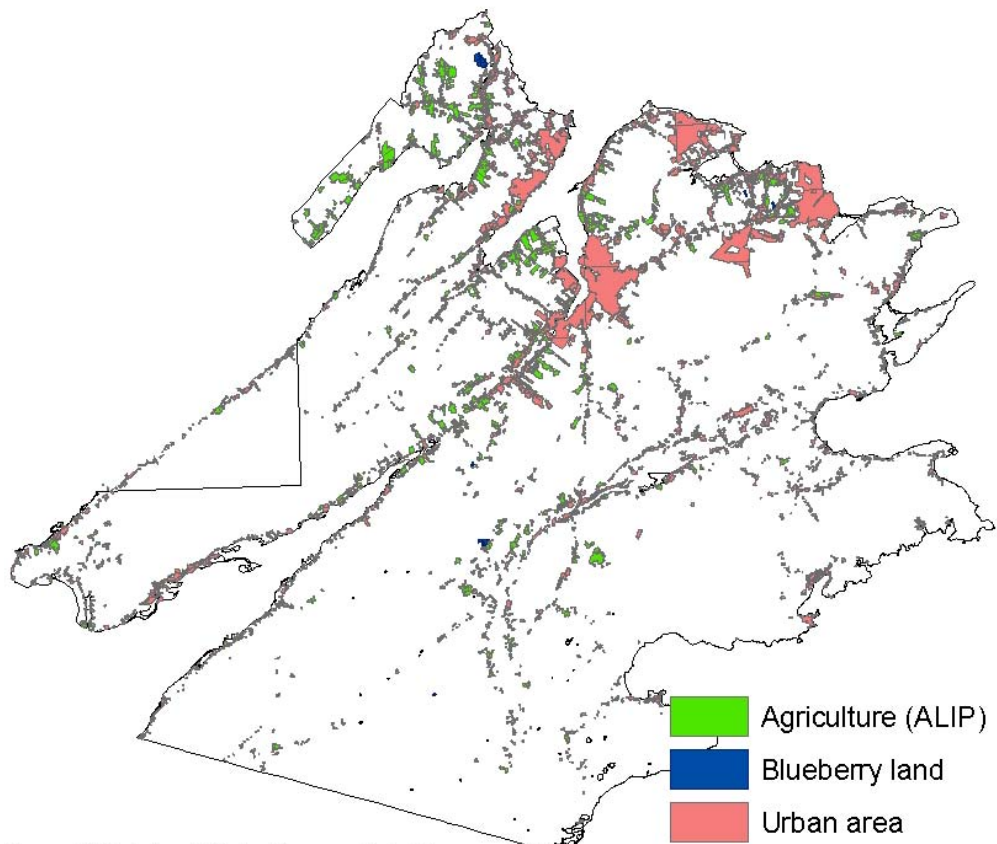
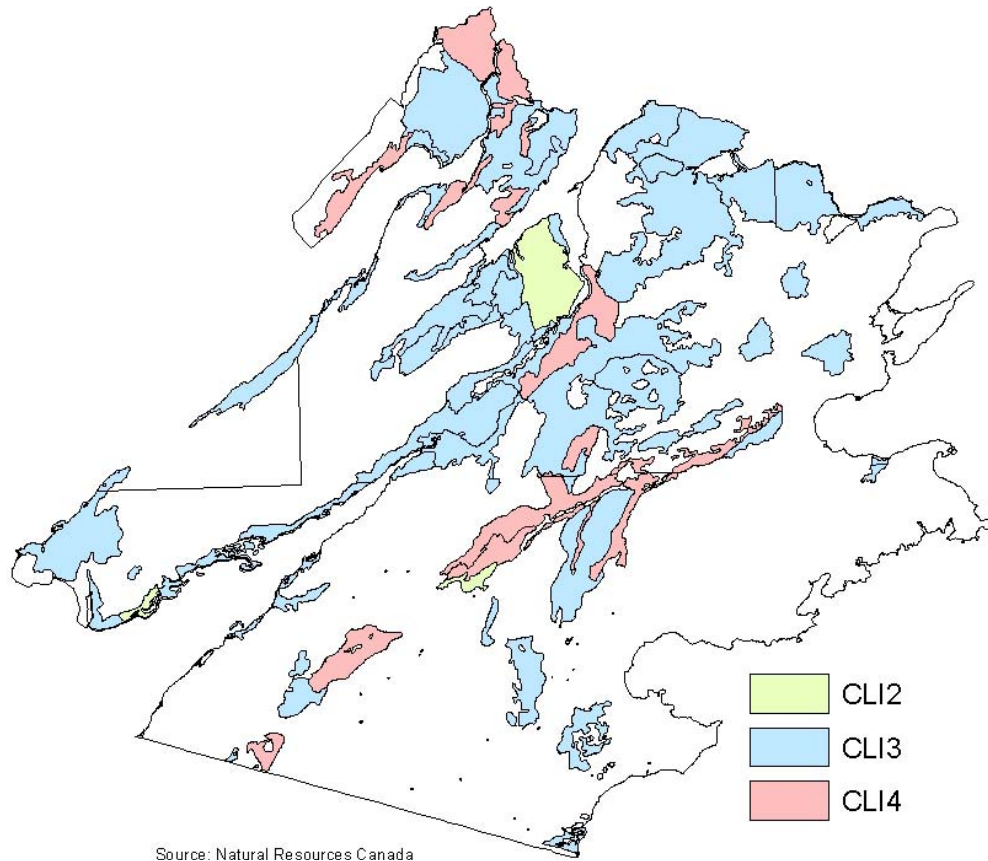
