

Growing Knowledge



Ministry of
Agriculture
and Lands

Land Use Inventory Report

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Salt Spring Island



Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Strengthening Farming Program
Sustainable Agriculture Management Branch

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Contact Information

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
AAC	Agricultural Advisory Committee
AAP	Agricultural Area Plan
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LUI	Land Use Inventory
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Definitions

Agri-commercial – A commercial use of the property directly related to agriculture but not to the growing, processing or distribution of agricultural products.

Agro-industrial – An industrial use of the property where agriculture products are processed on the site. An example of agro-industrial is the processing of milk into a variety of dairy products.

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) – A provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled.

Agriculture – Lifestyle / amenity – See Lifestyle Farming.

Agriculture – Unused – See Unused Farmland.

Ancillary Activity – An agricultural activity is considered an ancillary use if it is not the primary agricultural activity or the parcel's primary activity is not Agriculture.

BC Assessment – The Crown Corporation which produces annual, uniform property assessments for local and provincial taxation. The database purchased from BC Assessment contains information about property ownership, land use, and farm classification, which is useful for land use surveys.

Cadastre – The GIS layer containing parcel boundaries, i.e. legal lot lines.

Farmed Land – Applies to parcels producing the minimum amount to be classified “farm” by BC Assessment. Local governments apply a tax rate to farms which is usually lower than for other land cases. To receive and maintain the farm classification, the land must generate annual income from primary agricultural production.

Lifestyle Farming – Applies to parcels not producing enough for BC Assessment farm classification, but having some farming activity. Examples of lifestyle farming include homes with one or two horses, or a very small amount of crops which are not likely a significant source of income for the residents.

Marginal Land – These land use areas have very limited potential for farming, as they are on steep slopes or have large areas of wetlands that are periodically flooded.

Not Available For Farming – Applies to farmable land within the ALR that cannot be used for agricultural purposes because of a conflicting land use. As well, some parcels were considered “Not Available for farming” due to topographical restraints, such as steep terrain or land under water. It has been applied to those parcels with a primary land use of: Commercial/Service, Golf Course, Industrial, Institutional, Marginal Land, Military Area, Mineral Extraction, Mobile Home Park, Park, Recreational, Residential, Transportation and Communications, or Utility. Residential parcels were considered not available if the parcel size was less than 4,000 square metres (approximately 1 acre), or if pavement and landscaping made future agricultural development impossible.

Not Farmed – Applies to parcels in the ALR which are available for farming, but are not producing the minimum amount to be classified farm by BC Assessment. This category includes parcels of bare land that could be converted to farmland, parcels greater than 4,000 square metres with only residential use, parcels greater than 4,000 square metres with limited industrial use, or lifestyle farms.

Orthophoto – Aerial photograph which has been adjusted to remove photographic distortion.

Primary General Land Use – This category is the dominant land use taking place on the parcel. It is a general term, such as “Agriculture”, “Lifestyle Farm”, “Residential Use”, or “Commercial/Service Use”.

Primary General Agricultural Activity – If “Agriculture” is listed as a primary, secondary, tertiary or quaternary land use, the primary agricultural activity is the one which is likely the greatest source of income (e.g. “Beef Cattle Farm”, or “Greenhouse Operation”).

Undeveloped – Natural Area – Property is in a natural state, but could be developed (unlike Marginal Land). These areas tend to be wooded.

Unused Farmland – Applies to area where there are abandoned crops.

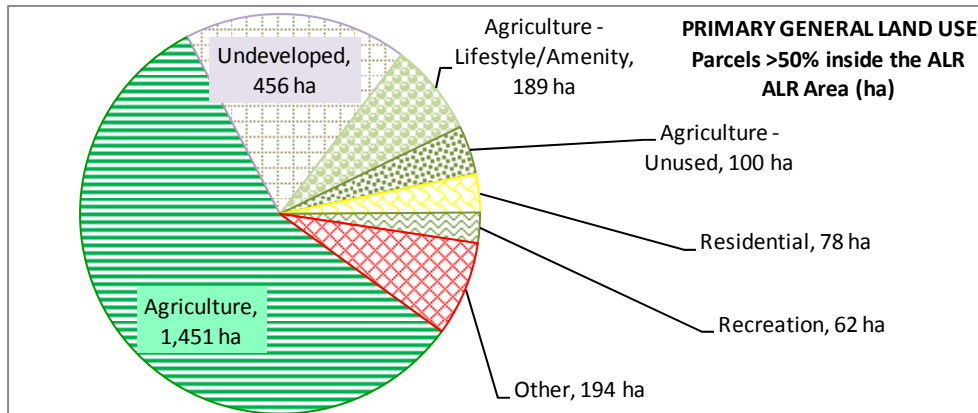
Unknown – These are unsurveyed areas or areas where general activities are not identifiable from airphotos or because the surveyor’s view was blocked by vegetation or other obstructions.

