



**PLANNING RESOURCE GUIDE**

# Planning for Agriculture



The new Provincial Planning Regulation continues to promote sound land use planning and express the provincial interest in the sustainable development of land, resources and infrastructure. However, several new ideas promoted and a number of new provisions included are significantly different from the previous regulation.

To support the understanding of these new ideas and provisions, and their application at the local level, the Province of Manitoba is developing a variety of resources and tools that will provide additional information and direction.

Manitoba Local Government, in partnership with other departments and stakeholders, is developing a series of planning resource guides that will further elaborate on some of the ideas promoted in the new regulation and provide additional direction to support their local application.

Because of their technical nature, the planning resource guides are intended mainly for a planning audience, such as planning staff from municipalities and planning districts, consultants and provincial staff involved with land use planning.

The guides are intended to support planning, rather than dictate how it be done. While a guide may discuss or promote a certain approach, the province is not requiring that a particular approach must be used. The guides are intended as supplementary resources to further elaborate and explain select ideas or provisions in the Provincial Planning Regulation and their use is optional.

As the guides are intended to support the application of the Provincial Planning Regulation locally, the department of Local Government encourages feedback from users to ensure that they are achieving this purpose. The department also welcomes any suggestions for additional information or tools that should be developed.

For more information on planning resource guides and other resources available to support local planning, go to the Provincial Planning Regulation *Portal* at: [www.manitoba.ca/ia/plups](http://www.manitoba.ca/ia/plups)  
This website will be updated regularly, so check back often.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Introduction</b> .....  | 2  |
| <b>What it means to Plan for Agriculture in Manitoba</b> .....             | 3  |
| <b>A. Designating Agricultural Lands</b> .....                             | 4  |
| I. Identify and Map Agricultural Operations and Lands .....                | 5  |
| <i>General Agricultural Operations</i> .....                               | 5  |
| <i>Livestock Operations</i> .....  | 6  |
| <i>Non-Agricultural Uses &amp; Designations</i> .....                      | 7  |
| II. Identify Lands with Capacity for Agricultural Production .....         | 8  |
| <i>Prime Agricultural Land</i> .....                                       | 10 |
| <i>Viable Lower Class Land</i> .....                                       | 10 |
| III. Mapping the Data .....  | 11 |
| <b>B. Setting Policies for Agricultural Land Use and Development</b> ..... | 17 |
| I. Planning for Livestock Operations.....                                  | 18 |
| <i>Livestock Operation Policy</i> .....                                    | 18 |
| <i>Text vs Maps</i> .....  | 19 |
| <i>Conditional Use</i> .....   | 19 |
| <i>Siting and Setback Requirements</i> .....                               | 20 |
| II. Minimizing Fragmentation of the Agricultural Land Base .....           | 21 |
| <i>Specialized Operations</i> .....  | 22 |
| <i>Agro-Commercial and Agro-Industrial Uses</i> .....                      | 22 |
| <i>Farm-Related Residential Subdivision</i> .....                          | 23 |
| <i>Isolated Parcels</i> .....  | 23 |
| III. Providing for Agricultural Development .....                          | 23 |
| <b>Additional Resources</b> .....  | 25 |

## INTRODUCTION



Manitoba's Provincial Planning Regulation stresses the importance of planning for agriculture. Farms today range in size from small to moderate to very large modern business operations. These operations generate income for rural families, put millions of dollars and thousands of jobs annually into the local and provincial economy, provide a safe and high-quality supply of affordable food and agricultural products, and contribute to the well-being of all Manitobans. Encouraging long-term commitment and investment from farmers will enable a strong future for the agricultural sector.

Agricultural land is an important resource. Of the 136 million acres of land in Manitoba, only 19 million acres (approximately 14 per cent) of the provincial land base has agricultural potential, and it is this same portion of land base that is often the most desirable for non-farm use. Agricultural land continues to face pressure from residential and recreational development, as well as from other competing resource-related uses.

Agriculture, as one of many land uses, requires appropriate policies to guide its development.

Planning for agriculture means protecting agricultural land from conversion to other uses and providing agricultural operations the opportunity to continue to operate, diversify or expand in the future. Ensuring non-agricultural uses have room to exist or even expand without affecting agriculture helps to shield agricultural uses from land use conflicts. Ideally, this is accomplished by directing non-agricultural uses, such as residential and recreation development, away from prime and viable lower class agricultural land to areas less suitable for agricultural purposes.

Local planning authorities achieve land use related goals by developing strong land use policies in a development plan bylaw. A strong development plan will clearly indicate where in the planning area agricultural uses and operations will be suitable and promoted, and where non-agricultural uses may be considered.

**We need a good supply of agricultural land and farmers to produce the food we eat and other goods we use.**

## WHAT IT MEANS TO PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE IN MANITOBA

A development plan bylaw contains the land use goals and policies of a local planning authority. Prior to being adopted locally, the development plan must be approved by the province. The province will only approve a development plan that is consistent with the Provincial Planning Regulation, which identifies Manitoba's interest in the sustainable development of land, resources and infrastructure. This process ensures that the provincial interest, as expressed in the policies of the Provincial Planning Regulation, is properly reflected in the goals and policies of the development plan.

Policies contained in a development plan will be grouped according to specific land use categories often referred to as **designations** or **policy areas**; for example, designations like agricultural, industrial, commercial or residential. Each parcel of land within the planning area will be assigned a land-use designation according to the policy guidance outlined in the plan. A policy map indicates where each designation is to be applied in the planning area. The combination of policies and mapping should result in a plan that identifies the following:

- the development objectives and direction the planning authority is trying to achieve for each category of land use
- where in the planning area these objectives and directions apply

Through the Provincial Planning Regulation (Policy Area 3: Agriculture), the province has expressed a strong interest in ensuring that land designated agricultural is prioritized for agricultural uses and protected from encroachment by non-agricultural uses. The regulation restricts the development of non-resource related uses, such as residential, commercial and industrial uses on land designated agricultural. The regulation also limits the subdivision of agricultural land designations to one per 80 acres in certain limited circumstances (see section B ii of this guide for details).

If a development plan designates land as agricultural, the provincial interest to protect agricultural land (as expressed in policy area 3 of the regulation) would apply to that area. When preparing a development plan, a planning authority must carefully consider what lands should be designated agricultural based on the policy guidance of the regulation, local needs and circumstances, and the suitability of the land for agricultural use. The local perspective of what lands the planning authority wishes to designate agricultural will then be considered compared to the provincial perspective on land designation. This negotiation of potentially opposing views can be challenging, but it is best done upfront at the development plan stage. If discussions are left to the subdivision stage, the process is much more time consuming because it is done case-by-case, with each application possibly eliciting conflicting views.



## DESIGNATING AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Identifying areas to designate for agricultural use in a development plan may not be as straightforward as it appears. Not all land capable of supporting agriculture will be cultivated and not all existing agricultural operations will be located in predominantly agricultural areas. Therefore, determining which land to designate as agricultural requires careful consideration of existing land uses and elements of the physical environment that limit or support agricultural uses.

The Provincial Planning Regulation requires that at least the following be identified to assist with appropriate land designation:

- land with existing agricultural operations
- land with the capacity to support agricultural production now and in the future, including:

- prime agricultural land
- viable lower class land suitable for mixed farming enterprises (see policy 3.1.1 of the Provincial Planning Regulation)

With this information, a background inventory can be prepared. The following are suggestions of the types of information to include in a background inventory to help inform the designation of land for agricultural use.

