

# HALIFAX 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 15 percent of Halifax County (see Table 1). Halifax has 2 percent of the province's CLI 2 soils, 6 percent of CLI 3 and 4 percent of CLI 4.

Halifax has approximately 7,500 hectares in agricultural production. This amounts to just over 3 percent of Nova Scotia land in agriculture. Farming in Halifax uses about 1.5 percent of the county land area.

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

	Hectares	Percent of provincial total	Percent of county land area
CLI 2,3,4 TOTAL	83,941	5.3	15.4
CLI 2	3,093	1.9	0.6
CLI 3	63,149	6.4	11.6
CLI 4	17,699	4.2	3.3
Agricultural land (ALIP)*	7,676	3.3	1.4
Agricultural land (DNR)**	7,488	3.3	1.4
Blueberry land (DNR)**	538	3.3	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.

Halifax also has 538 hectares of wild blueberry production. This amounts to 3 percent of the Nova Scotia total.

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

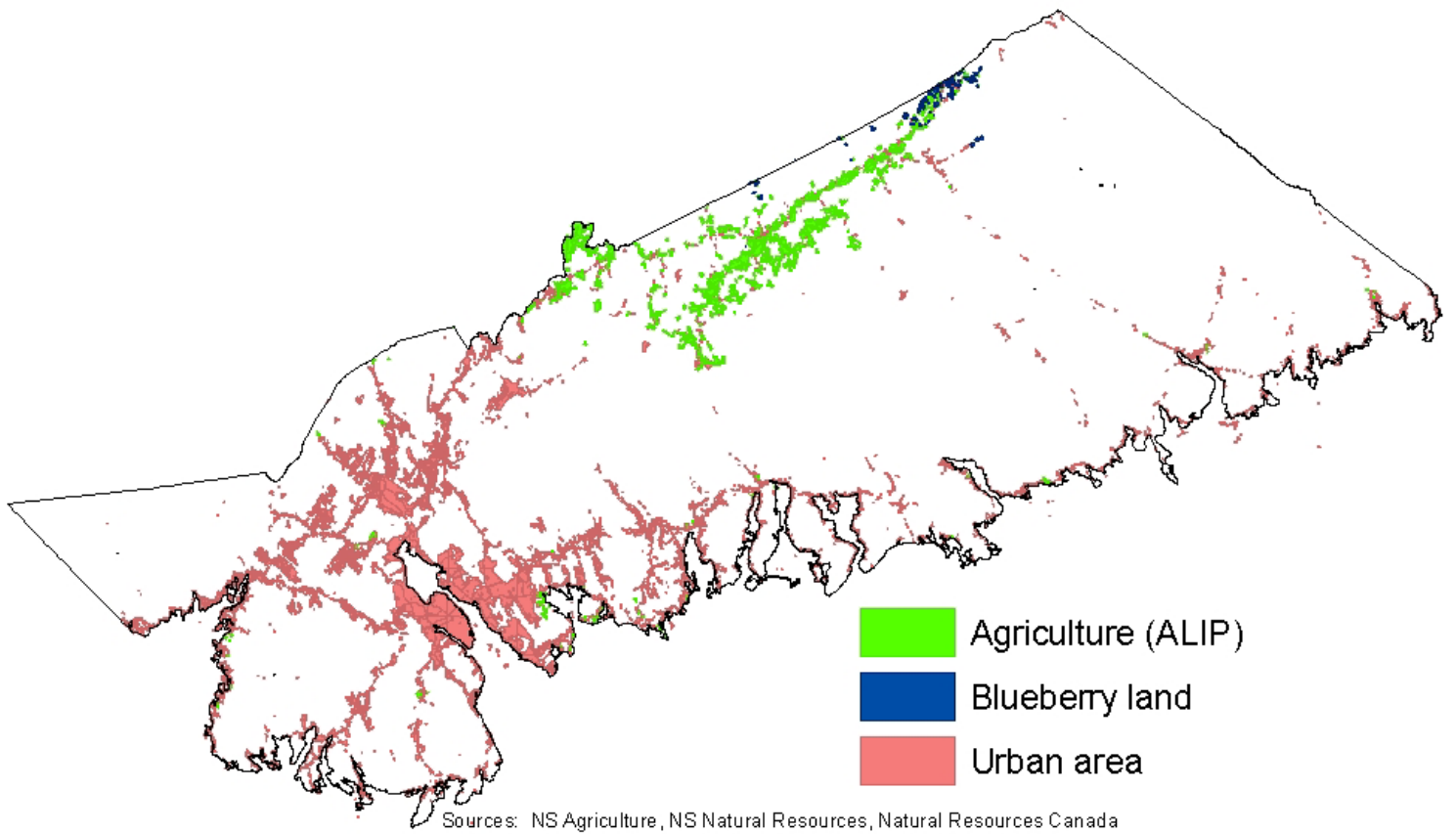
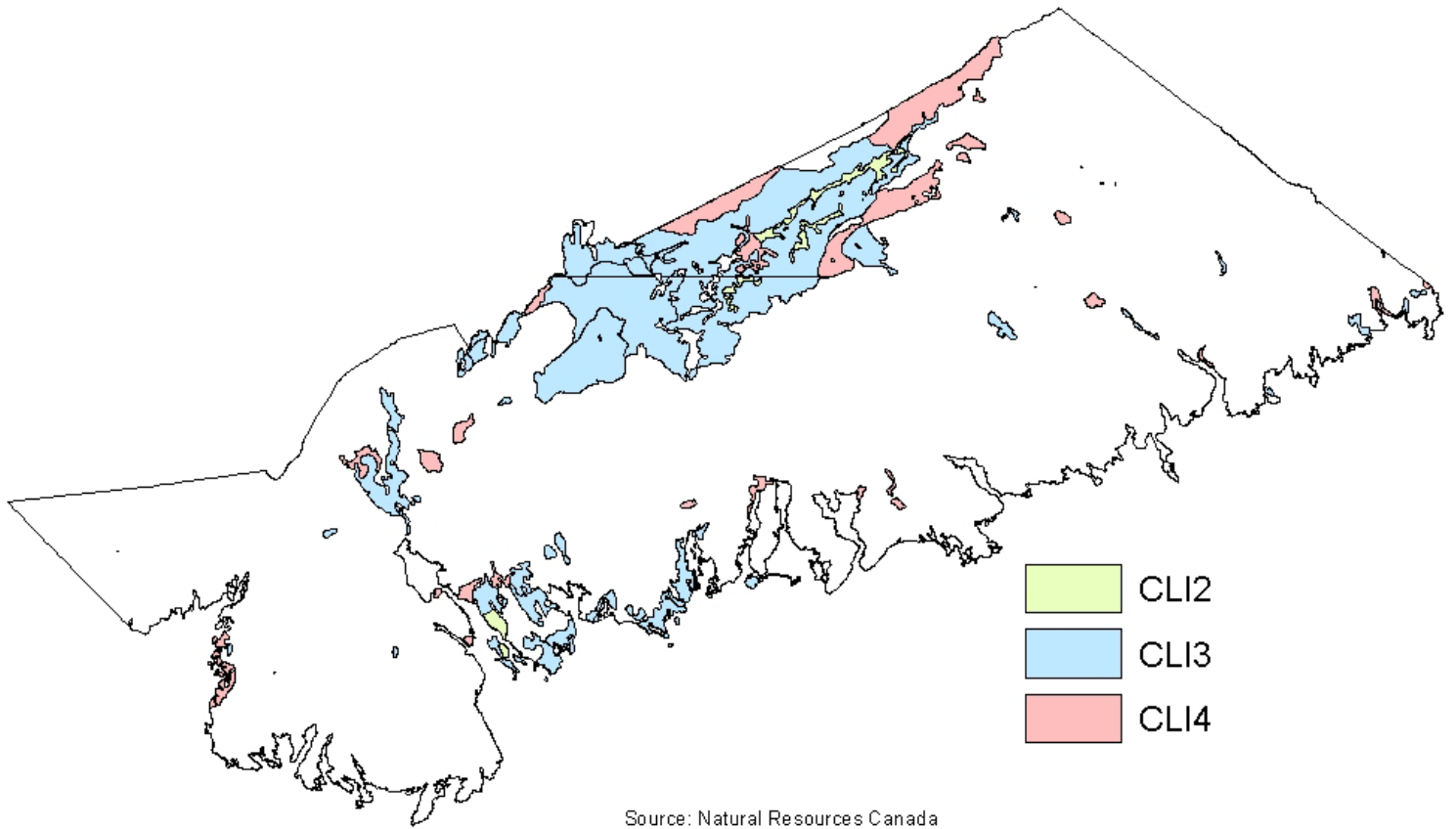
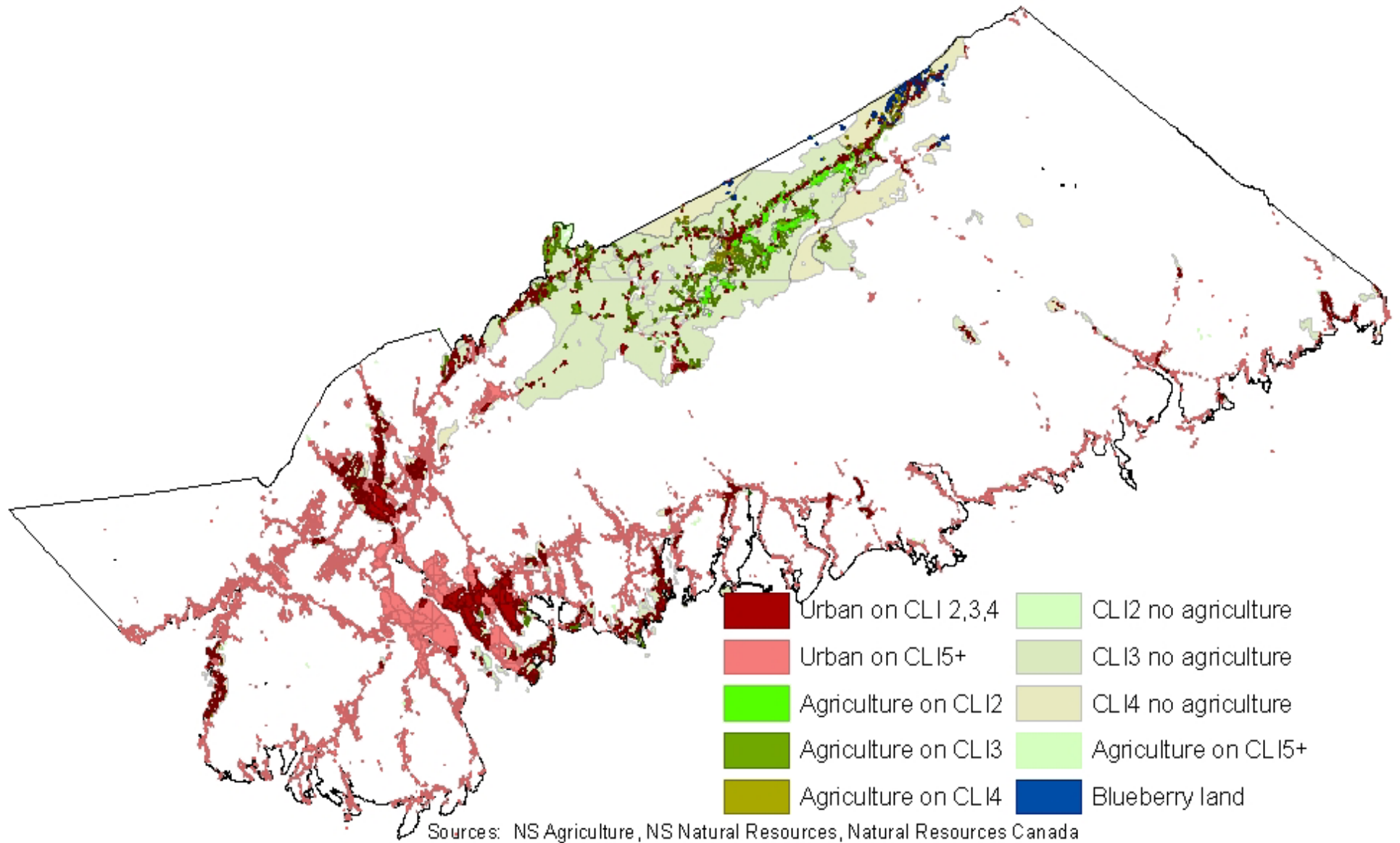