Executive Summary

On Salt Spring Island, there are 2,920 hectares in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), which is approximately 15% of the land area.

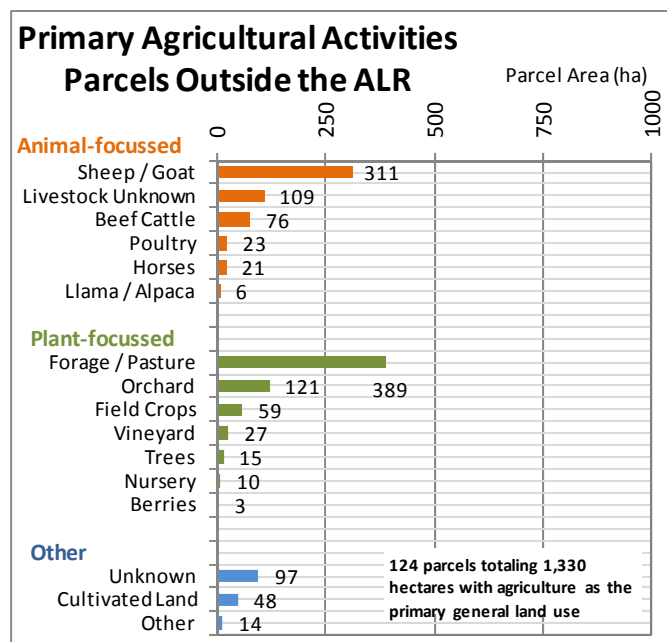
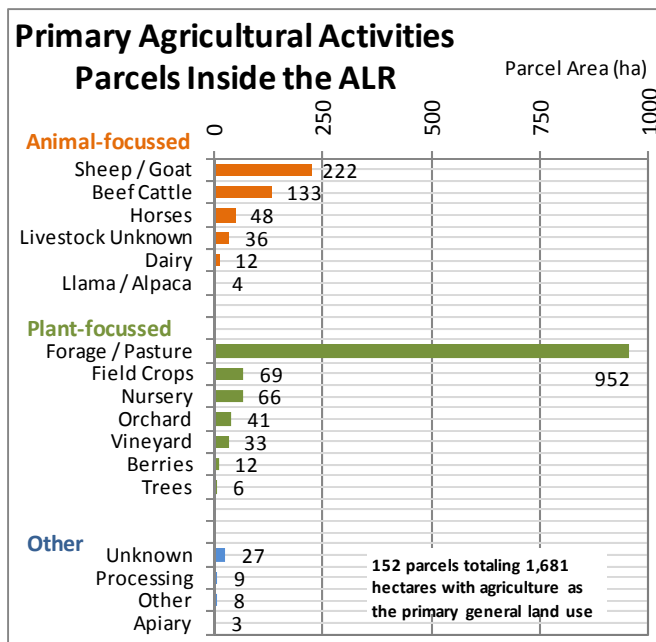
There are a total of 3,011 hectares currently being farmed with 56% occurring within the ALR and 44% occurring outside the ALR.

About 54% of the ALR is currently being farmed: 1,451 hectares on parcels with > 50% of their area in the ALR and 124 hectares on parcels with ≤ 50% of their area in the ALR. There are an additional 884 hectares of ALR land which are available for agriculture but currently not farmed.



On parcels with >50% of their area inside the ALR, the primary general land uses are dominated by agriculture in various states.

The mix of primary agricultural activities is similar both inside and outside the ALR, with Forage / Pasture and Sheep / Goat dominating.



The parcels in the ALR are mostly small: 41% are under 2 ha and another 17% are between 2 and 4 hectares. When looking at various parcel size groupings, the smaller parcels are less likely to be farmed.

Two provincial parks each have about 15% of their area in the ALR. Burgoyne Bay Provincial park has an area of 503 ha with 75 ha in the ALR, of which about 63 ha is in crops. Ruckle Provincial Park's area is 534 ha with 80 ha of ALR land and about 61 ha under crops.