To help decide which land to designate as agricultural, mapping can be a useful tool. See what the data looks like in map form in section A iii of this guide.

## I. Identify and Map Agricultural Operations and Lands

When deciding which land to designate as agricultural, a planning authority must consider the location of existing agricultural land uses throughout, and peripheral to, the planning area. In many cases, these agricultural operations may have been around for a long time and should be given every opportunity to continue operating successfully into the future.

Identifying the areas currently in agricultural use, including livestock operations, will provide a planning authority with valuable insight into which land to designate for agricultural uses (see policy 3.1.1 of the Provincial Planning Regulation). Councillors and other individuals with local knowledge of the planning area may be able to provide assistance.

## General Agricultural Operations

An **agricultural operation** is an agricultural, horticultural or silvicultural operation that produces products for commercial purposes. A planning authority needs to consider the location of existing agricultural land and operations when preparing or amending a development plan. To support analysis adequately, a planning authority should consider identifying all land in the planning area that is used for any type of agriculture, including land used for cultivation, grazing and tree farms. It may not be necessary to map this information in detail. Identifying quarter sections engaged in agriculture may be sufficient. Other land uses and features existing within these same areas will be identified through secondary data sources (ex: streams, non-farm residences, anhydrous ammonia storage sites, etc.).



## Livestock Operations

*The Planning Act* requires development plan bylaws to contain a clear livestock operations policy. *The Planning Act* defines a **livestock operation** as a permanent or semi-permanent facility or non-grazing area where at least 10 animal units of livestock are kept or raised either indoors or outdoors, and includes all associated manure collection facilities, but does not include an auction mart. Information on livestock operations will be necessary when formulating livestock operations policies if the intent is to restrict or prohibit livestock operations in a specific area (for example, within one mile of a town) (see policy 3.2.1 of the Provincial Planning Regulation).

Detailed and reliable information on specific livestock operations may not be readily available. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and Manitoba Conservation will be able to provide some information, but local knowledge is invaluable. One method for recording accurate information is to have councillors or other local individuals record the location of livestock operations on paper maps. To be useful for policy development, the inventory should include the following information:

- location and type of existing livestock operations
- number of animal units in the existing livestock operations
- location of nearby residential dwellings and residential designations

After the data has been collected, the planning authority may wish to calculate the number of animal units for each livestock operation represented on the map (See Appendix 2 of the Provincial Planning Regulation for a chart to convert different species of animals into



animal units). This information will be useful in determining the mutual separation distances between livestock operations and other uses, including non-farm dwellings (see section iii. policy 3.2.2 of the Provincial Planning Regulation).

An animal unit does not necessarily equal one animal. An animal unit means the number of animals of a particular category of livestock that will produce 73 kilograms of total nitrogen in a 12-month period. Refer to the animal unit conversion chart (Appendix 2 of the Provincial Planning Regulation) to convert animals to animal units. Animals or poultry that are not kept exclusively as pets are considered livestock. For information on a livestock operation with animals that are not found on the chart, contact your local Community and Regional Planning office for conversion information.

## Non-Agricultural Uses and Designations

Areas not currently designated for agricultural use in the development plan should be identified and mapped. The proximity of an agricultural operation, particularly livestock operations, to a non-agricultural designation may determine whether a livestock operation can expand or intensify (see policy 3.2.2 of the Provincial Planning Regulation). For lands not designated agricultural, it is only necessary to identify those uses that have the potential to have an impact on an adjacent agricultural area. For instance, a recreational use may be located in a non-agricultural area, but may affect surrounding uses beyond the designated area in which it is located.

Other items to consider capturing in the background inventory include:

- agro-commercial uses
- agro-industrial uses
- rural residential areas and settlement areas
- significant recreational areas
- existing or planned water and wastewater infrastructure (including drinking water sources and sewage lagoons)
- natural features such as surface and ground water, aggregate deposits, wildlife management areas, and Crown lands
- historic or archaeologically significant features or areas not currently listed by the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism

## OTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Manitoba Land Initiative (MLI):

- Land use/land cover: Provides a general overview of land cover—while it is not particularly useful for detailed planning exercises, it provides a general understanding of which portions of the planning area are engaged in agriculture. Note that the dataset may not be up to date.
- Community pastures: indicates the spatial extent of all community pastures
- Crown land plans: identifies Crown lands coded for agricultural use

### Community and Regional Planning Branch:

- Roll entry: Can be used to spatially represent data from the municipal assessment database. The tax code field from this database indicates the primary activity that each land parcel is engaged in. Mapping the Roll Entry database using this field will allow all agricultural land to be quickly identified. When joined with the municipal assessment data, this dataset will allow for the general location of livestock operations and non-farm rural residences to be spatially represented.



## II. Identify Lands with Capacity for Agricultural Production

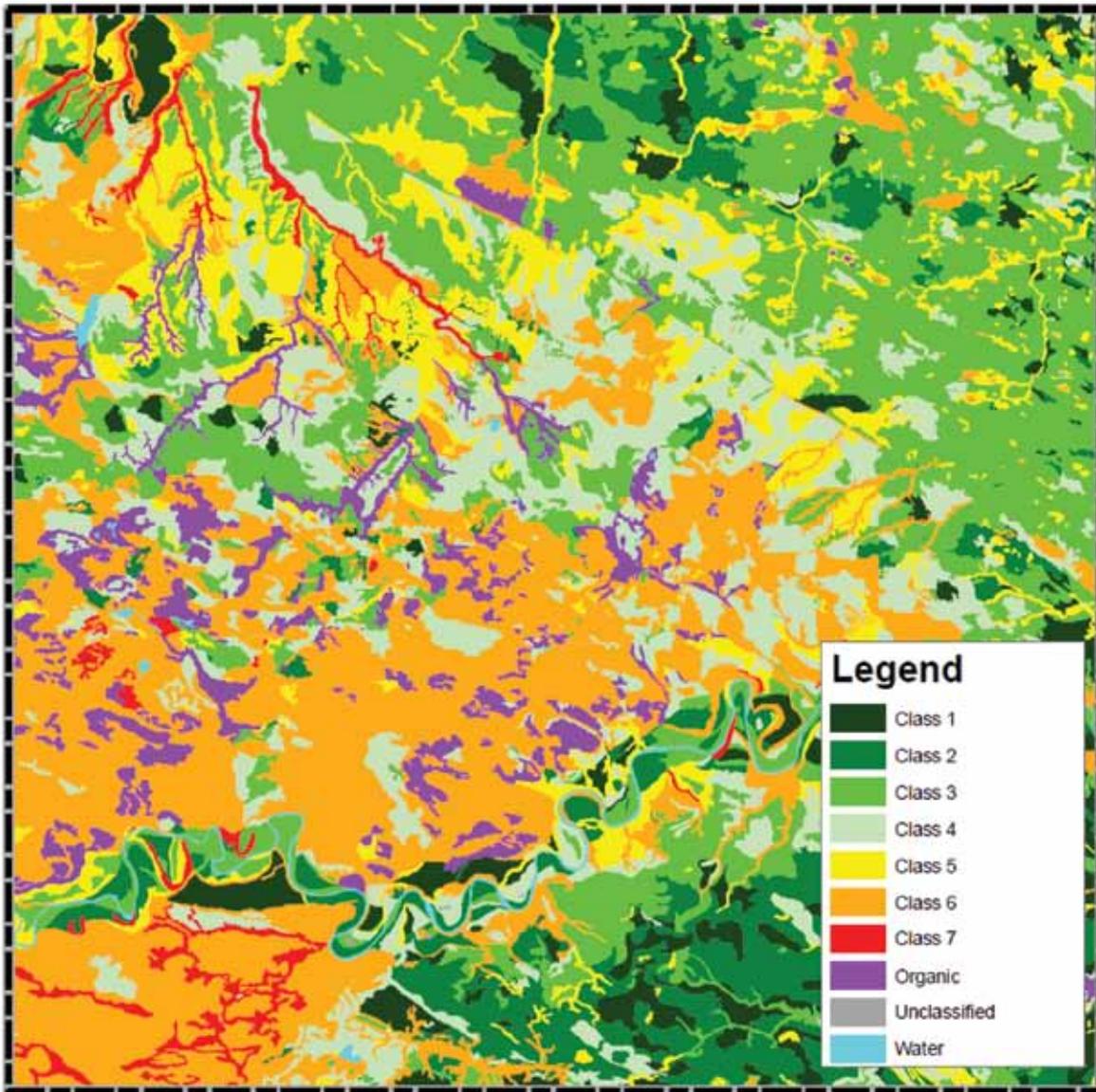
The Provincial Planning Regulation requires that prime agricultural and viable lower class agricultural land be identified and designated in a development plan for agricultural use (see Policy 3.1.1 of the Provincial Planning Regulation).