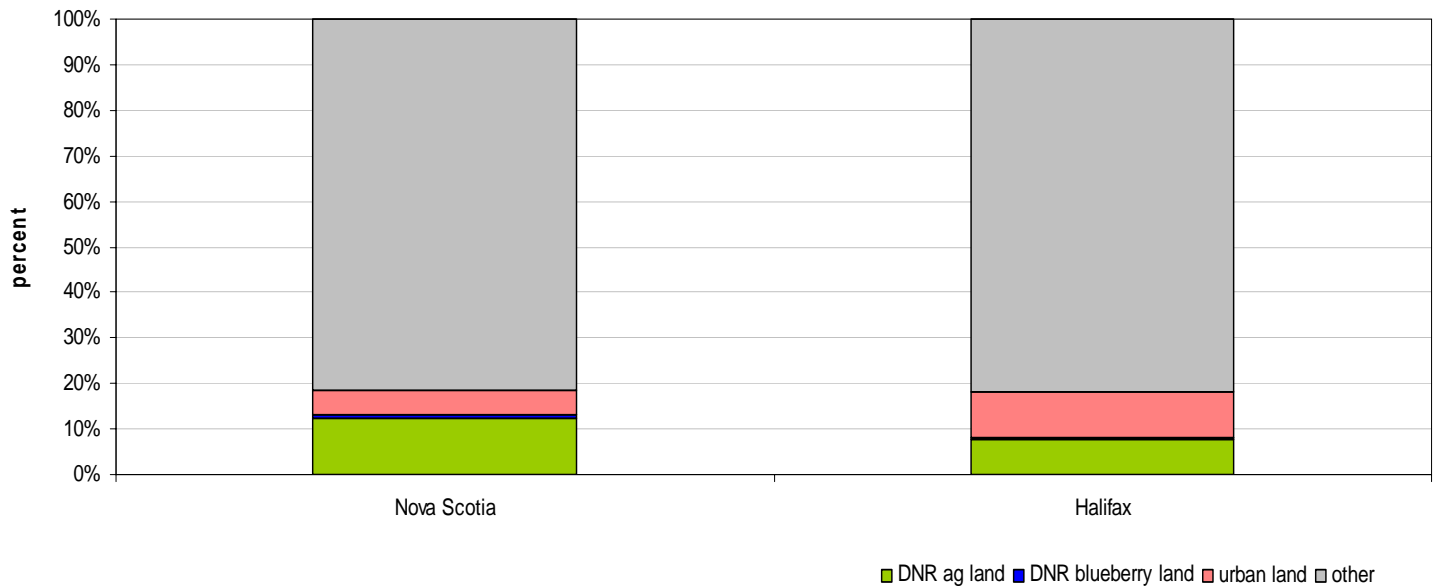
Figure 1b. Agricultural lands in Halifax County (overlay)