General Community Information

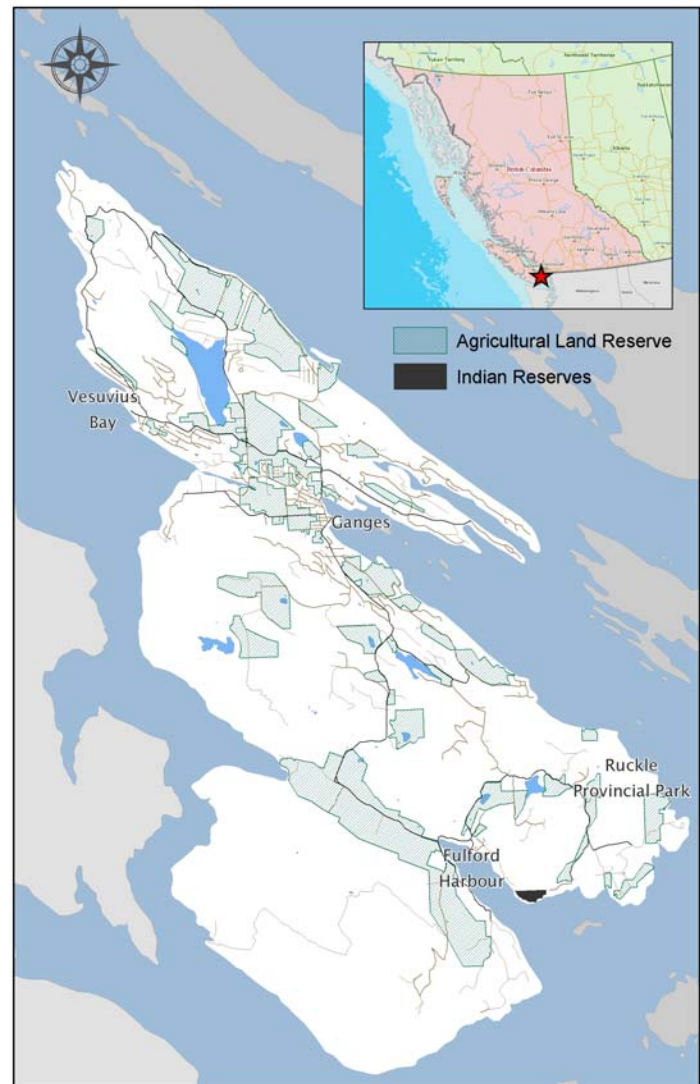
Salt Spring Island, the largest of the Gulf Islands, is located in the Strait of Georgia off the east coast of Vancouver Island. The Island is approximately 27 kilometres long with an average width of 9 kilometres, covering a total area of approximately 20,000 hectares (Figure 1).

Access to the island can be made by ferry from Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia through three ferry terminals at Fulford Harbour, Vesuvius Bay and Long Harbour.

With a 2006 population of 10,500, Salt Spring Island is the most populated island within the Islands Trust area. Population density is highest on the northern third of the Island, especially around the village of Ganges.

The Island has a long history of agricultural settlement. The Ruckle farm, one of the oldest farms in British Columbia, was established on the southeast part of the Island in 1872 and is still being farmed by the Ruckle family on the original farm site that is now Ruckle Provincial Park. The main concentration of developed farmland on Salt Spring Island is situated within the Fulford and Burgoyne Bay Valleys.

Figure 1. Map of Salt Spring Island



AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial land use zone designated in 1973 to preserve land for farming. The ALR was established through cooperative efforts with local governments with input through public hearing processes. The Agricultural Land Reserve covers 2,920 hectares of Salt Spring, nearly 15% of the land area of the island¹ (Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of Salt Spring's land and ALR area	
Area of Land on Salt Spring Island	19,797 ha
Area of Land Parcels only (omits roads and highways)	18,774 ha
Area in ALR	2,920 ha
Area of Land Parcels in ALR (omits roads and highways)	2,844 ha

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 1974, in recognition of the special nature of the islands in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound, the provincial government enacted the *Islands Trust Act*. The purpose of the Act is to preserve and protect the Gulf Islands area, including its unique amenities and environment, for the benefit of both the residents of the Islands Trust Area and the province.

The Islands Trust area is comprised of 12 Local Trust Committees and one island municipality (Bowen). Each Local Trust Committee has jurisdiction over a major island, plus smaller islands and surrounding waters.

Salt Spring Island is administered by the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee and is advised on agricultural issues by its appointed Agricultural Advisory Committee.

CLIMATE AND SOILS

The rain-shadow effect of the Olympic Peninsula and Vancouver Island mountains creates a Mediterranean-like climate with mild, dry summers and cool, humid winters.

Annual precipitation (Table 2) is lower than other parts of coastal British Columbia. The island has a long frost free period (224 days), which supports a large diversity of crops.

The Island's agricultural soils are primarily fine textured marine sediments, glacial tills, and more recent alluvial deposits.

Table 2. Salt Spring Island climate variables ²	
Annual precipitation	936 mm
May-September precipitation	150 mm
Evapotranspiration – annual	422 mm
Evapotranspiration – summer	369 mm
Frost free period	224 days
Effective growing degree days (> 5°C)	1,064 days

¹ Agricultural Land Commission, ALR mapping, Land and Resource Data Warehouse, September, 2006.

² Coligado, M.C. 1979. Climate of the southern Gulf Islands.

AGRICULTURAL WATER USE, SUPPLY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Summer droughts create crop water deficits between 230 to 380 millimetres. Many of Salt Spring Island's creeks and lakes are licensed for irrigation use but irrigation is not common.