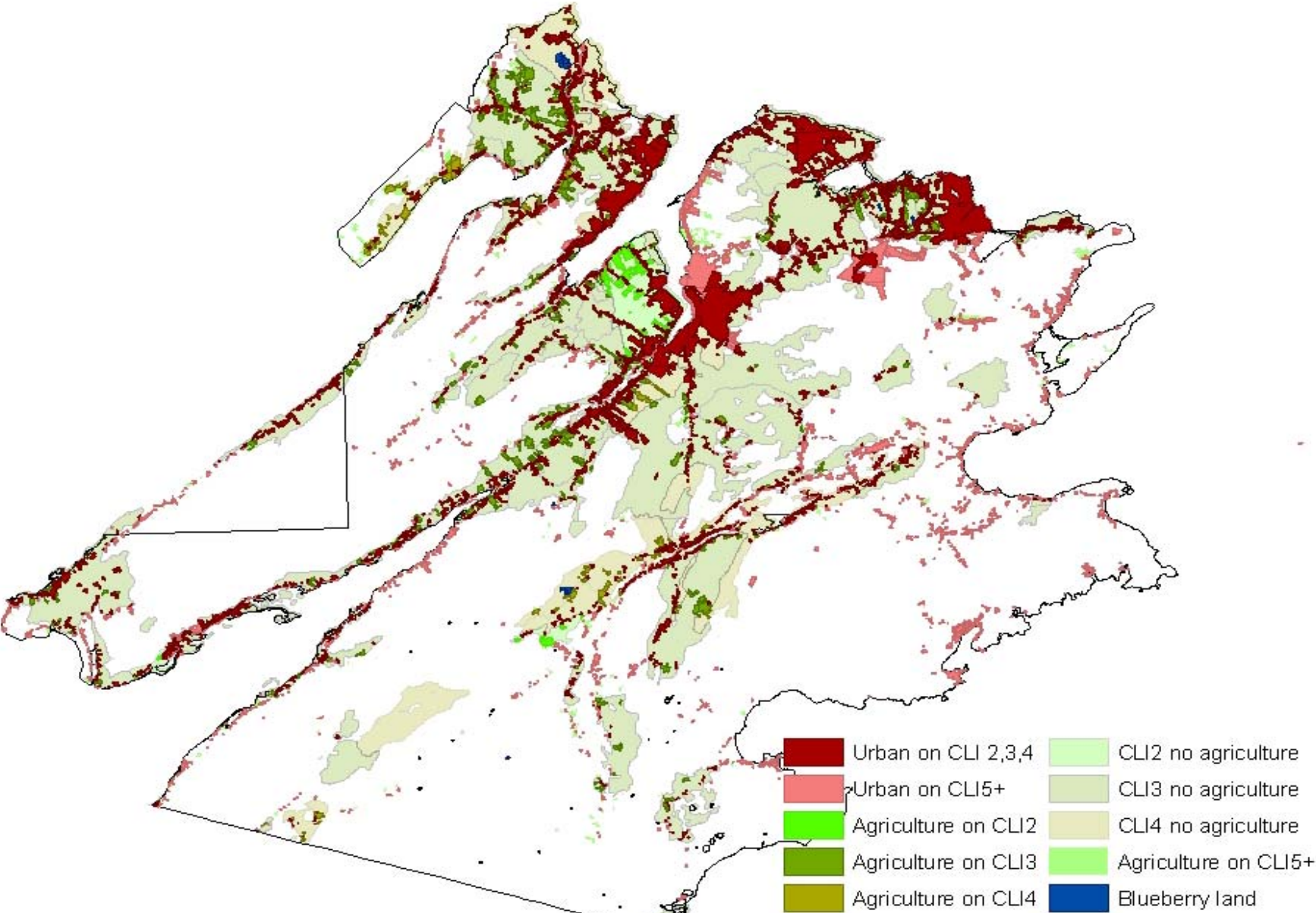


Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Cape Breton County (overlay)

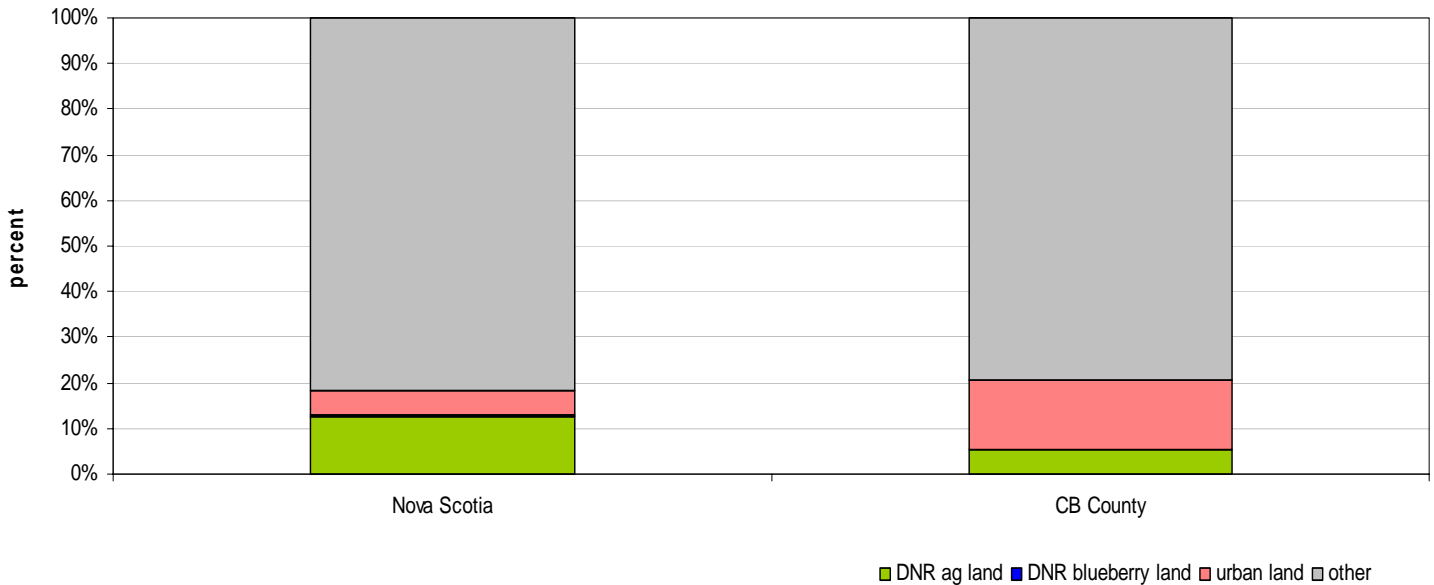


Sources: NS Agriculture, NS Natural Resources, Natural Resources Canada

Usage of arable land and composition of farmed land

Land most suitable for agricultural production (CLI classes 2, 3 and 4) are used for agriculture in Cape Breton County at a rate significantly lower than the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 5 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Cape Breton compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Cape Breton 13th among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is not highly utilized for farming in Cape Breton with approximately 14 percent in agriculture (12th out of 14 counties with CLI 2 land). This is lower than the Nova Scotia average of 29 percent of CLI 2 lands used for agriculture.