## 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 Halifax County at a lower rate than the provincial average (see Figure 2 and Table 2). About 8 percent of suitable agricultural land is used for agricultural production in Halifax compared with 13 percent provincially. This places Halifax 10<sup>th</sup> among the 18 counties in terms of utilization of arable land for farming.

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



Premium agricultural land (CLI 2) is moderately utilized for farming in Halifax with approximately 31 percent in agriculture (5<sup>th</sup> out of 18 counties). This is higher than the Nova Scotia average of 29 percent of CLI 2 lands used for agriculture.

Halifax has about 10 percent of its good agricultural soils under urban development ranking Halifax 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is significantly higher than the provincial average of 5.4 percent.

	CLI 2		CLI 3		CLI 4		TOTAL CLI 2,3,4	
	Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	Nova Scotia
	Percent							
Agricultural land (DNR)*	30.8	29.3	7.0	12.0	5.6	7.9	7.6	12.7
Blueberry land (DNR)*	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3	2.6	1.8	0.6	0.7
Urban area	13.5	6.9	9.4	5.4	11.9	4.6	10.1	5.4
Other	55.7	63.3	83.6	82.3	79.9	85.7	81.8	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 Halifax County agriculture is generally taking place on good agricultural soils, at a rate similar to the provincial average. Over half of agricultural land is on class 3 soils, while 13 percent is on class 2 soils and 13 percent on class 4. Approximately 15 percent of Halifax agriculture is on less than class 4 soils.