The Island's groundwater recharge potential is limited to annual precipitation and consists of a fresh water lens surrounded by denser sea water. Increasing demands and impacts of climate change has raised community concerns about future supply and access to water³. Climate change is forecast to increase the frequency of summer droughts and increase winter precipitation. More droughts will challenge agricultural producers to use appropriate water management technologies to maintain or increase agricultural production levels.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Farm production on the Island includes sheep and lamb, poultry, llamas, cheese, tree fruits (e.g. apples), vegetables, wine and lavender. Organic food production is a strong component of farms on Salt Spring Island with 46% of farms producing some organic products and 7% producing certified organic products (Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006).

Much of Salt Spring Island farm produce is marketed locally to islanders and tourists through direct farm markets (farm stands, stores, etc.), two community markets, and through local commercial food stores.

³ Source: Appendix 4 – Groundwater, March 2007. Greenwood, H.J. & R.J. Gilleland. *Portable Water – Official Community Plan Focus Group – Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan Review*.

Agricultural Land Use Inventory

This report summarises the results of an agricultural land use inventory completed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL) in September 2006 to capture the extent of agricultural development on Salt Spring Island.

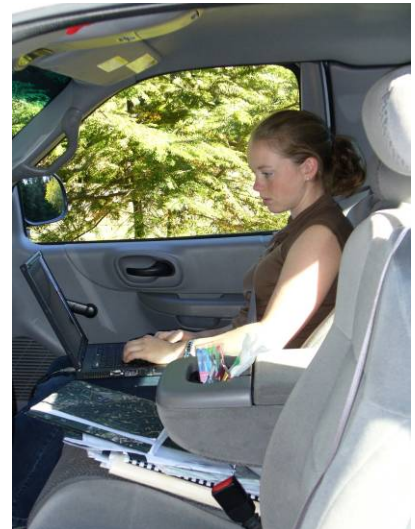
The information and data collected through this inventory can be used to support agriculture area planning and to provide information to the Strengthening Farming Program of the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL).

METHODOLOGY

The survey area included all properties within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)⁴ and those properties occurring outside the ALR where active agriculture occurs. The inventory was undertaken by the BCMAL Regional Agrologist and the Area Farm Plan's support technician.

Zoning, cadastre (lot lines) mapping (2006) and digital orthophotography (2005) was provided by the Islands Trust and Capital Regional District, respectively. BC Assessment Authority data (2006) was used to identify properties with farm tax status. The Island Natural Growers Crop Survey (2005) and Island Trust's Ecological Inventory mapping were used as background information to inform the inventory work. Aerial photographs provided confirmation of uses and basic estimated information where the activities on a parcel were not visible from the road. Percentage of a parcel, a cover, or land use were calculated from the air photos.

The survey maps and database were created by BCMAL for the survey crew to enter data about each property. The survey crew drove to each property where the agrologist observed the agricultural activity. Aerial photographs were used to check site characteristics. The technician entered the appropriate codes into the database on a laptop computer. For further details on survey methods, please refer to *AgFocus, a Guide to Agricultural Land Use Inventory*⁵.



Once acquired through the survey, the land use data was brought into a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate analysis and produce maps. Digital data, in the form of a database and GIS shapefiles (for maps), is available from BCMAL upon request through a data sharing agreement.

⁴ Properties along the ALR edge were considered to be in the ALR if 50% or more of their area was within the ALR. See the following section titled "Parcel Inclusion in the ALR".

⁵ <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800series/830110-3.pdf>

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA

For each property in the study area, data was collected on the general land use, agricultural activities (where present), land covers (including buildings), agricultural practices (including irrigation), and livestock.

1. *General land use:* Up to four general levels of use (e.g. agriculture, industrial, commercial, residential) were recorded for each property, based on an assessment of their overall economic importance, the property's tax status, and/or the extent of the land use. These are referred to as the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary land uses.

Agriculture was recorded as the primary land use if the parcel area was predominantly in agricultural use or if there was high agricultural activity intensity.

Lifestyle farm activity (Hobby – Amenity Use) was recorded as a primary land use when it was considered to be very small scale and the land parcel did not currently have farm status based on the 2006 BC Assessment. Residential use is implied on these parcels and therefore was not recorded separately as a land use activity.

2. *Agricultural land use:* Up to four types of agricultural activities were recorded on parcels where agriculture was recorded as a general land use. The primary agricultural activity represents the most intensive agricultural activity covering the greatest extent of land. BC Assessment data was used to support this assessment.
3. *Land covers:* Land covers, including crops, buildings, forested areas, streams, etc. were recorded for each parcel surveyed. The percentage of the lot area occupied by each land cover, and the number of buildings were also recorded. Where a property was not visible from the roadway, orthophotos were used to identify land covers. Orthophotos were also used to confirm areas of observed covers.
4. *Agricultural practices:* Land use surveyors recorded agricultural practices associated with each crop cover. For example, if a forage crop was being harvested for hay, it was recorded. Irrigation was also recorded, including the type of system used.
5. *Livestock:* The types and scale of all livestock were recorded. A record was also made of properties where livestock were not seen at the time of survey, but inferred based on grazed pastures, manure storage and other evidence.