Agricultural land is a valuable and limited natural resource and is the foundation of all agricultural activities in Manitoba. Prime agricultural lands are necessary for Manitoba's annual crop production, while viable lower class lands support forage and livestock production and grazing. Prime agricultural land and viable lower class land can be considered non-renewable; once taken out of production,

they are seldom returned to agriculture. Planning for agricultural use of these lands and protecting them from conversion to non-farm use is vital to the future of Manitoba's agricultural sector.

A map of soil capability for agriculture will inform the planning authority of where prime and viable lower class land can be found throughout the planning area (see Figure 1 – Soil Capability for Agriculture). For additional information on soil capability, see the *Agriculture Capability Ratings for Annual Dryland Crop Production* (Appendix A).

Figure 1 – Soil Capability of a Municipality for Agriculture



While the amount of prime agricultural land and viable lower class land will vary among municipalities, many municipalities will have a mixture of both. Planning authorities should direct non-agricultural development away from all land capable of supporting agriculture. The nature and extent of the agricultural land base

must be determined for the planning area. Policies for the use of agricultural land must be communicated through the development plan bylaw. The following should be considered when identifying areas for agricultural designation (see Appendix A for more detailed soil information).

## Prime Agricultural Land

The Provincial Planning Regulation describes **prime agricultural lands** as mineral soil with dryland agricultural capability of class 1, 2 or 3, which includes a land unit of one quarter-section or more, or a river lot, of which 60 per cent or greater consists of land with a dryland agricultural capability of class 1, 2 or 3. Annual dryland cropping generally consists of grain and oilseed production. The only prime agricultural land without limitations to annual dryland cropping is class 1 land. Class 2 land has slight to moderate limitations for agricultural crop production, while class 3 land has moderately severe limitations. Therefore, prime agricultural land is not necessarily land ideally suited to dryland annual crop production, but it is the only land capable of sustaining it within the province. For this reason, prime agricultural land is a valuable and finite resource that needs to be protected from non-agricultural development.

For land use planning purposes, prime agricultural lands also include lands that are highly suitable for irrigation purposes (although they could be class 5 for dryland production). These are highly important for the production of potatoes and other vegetables. This definition may also include some organic soils that have been improved for agricultural purposes and are or have been

used for agricultural production. This is why it is important to consider existing land use in addition to soil capability for agriculture.

For those planning areas primarily consisting of prime agricultural land, identifying land to designate for non-agricultural uses may be challenging. In such instances, planning authorities should consider protecting the best land currently under agricultural production and directing future non-agricultural uses to those areas currently designated for non-agricultural use, for example, directing residential uses to urban areas and other settlement centres.

## Viable Lower Class Land

**Viable lower class lands** are defined as lands that are not prime agricultural land but that are or were used for agriculture and continue to have the potential to be used for this purpose. These lands have high potential for forage production, haying and grazing, essential to the cattle industry. Viable lower class land mainly consists of land with a dryland agricultural capability class of 4 or 5; however, class 6 lands are still capable of sustaining native grazing. Viable lower class land is important for a different type of agricultural production. This land is extremely valuable

GIS-ready data layers, containing soils classifications, are available for download from the [Manitoba Land Initiative website](#). In addition, the [Province of Manitoba website](#) contains supporting information on soil surveys and management that may be of interest.

Soil information is available for all of Manitoba but at different soil map scales – detailed and reconnaissance. Soil map scale becomes important from a land use planning perspective because the scale of the information provided will determine the accuracy of the information. When detailed soil survey information is available (1:20,000 to 1:50,000 scale data), this can be used with confidence to identify areas of prime and viable lower class land. When only reconnaissance information is available, land use satellite mapping and current land use information should also be consulted to identify which areas are working landscapes used for annual crop or forage production.

For information on soil as a resource and the importance of soil information for land use planning, see the *Soil Management Guide* at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/soilwater/soilmgmt/fsm01s10.html>

for agriculture in planning areas with grazing livestock and forage sectors, particularly if there is very little prime agricultural land. The areas planning authorities designate for agricultural use and the associated agricultural policies must reflect the value of viable lower class agricultural land to the local economy.