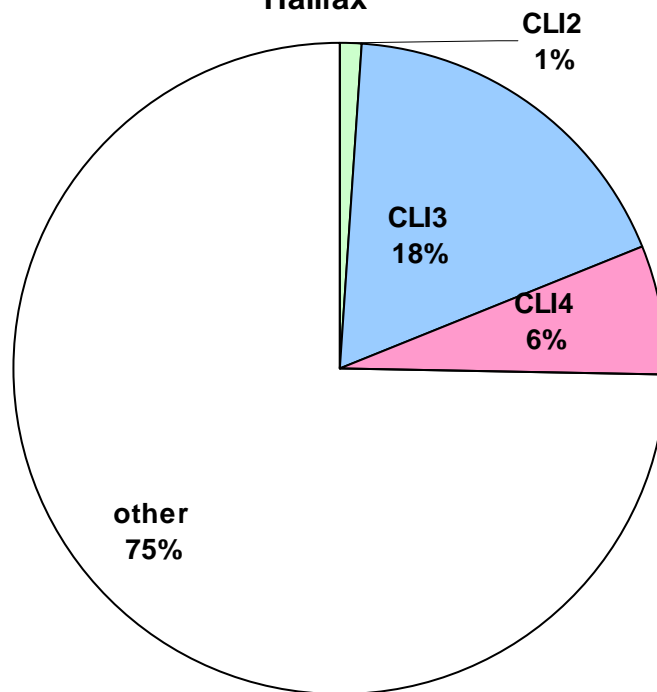
	Agricultural land (ALIP)*		Agricultural land (DNR)**		Blueberry land (DNR)**	
	Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	Nova Scotia
	Percent					
CLI 2	12.1	20.5	12.7	21.1	0.0	4.7
CLI 3	55.5	49.4	59.4	51.8	3.1	16.4
CLI 4	17.3	16.3	13.2	14.5	84.1	44.5
Other	15.1	13.8	14.6	12.7	12.8	34.4

\* 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 Halifax is on land with poor capability for agriculture. This is largely due to the fact that much of the former City of Halifax and surrounding areas are situated on lower than CLI4 land. Only 1 percent of urban development occurs on class 2 soil, and 6 percent on CLI4 land. The majority of the urban areas taking up 18 percent of CLI3 land are in the Dartmouth, Bedford/Sackville and Musquodoboit Valley areas. Three-quarters of urban lands in Halifax are lands rated CLI5 or poorer, making Halifax the 4<sup>th</sup> least intensive user of arable land for urban development.

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



Some lands currently in agriculture may be relatively easily removed for other forms of development. A contributing factor is lot size. Halifax County has 487 properties that are less than two hectares in size that are centered in ALIP lands (Table 4). These properties amount to 330 hectares, 274 of which are on ALIP.