PARCEL INCLUSION IN THE ALR

Since much of data presented in this report is parcel based, it is important to note that the ALR boundaries are not always coincident with parcel boundaries. As a result, many parcels have only a portion of their area in the ALR. In an effort to achieve an accurate picture of the ALR land on Salt Spring Island, this report distinguishes between two parcel categories:

- parcels with at least 50% or more of their area within the ALR;
- parcels with less than 50% of their area within the ALR.

For the purposes of this report, parcels with at least 50% or more of their area within the ALR are considered to be within the ALR.

Figure 2. Parcel inclusion in the ALR

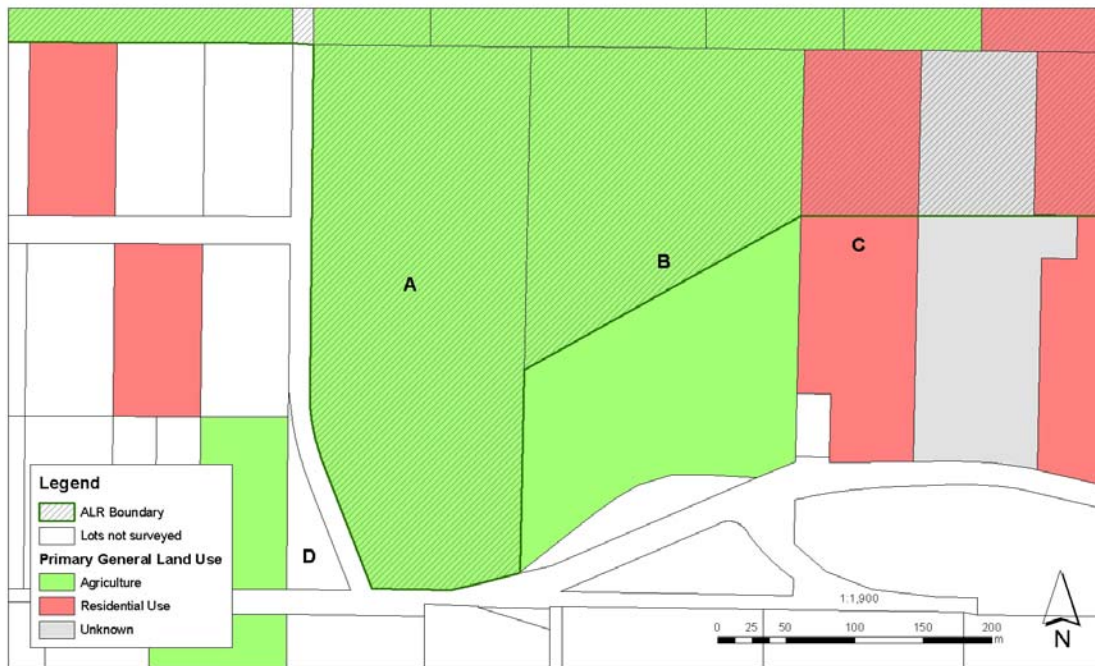


Figure 2 illustrates the distinction between parcel categories in relation to the ALR:

Considered to be within the ALR:

- lot A is completely in the ALR
- lot B has 50% or more of its area in the ALR.

Considered to be outside the ALR:

- lot C has less than 50% of its area in the ALR
- lot D is completely outside the ALR.

PORTION OF PARCEL IN THE ALR

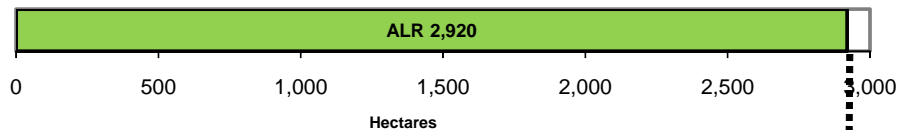
As shown in Figure 2 above, many parcels have only a portion of their area in the ALR. This report summarizes the *portion* of the parcel within the ALR and the *portion* of the parcel outside the ALR separately.

Figure 3 shows that although Salt Spring Island's ALR land totals 2,920 hectares, only 2,469 hectares are within parcels considered to be within the ALR. The remaining 451 hectares of ALR lands are distributed among parcels considered to be outside the ALR or in rights-of-way.

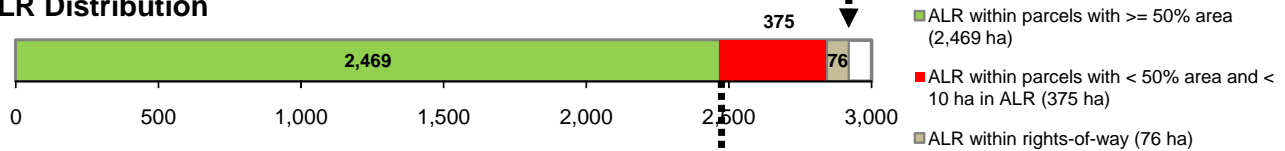
Figure 3 also shows that the total area of parcels considered to be within the ALR is 2,788 hectares, a combination of 2,469 hectares of ALR land and 319 hectares of Non ALR land on 463 parcels.