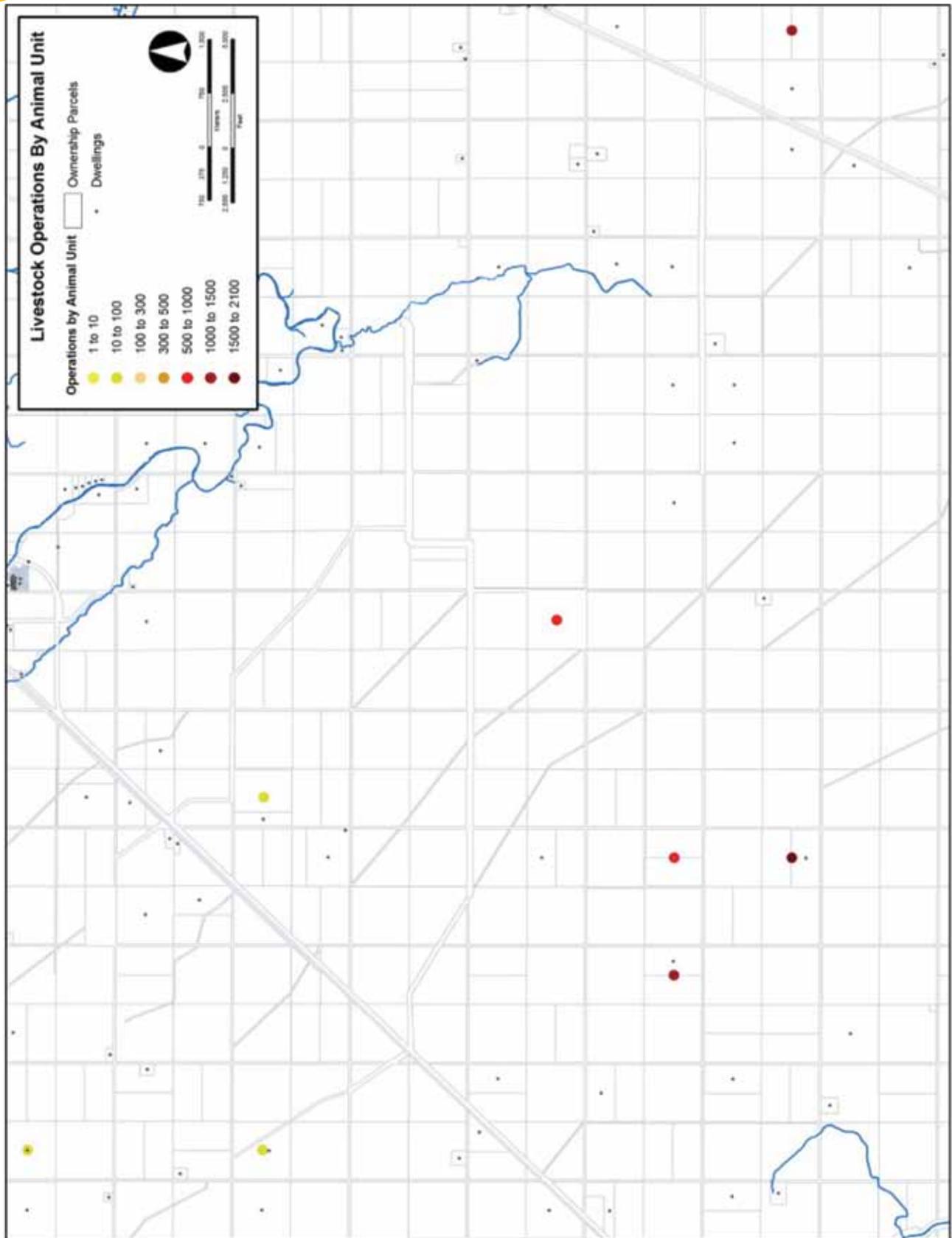
Planning authorities in planning areas characterized predominantly by viable lower class agricultural land may have to rely on an analysis of existing agricultural operations to decide which land to designate for agricultural use. In addition, they would be encouraged to look closely at the agricultural sector that supports the planning area and ensure that the land base required to sustain that sector is protected.

### III. Mapping the Data

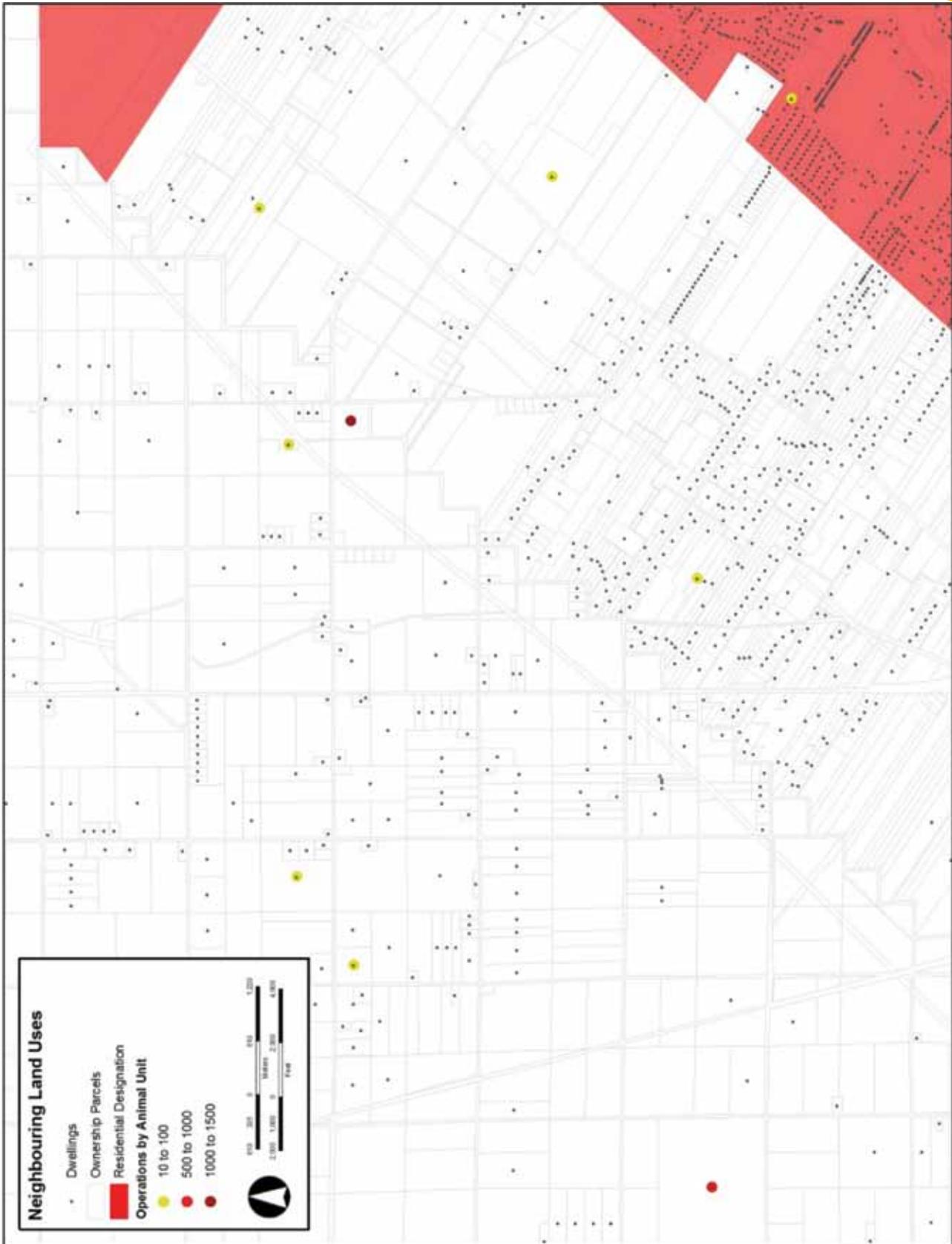
Mapping can be a useful tool to help determine which areas should be designated as agricultural lands. The following are examples of what the maps would look like and how maps can help to inform policy decisions. Data to consider for mapping includes:

- the location and size (in animal units) of existing livestock operations (see layer 1)
- the location of existing dwellings and neighbouring land uses (see layer 2)
- the minimum mutual separation distances between existing livestock operations and existing dwellings and residential designations (see layer 3)
- the soil capability of the area (see layer 4)
- combining layers 1 through 4 (see layer 5)