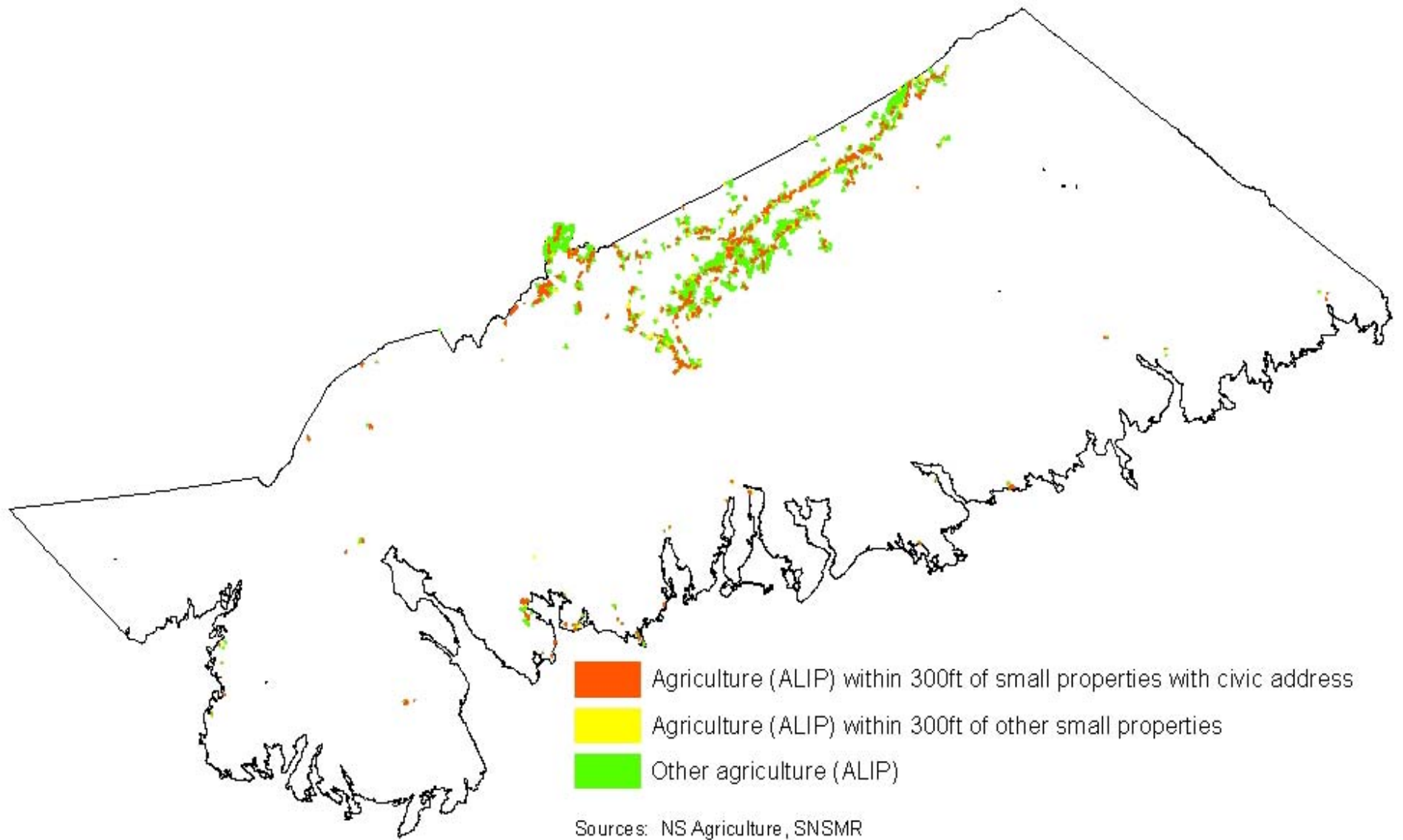
<b>Table 4. Analysis of small properties (&lt; 2ha) encroaching on farm land- Halifax County, Nova Scotia</b>						
	<b>Vacant properties</b>		<b>Properties with civic address</b>		<b>TOTAL of small properties (&lt; 2 ha)</b>	
	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares	# properties	Hectares
<b>Centered in ALIP farmland</b>	198	116	289	214	<b>487</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>Area in farmland of properties centered in ALIP</b>	198	98	289	176	<b>487</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Within 10 meters of ALIP farmland</b>	410	249	742	494	<b>1,152</b>	<b>743</b>
Source: Provincial PID data, NSDA (ALIP data)						

A total of 1,152 properties less than two hectares in size are on or adjacent to ALIP lands, 64 percent of which have civic addresses (i.e. are not vacant). This amounts to 5 percent of the provincial total of these properties. Relative to the amount of farming in Halifax, the county has the 13<sup>th</sup> highest rate of small developed properties that are adjacent to farmland.

Ultimately, approximately 91 hectares (1.2 percent) of ALIP lands in Halifax have been lost to urban development since 1998. This places Halifax tied for 10<sup>th</sup> with Hants in terms of percentage farmland lost to development and 12<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). Halifax has approximately 26 percent of its ALIP farmland falling under this category, the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest in the province (8<sup>th</sup> lowest in absolute terms). Approximately 19 percent of Halifax 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.