The 19 percent of CLI2 developed as urban areas is the highest in Nova Scotia. In total, Cape Breton has about 15 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development ranking Cape Breton 2nd behind Queens County. This is significantly higher than the provincial average of 5.4 percent.

	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	14.1	29.3	4.8	12.0	5.3	7.9	5.3	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.6	1.8	0.1	0.7
Urban area	19.1	6.9	15.0	5.4	14.4	4.6	15.1	5.4
Other	66.8	63.3	80.2	82.3	79.6	85.7	79.5	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 in agriculture, Table 3) it is apparent that Cape Breton County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, although at a significantly lower percentage than the provincial average. Over half of farmed agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 9 percent is on class 2 soils and 14 percent on class 4. Over one-quarter of Cape Breton agriculture is on poorer than class 4 soils.

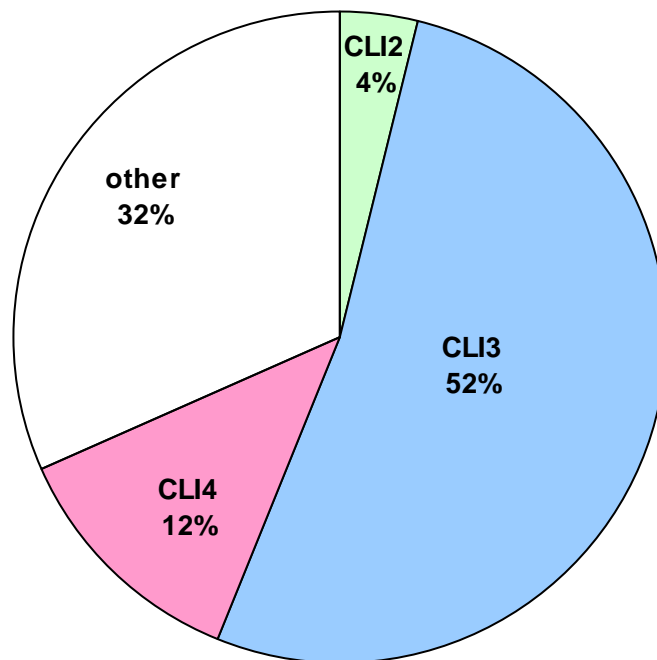
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	8.7	20.5	9.0	21.1	0.0	4.7
CLI 3	50.6	49.4	50.7	51.8	13.2	16.4
CLI 4	14.3	16.3	13.9	14.5	81.2	44.5
Other	26.3	13.8	26.4	12.7	5.6	34.4

* 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, approximately two-thirds of urban development in Cape Breton County is on good agricultural soils. Most of this development is in the Sydney-Sydney Mines-New Waterford-Glace Bay urban areas. 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- Cape Breton County



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Cape Breton County has 699 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 466 hectares, 366 of which are on ALIP.