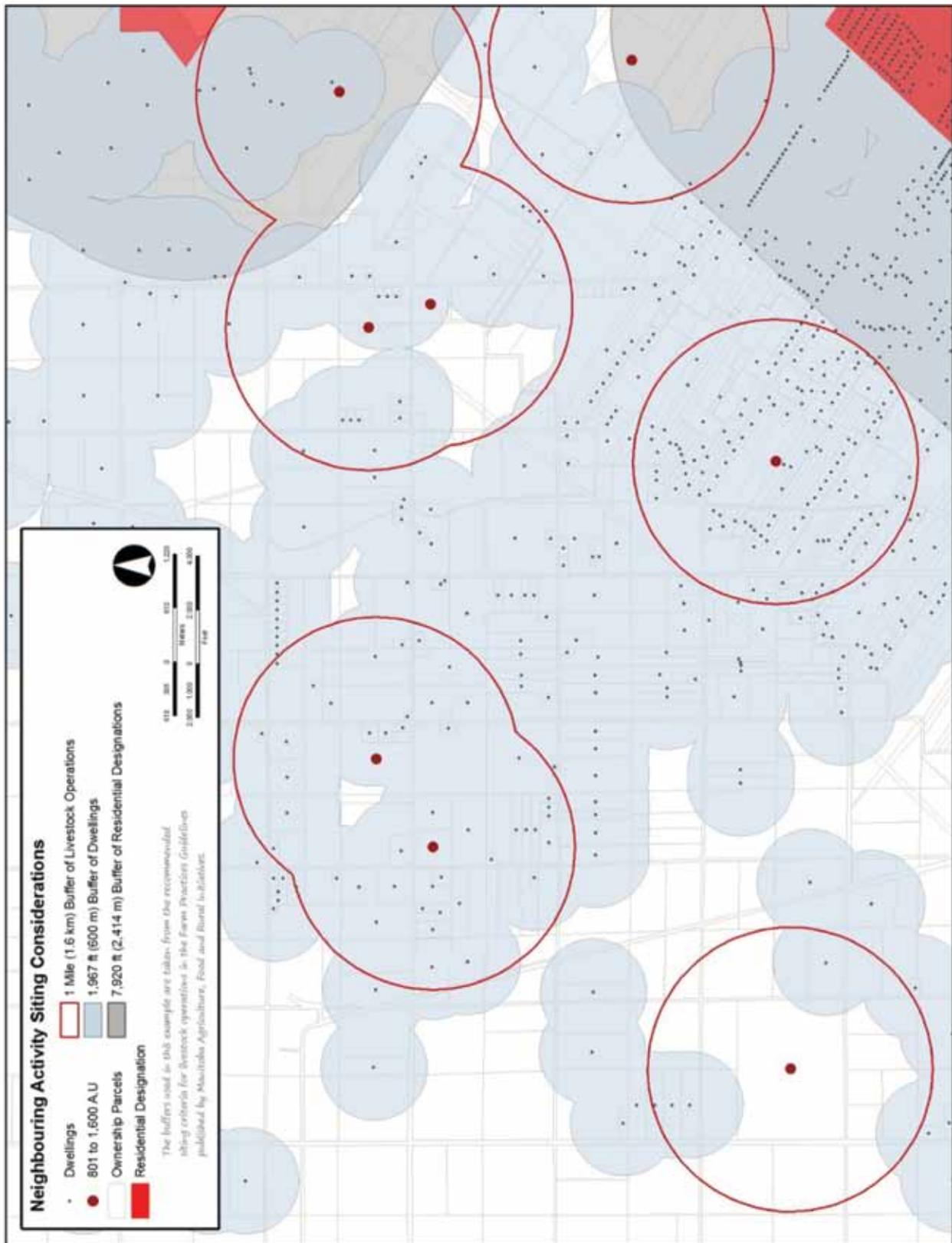
\* Please note that the maps used are not all for the same area.



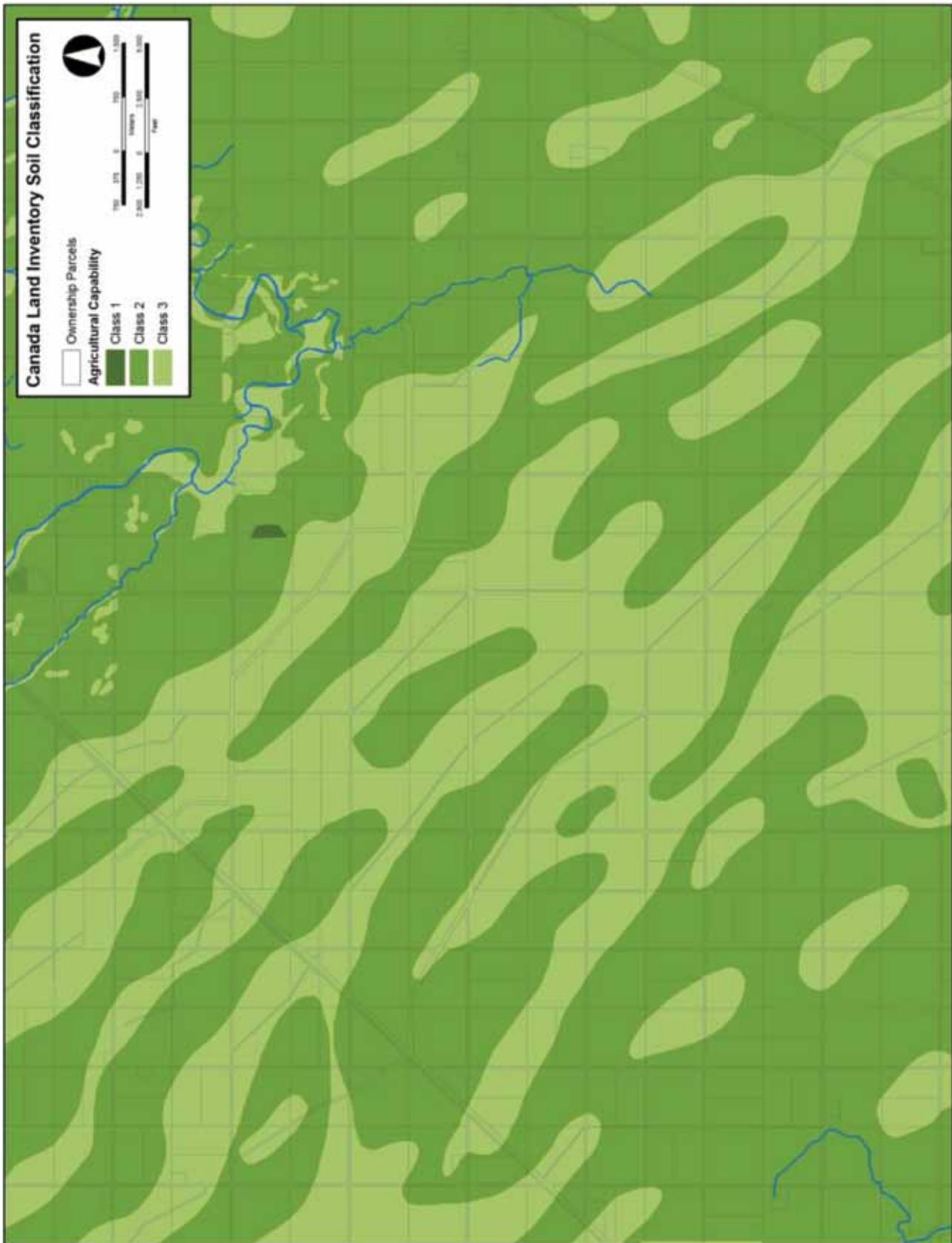
**LAYER 1:** This layer identifies all livestock operations in the area and the number of animal units. The greater the number of animal units, the greater the separation distances required between the livestock operation and nearby dwellings and residential designations.