Figure 3. Parcels considered being within the ALR

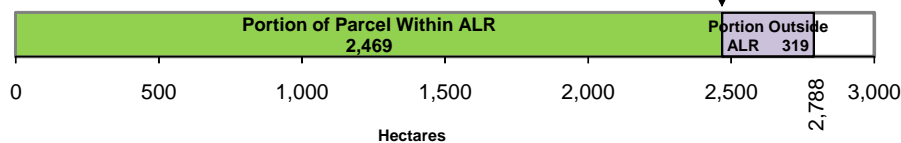
Salt Spring Island ALR



ALR Distribution



Area of Parcels considered to be within ALR



There are 2,788 ha in parcels considered to be within the ALR

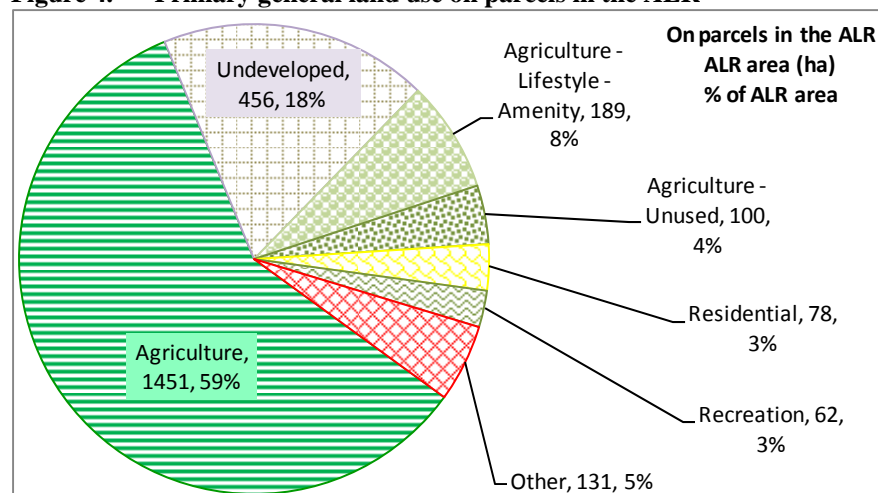
Results

This section summarises the general land uses and agricultural activities occurring within and outside Salt Spring Island's ALR and the availability of ALR land for farming.

GENERAL LAND USE

Figure 4 and Table 3 summarise the primary general land uses within the ALR. Primary general land uses are determined by economic importance and/or extent of land utilized. Figure 5 maps primary general land use on surveyed parcels.

Figure 4. Primary general land use on parcels in the ALR^{6 7}



Active agriculture is the primary general land use on 33% of ALR parcels, covering 59% of the ALR area.

Lifestyle farming is the primary land use on 11% of ALR parcels covering 8% of the ALR area.

Together this farming accounts for 44% of ALR parcels and 67% of the ALR area.

Table 3. Primary general land use on parcels in the ALR^{6 7}

Parcels with greater than half their area in ALR						
Primary land use	Number of parcels	Percent of ALR parcels	Area of parcels (ha)	Area of ALR (ha)	Percent of ALR	Mean parcel size (ha)
Agriculture	152	33%	1,681	1,451	59%	11
Undeveloped	113	24%	488	456	18%	4
Agriculture - Lifestyle/Amenity	55	12%	195	189	8%	4
Agriculture - Unused	20	4%	128	100	4%	6
Residential	69	15%	82	78	3%	1
Recreation	8	2%	74	62	3%	9
Agriculture - Unknown	5	1%	29	28	1%	6
Park	2	< 1%	32	25	1%	16
Industrial	2	< 1%	21	21	< 1%	10
Agriculture - Changing Use	3	< 1%	18	16	< 1%	6
Institutional	10	2%	13	13	< 1%	1
Unsurveyed	15	3%	12	12	< 1%	1
Commercial	5	1%	10	10	< 1%	2
Tourism	2	< 1%	4	4	< 1%	2
Transportation/Utility	2	< 1%	2	2	< 1%	1
Total	463	100	2,788	2,469	100	

⁶ There are an additional 124 hectares of ALR land with the primary use being agriculture on parcels considered to be outside the ALR.

⁷ Agriculture – Lifestyle /Amenity was recorded as a primary land use when very small scale agriculture was present and the land parcel did not currently have farm status based on the 2006 BC Assessment. Residential use is implied on these parcels and therefore was not recorded separately as a land use .