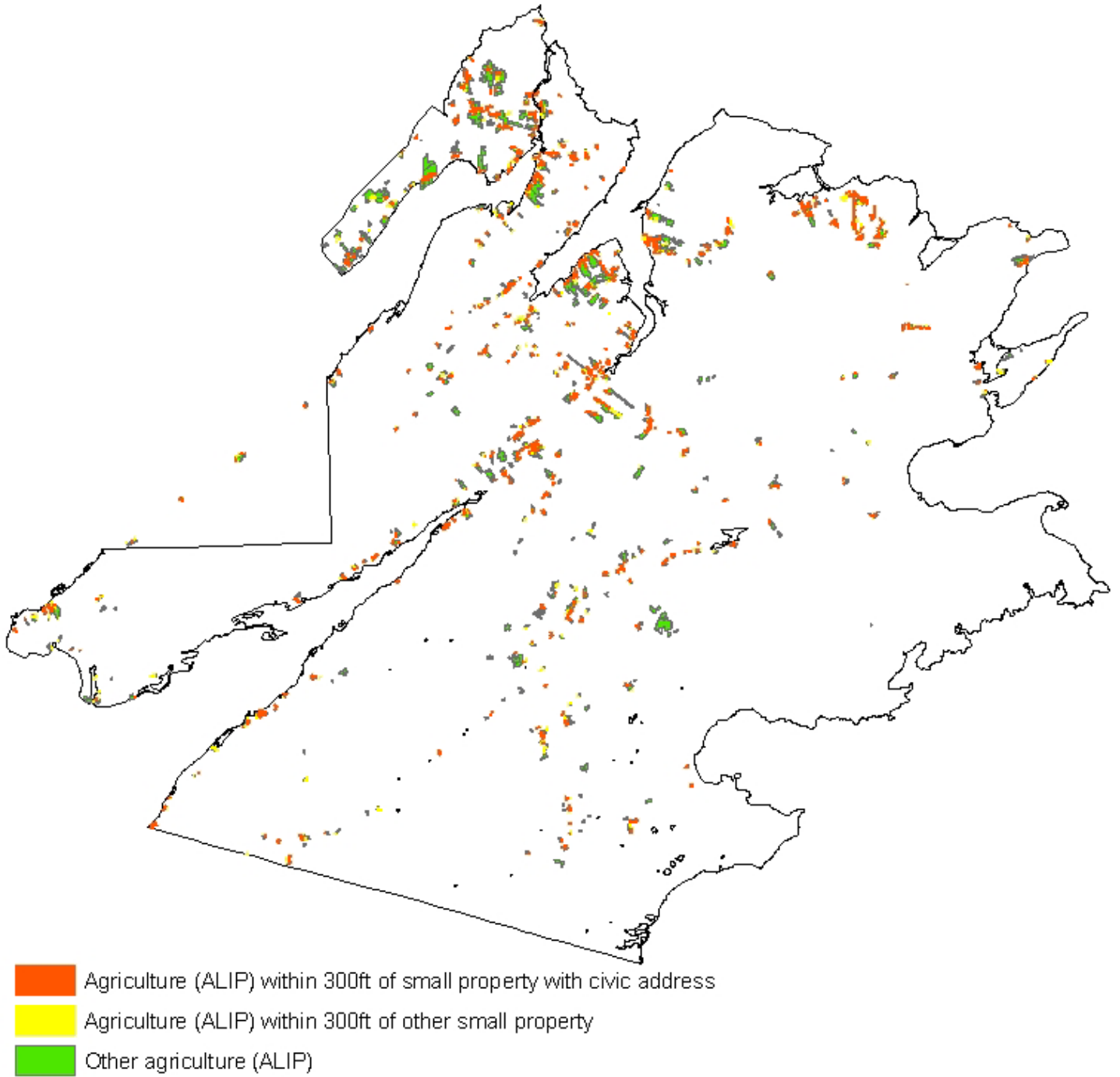
Table 4. Analysis of small properties (< 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Cape Breton County, Nova Scotia						
	Vacant properties		Properties with civic address		TOTAL of small properties (< 2 ha)	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
Centered in ALIP farmland	349	205	350	261	699	466
Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP	349	165	350	201	699	366
Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland	700	409	1,052	608	1,752	1,018
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 1,752 properties less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 60 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 6 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Cape Breton County, the county has the 5th highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland.

Ultimately, approximately 135 hectares (2.4 percent) of ALIP lands in Cape Breton have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Cape Breton 4th in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 9th 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). Cape Breton County has approximately 34 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the 6th highest in the province (7th lowest in absolute terms). Approximately 27 percent of Cape Breton County 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)



Sources: NS Agriculture, SNSMR

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].

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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. Accessed [25 January 2010].

SNSMR (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations). 2009. NS Civic Address File and property polygons.