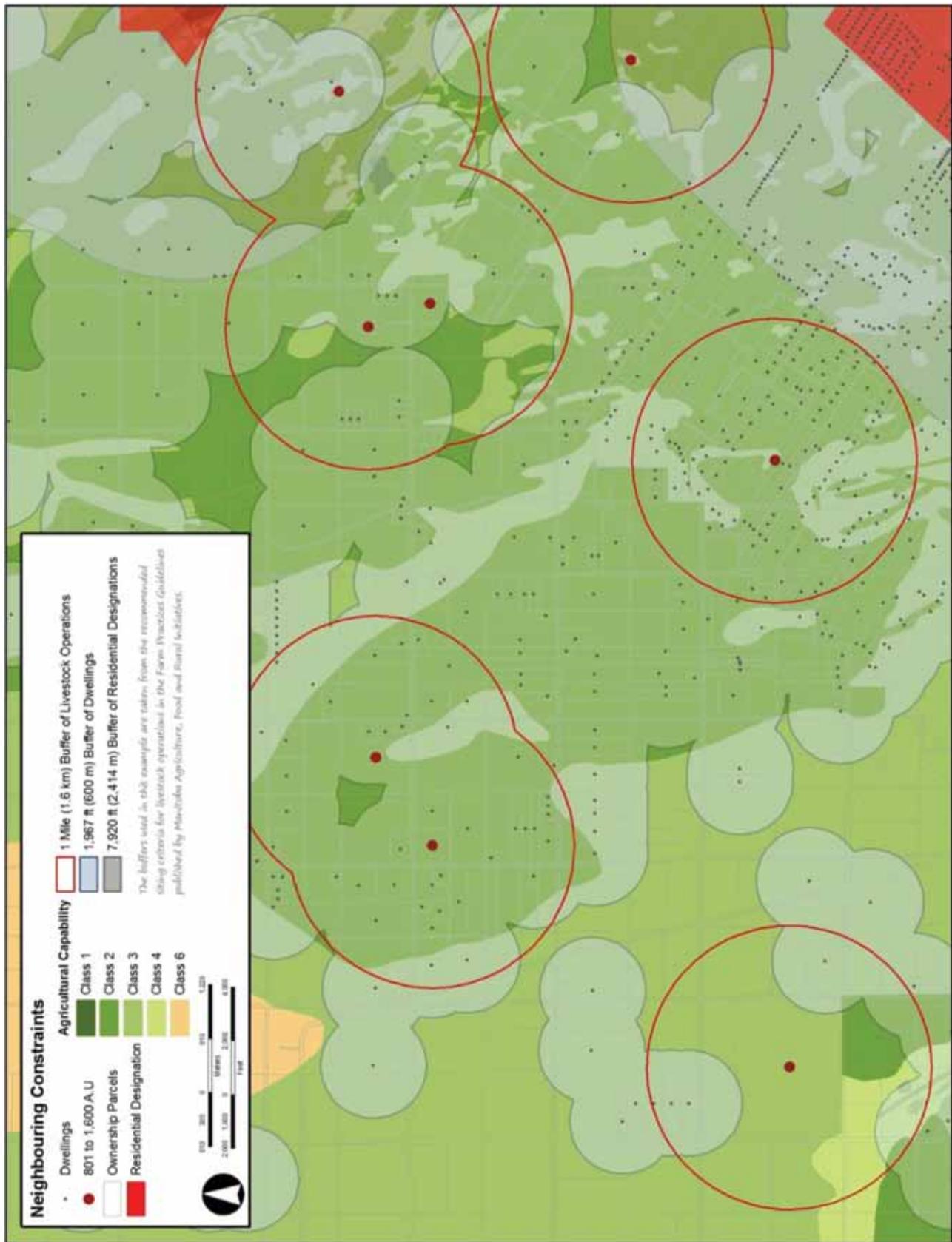
**LAYER 2:** The neighbouring land uses have been added to Layer 1. This example includes individual dwellings and residential designations, but other significant land uses should also be identified if applicable. These may include agro-commercial or agro-industrial areas, significant recreational areas, and natural features.



**LAYER 3:** The minimum mutual separation distances are added to layer 2 and are shown as blue areas around individual dwellings, as red lines around livestock operations and as a grey area around the residential designation. This map illustrates the current standards for mutual separation distances are not met due to scattered development patterns of the past. The new standards aim to separate incompatible uses, generally by clustering non-agricultural uses away from agricultural designations, such as in a residential designation. This protects both agricultural and other land uses.



**LAYER 4:** As shown in figure 1, the soil capability of an area will inform the planning authority of the location of prime agricultural and viable lower-class lands. In this area, soil capability is predominantly class 1, 2 and 3 and therefore considered prime agricultural land.



**LAYER 5:** By combining layers 2, 3 and 4, this layer shows the areas of greatest agricultural importance. New residential development should be directed away from the prime agricultural land and existing livestock operations and towards the existing residential clusters and designations.



## SETTING POLICIES FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture should not be a catchall land designation that allows for any type of non-urban development. An agriculture designation should be given to areas where agricultural land use is the top priority and where that use is to be protected and encouraged, while other forms of development are limited. By designating land as agricultural on a development plan map, a planning authority indicates where agricultural uses and activities will be promoted, protected and directed both now and into the future. Policies related to the future development of agriculture land will be expressed as policies in the development plan bylaw. These policies must support those of the province, as found in the Provincial Planning Regulation and *The Planning Act*.

The Provincial Planning Regulation defines agricultural operations as any agricultural, horticultural or silvicultural activities that are conducted in order to produce agricultural products on a commercial basis including the tillage of land, the operation of farm machinery and equipment, processing, application of fertilizers, manure soil amendments and pesticides and the storage use, or disposal of organic wastes for farm purposes.

## I. Planning for Livestock Operations

Livestock operations should be accommodated in the designated agricultural areas. Rationale for limiting these operations to designated agricultural areas should be provided as described in the ***Land Use Planning for Livestock Development*** fact sheet. Livestock operations may also be accommodated on lots smaller than 80 acres where appropriate, for instance, when the area is fragmented.

The following is an overview of the considerations required from a planning authority when developing policies related to livestock operations. Please consult part 5 of the Provincial Planning Regulation for more information.

### Livestock Operation Policy

*The Planning Act* requires a development plan bylaw to identify where in the planning area the development or expansion of livestock operations:

- may be allowed
- may be allowed to a specified maximum size
- will not be allowed

A good portion of this analysis may have already been done when deciding on which land to designate for agricultural use. Now the planning authority must refine the analysis and focus only on livestock operations. First, the planning authority must decide where within the agricultural designation development or expansion of livestock operations will be allowed. It may also need to determine where livestock operations will be limited in size or not allowed.

If planning authorities choose to limit or restrict livestock operations within an area designated for agricultural use, justification for the restriction must be stated in the development plan. This justification should reflect one or more of the following and the information used must be identified by or acceptable to the province:

- compatibility with existing land uses and provincial natural areas
- proximity to settlement areas, surface water (including lakes, rivers and wetlands) and areas of groundwater vulnerability
- risk of flooding
- soil capability for dryland agriculture (livestock operations should not be located on soils with an agricultural capability of 6, 7 or unimproved organic land according to detailed soil survey information)

A planning authority has some amount of flexibility of establishing policies related to areas where livestock operations may be allowed, not allowed or allowed to a certain size. There may be instances where a planning authority will identify areas in which no new livestock operations will be allowed (for example, in proximity to a settlement area), however the expansion of existing livestock operations may be considered to ensure the economic viability of those existing businesses.