Figure 5. Primary general land use on parcels in the ALR

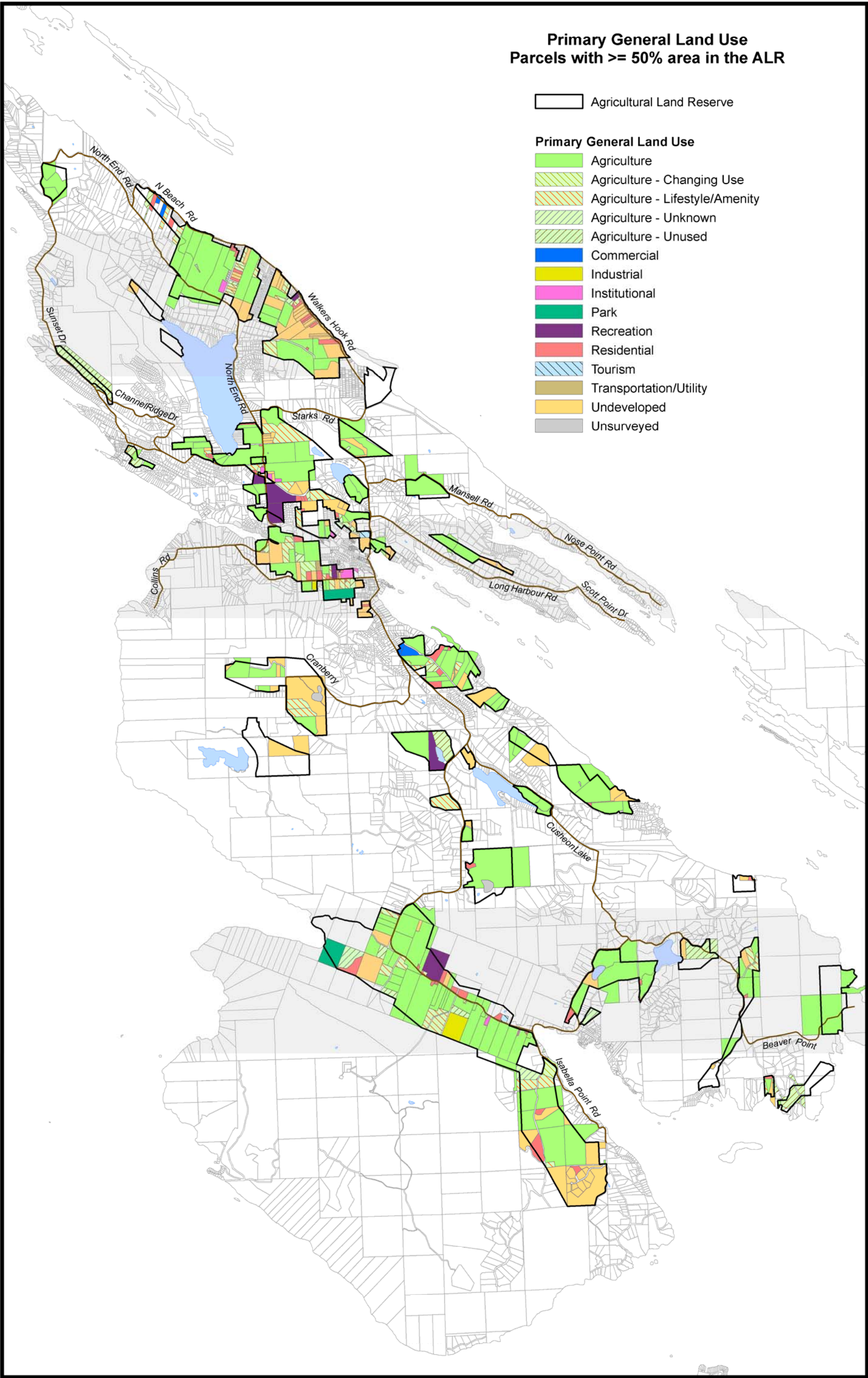
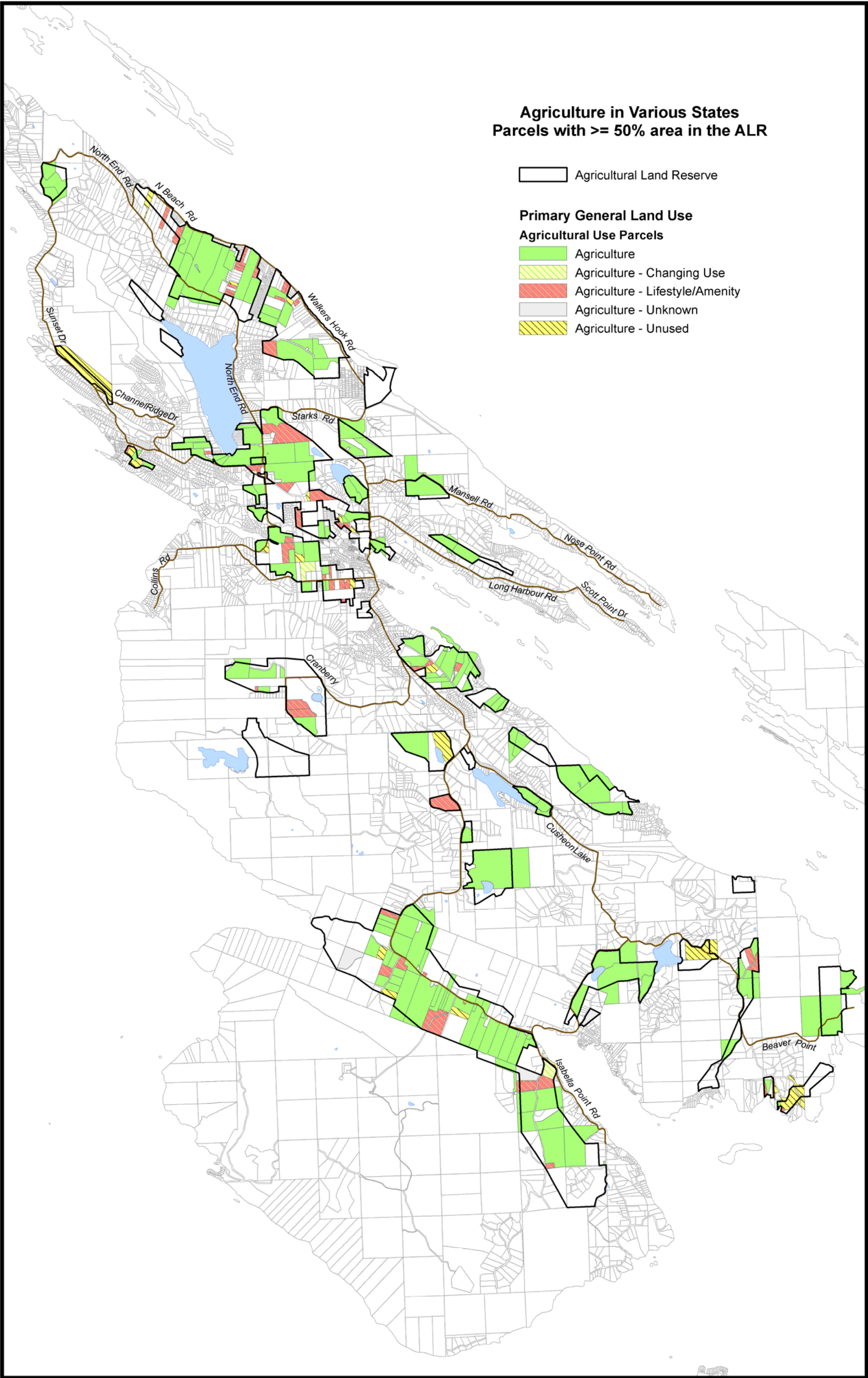