## Text vs. Maps

Areas where livestock operations will be allowed, limited or restricted may eventually be presented in the development plan on a map overlay, or as text descriptions in policy (for example, livestock operations are not permitted within 1,000 metres of land designated as urban centre). The advantage to using text descriptions over displaying areas on a map is that a text description will not require adjustment if the boundary of an urban centre designation is expanded. The advantage to using a map over a text description is that a map clearly indicates where livestock operations will or will not be allowed. A map will likely be the preferred choice when dealing with more complicated livestock operations policies involving different rules throughout the planning area. The decision on which approach to use will be up to the planning authority.

## Conditional Use

A **conditional use** is a discretionary level of local government approval applied to structures, uses and activities in a zoning bylaw (**permitted** and **not permitted** are the other permissions). Developments identified as conditional use in a zoning bylaw require permission from the local council before they can be established. Council has the ability to accept the proposed development, reject it or accept it with conditions. Conditional use designation is not intended to stop a particular use, but to help reduce potential land use conflicts. For new or expanding livestock operations, planning authorities are limited in the types of conditions they can set. *The Planning Act* outlines the types of conditions local councils may consider, depending on operation size.

*The Planning Act* requires that all new or expanding livestock operations involving 300 animal units or more be considered as conditional uses in a zoning bylaw and be subject to a provincial technical review. Before a municipal council considers a conditional use application for a new or expanding large livestock operation (300 or more animal units), the livestock producer is required to complete a site assessment and follow a process outlined in the Technical Review Committee Regulation, under *The Planning Act*. The completed site assessment is reviewed by the municipal council, provincial departments, the public and others (see [www.gov.mb.ca/ia/programs/livestock/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/ia/programs/livestock/index.html)).

A planning authority should include a policy in the development plan that reflects this requirement. This will provide clarity for those using the document who may not be familiar with *The Planning Act*. The planning authority may specify operations with fewer than 300 animal units as either permitted or conditional uses in a zoning bylaw. However, proposals below 300 animal units are not subject to a provincial technical review as prescribed in the Technical Review Committee Regulation.





### **Siting and Setback Requirements**

Siting and setback standards for livestock operations must be established in accordance with the requirements of the livestock operations policies in part 5 of the Provincial Planning Regulation.

The Provincial Planning Regulation also requires that development plans establish mutual separation distances between livestock operations and any new or proposed:

- designated settlement areas
- designated parks or recreation areas
- residential dwellings not associated with the livestock operation

These mutual separation distances are to ensure adequate buffers between livestock operations and non-agricultural developments and must be clearly stated in a development plan bylaw. A development plan may contain mutual separation distances greater than the required minimums. For instance, a planning authority could decide to adopt distances 15 per cent greater than those established by regulation.

However, it is not possible to include mutual separation distances less than the regulated minimum.

Once they are established in the zoning bylaw, mutual separation distances will be maintained between existing, expanding or proposed livestock operations. However, applications to vary such distances may be considered by council to accommodate individual circumstances. Remember, there is no mechanism to vary requirements stated in a development plan bylaw. For this reason, it is important to keep the wording in the development plan flexible enough to allow the distances to be varied in the zoning bylaw. The wording in the development plan could be:

*The zoning bylaw shall adopt minimum mutual separation distances equivalent to livestock operations regulations. These distances may be varied as per The Planning Act.*



It will not be feasible to present these mutual separation distances on a map. New developments and other changing conditions will make this tedious, if not impossible, to maintain. A better approach is to include the minimum separation distances in a table in the zoning bylaw.

For clarity, a planning authority may wish to include a statement explaining that minimum mutual separation distances are measured to the boundary of the non-agricultural designation, not the development within it. This will provide clarification for both agricultural producers and non-agricultural residents alike.

## **II. Minimizing Fragmentation of the Agricultural Land Base**

Fragmentation of the land base can make it difficult for farmers to farm by increasing the potential for conflict between farm and non-farm uses and inflating the price and assessed value of farmland. Barring physical constraints, a residence can be established on any lot of record. The more parcels created in the agricultural area, the greater the potential for non-agricultural types of development on agricultural land. This not only removes land from agricultural use, it also increases the potential for land use conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses (see policy 3.1.8 of the Provincial Planning Regulation). While a planning authority cannot ensure that large parcels of land are actively farmed, maintaining land in large parcels should help reduce the likelihood of land being converted to non-agricultural land uses. Keeping agricultural land in large parcels and minimizing fragmentation through subdivisions is an effective way to protect the agricultural uses and activities from encroachment of other non-compatible uses.

The Provincial Planning Regulation directs that land designated for large-scale agricultural uses (such as annual crop production and livestock operations) be maintained at a parcel size of at least 80 acres (see policy 3.1.4 of the Provincial Planning Regulation). The province encourages local authorities to support the farming community by adopting policies that reduce fragmentation of agricultural land and protect the continuing viability of agricultural operations.

The Provincial Planning Regulation does enable subdivision policies that allow the creation of one lot per 80-acre title under certain conditions, as discussed in the following sections. Uses complying with the exceptions below should generally be limited to one subdivision per 80-acre title (see policy 3.1.5 of the Provincial Planning Regulation).

## Specialized Operations

**Specialized commercial agricultural operations** may need smaller parcels of land to support their businesses. These types of operations typically produce high value, lower volume, intensively managed agricultural products and do not require the large parcel sizes typically associated with annual crop production and livestock operations. Specialized agricultural operations include greenhouse production, honey production and processing and horticultural products such as fruit and vegetables. Generally, these operations sell products directly to the consumer by means of roadside stands or farm stores, u-pick operations, farmers' markets and direct sales to restaurants or retail outlets. Planning authorities can request business plans or other information that supports the feasibility and validity of the proposed businesses, and the province can provide some expertise in the form of business development specialists to assist with these.

**Note: the Provincial Planning Regulation states that only one residential and/or specialized agricultural lot may be considered for subdivision per 80-acre title.**



## Agro-Commercial and Agro-Industrial Uses

**Agro-commercial and agro-industrial** single lot uses include commercial and industrial developments that provide services, machinery, equipment or goods specifically required by farm operations, or store or process products grown or raised by an agricultural operation. These types of developments may need to be located in the designated agricultural area to serve the farming public. The need to locate the proposed development in an agricultural area must be demonstrated. If more than a single lot is required, then these developments should be directed toward designated commercial and industrial areas where they can be more efficiently serviced.

All agro-commercial and agro-industrial subdivisions must not be wasteful of agricultural land and, if possible, should be directed away from prime agricultural land. Where applicable, the subdivided lot should not extend beyond an existing shelterbelt or other physical attribute that confines the site.

## Farm-Related Residential Subdivision

### Farm-related residential splits

**(subdivisions)** occur where a farmstead site is no longer required as part of an agricultural operation due to amalgamation of the farm or retirement of the farmer. A residential lot may be subdivided for an individual having significant ongoing participation in an agricultural operation and deriving a significant income from it.

### Isolated Parcels

**A physically isolated parcel of land** may be subdivided from a larger holding if it is divided from all other land by a transportation route or watercourse and is of a size, shape and nature that makes farming physically impractical.

**Non-farm related residential splits** are generally not permitted, but may be considered if the planning area has experienced overall population decline for the previous 15-year period.

All residential subdivision lots must not be wasteful of agricultural land and should be directed away from prime agricultural land and viable lower-class land. Where applicable, the subdivision should not extend beyond the shelterbelt of the farmstead site. In addition, mutual separation distances to livestock operations must be observed.

**Non-resource related development** in agricultural areas should be limited to those discussed in this section of this document, and all development should be directed to where it will have the least impact on surrounding agricultural activities. Non-resource-related rural development can be accommodated in other rural or urban designations, whereas agriculture and other resource-related developments must occur on or near the resources they require.

## II. Providing for Agricultural Development

Because some normal farming practices may conflict with non-farm development, non-farm development should not be established in close proximity to farms. Please see the fact sheet *Living, Playing and Working in Farming Communities* for more details. Agricultural operations are businesses, and as such, deserve the same kinds of buffer from conflict as other forms of development, such as recreational and industrial. Separation distances for livestock operations should be mutually applied to residential and recreational developments. Resource-related development such as mining or energy production needs to be located where the resource is available, but policies should minimize impacts on agricultural operations when these developments occur in an agricultural area. For example, aggregate extraction operations are expected to rehabilitate the soil to the agricultural capability of the surrounding area after the resource has been removed.

Policies for the designated agricultural area should provide a stable environment for producers by protecting agricultural operations from encroachment by other land uses. Although *The Farm Practices Protection Act* provides a mechanism for reviewing and mediating complaints and nuisance disputes around normal farming activities, it does not protect the ability of a producer to manage, diversify or expand a farm – even if it has long been in existence. Manitoba relies on local development plan policies to do this, and stresses the importance of involving producers in the local planning process to protect their current and future viability. Protection of a producer's ability to farm sustainably is best achieved through strong land use policies.



For areas designated for agricultural use, planning authorities should incorporate policies in their development plan that:

- enable the development of the agricultural sector by recognizing agriculture as a priority use in agricultural areas
- allow producers the opportunity to diversify and expand in the areas of direct marketing, agri-tourism and other specialized agri-businesses
- allow producers the opportunity to establish home-based businesses as an accessory use to their agricultural operations
- encourage consolidation of existing smaller holdings of agricultural land with larger agricultural holdings in the case of subdivisions, to reduce the number of titles created
- support the development of renewable energy projects (ex: wind farms) where they are accessory to the primary agricultural use and do not create conflicts with agriculture

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For a summary of the most recent agriculture census data and information on the state of agriculture in Manitoba (including the contribution and role of agriculture in a particular municipality or region), visit [www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/statistics/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/statistics/index.html)

For geo-spatial information for land use satellite and soil survey mapping, visit the Manitoba Land Initiative website: <https://mli2.gov.mb.ca/index.html>

To view maps and basic information on soils and terrain for each municipality, see the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada soil and terrain information bulletins  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/publications/surveys/mb/index.html#SoilTerrain>

For instructions on how to use soil survey information, see the *Soil Management Guide*  
[www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/soilwater/soilmgmt/fsm01s02.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/soilwater/soilmgmt/fsm01s02.html)

For information on soil as a resource and the importance of soil information for land use planning, see Soils Information for Planning Purposes  
[www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/soilwater/soilmgmt/fsm01s10.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/soilwater/soilmgmt/fsm01s10.html)

For information on *The Farm Practices Protection Act*, visit  
[www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs/pdf/aaa25s03.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs/pdf/aaa25s03.pdf)



# APPENDIX A: AGRICULTURE CAPABILITY RATINGS FOR ANNUAL DRYLAND CROP PRODUCTION

| LIMITATIONS                              | CLASS 1  | CLASS 2   | CLASS 3  | CLASS 4   | CLASS 5  | CLASS 6  | CLASS 7  | POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVEMENTS  |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Depth to Consolidated Bedrock (R)</b> | Capable of sustained production of annual field crops – no significant limitations<br>> 39 in. (100 cm)    | Capable of sustained production of annual field crops – limitations not severe<br>> 39 in. (100 cm) | Capable of sustained production of annual field crops – choice of crops, management practices<br>> 39 in. (100 cm) | Marginal for sustained production of annual field crops – suitable for some annual crops and forage production<br>20 – 39 in. (50 - 100 cm) | Capable of producing perennial forages – improvements are feasible<br>8 – 20 in. (20 – 50 cm)  | Capable of producing native forages and pasture but improvement is not feasible<br>< 8 in. (20 cm)       | Unsuitable for dryland agriculture<br>Bedrock at surface   | No   |
| <b>Drought (M)<sup>1</sup></b>           | All soil textures except those identified – generally good moisture holding capacity<br>Range from 0 to 2% | Loams – moderate moisture holding capacity<br>Range from >2% to 5%                                  | Loamy sands – low moisture holding capacity, prone to drought<br>Range from >5% to 10%                             | Sands – very low moisture holding capacity, very prone to drought<br>Range from >10% to 15%   | Gravelly sands – very severe moisture deficiency, extremely prone to drought<br>Range from >15% to 30%                               | Stabilized sand dunes – almost continuously droughty<br>>30% to 45% Eroded slopes                        | Active sand dunes – continuously droughty<br>(>45% to 100%)  | Unable to change soil texture, which determines moisture holding capacity and leaching risk.<br>No |
| <b>Sloping Land (T)</b>                  | NONE<br>None during growing season   | WEAK<br>Slight impact on crops<br>Occasional (1 in 10 years)  | MODERATE<br>Crop growth and yield affected<br>Frequent (1 in 5 years) – some crop damage                           | STRONG<br>Crop selection is limited<br>Frequent – severe crop damage  | VERY STRONG<br>Few crops can be grown and growth are severely limited.<br>Very frequent (1 in 3 years) – grazing > 10 weeks possible | VERY STRONG<br>Eroded slopes<br>Very frequent – grazing 5-10 weeks possible                              | Salt Flats. Crop growth is not possible.<br>Land is flooded for most of the season                       | Only for Classes 2N to 4N and human-induced salinity<br>Only diking                                |
| <b>Excess Water (W)</b>                  | Well and imperfectly drained   | Moderately stony  | Very stony   | Exceedingly stony   | Poorly drained soils with no improvements  | Very poorly drained soils  | Open water, marsh  | Improved drainage possible for classes 2W to 5W  |
| <b>Stones (P)</b>                        | Non-stony and slightly stony   | Moderately stony  | Very stony   | Exceedingly stony   | Exceedingly stony  | Excessively stony  | Cobbled beach  | Yes  |
| <b>Erosion by wind or by water (E)</b>   | No apparent erosion  | Moderate erosion (>75% of topsoil is eroded)  | Severe wind or water erosion, where most of the topsoil and subsoil are eroded, lowers the basic rating.           | Severe wind or water erosion, where most of the topsoil and subsoil are eroded, lowers the basic rating.                                    | Severe wind or water erosion, where most of the topsoil and subsoil are eroded, lowers the basic rating.                             | Severe wind or water erosion, where most of the topsoil and subsoil are eroded, lowers the basic rating. | Severe wind or water erosion, where most of the topsoil and subsoil are eroded, lowers the basic rating. | Yes  |

<sup>1</sup>If suitable for irrigation, soils that are class 4 and 5 for dryland agricultural production may still be considered prime agricultural land for planning purposes.