Figure 6. Agriculture in various states on parcels in the ALR.



AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

Agriculture has been shown to be the dominant primary general land use on Salt Spring Island's ALR (See Table 3). In addition, there is ancillary agriculture use occurring in the ALR. This ancillary use includes parcels without enough agricultural production to qualify for BC assessment farm class but have some farming activity combined with residential or recreational use.

Figure 7 and Table 4 show that there are a total of 222 parcels totalling 1721 hectares of ALR land with some level of agricultural land use.

Figure 8 maps the distribution of primary and ancillary agriculture land use.

Figure 7. Levels of agricultural land use on parcels in the ALR

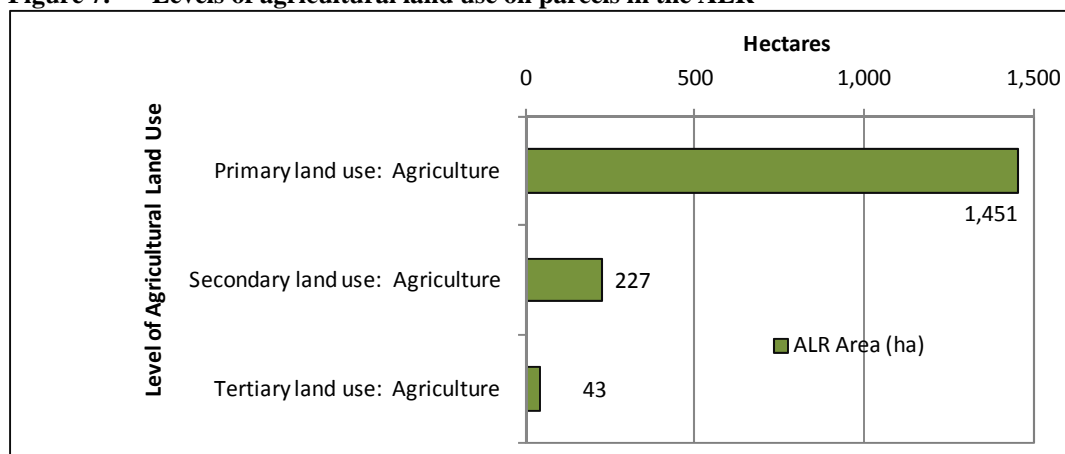
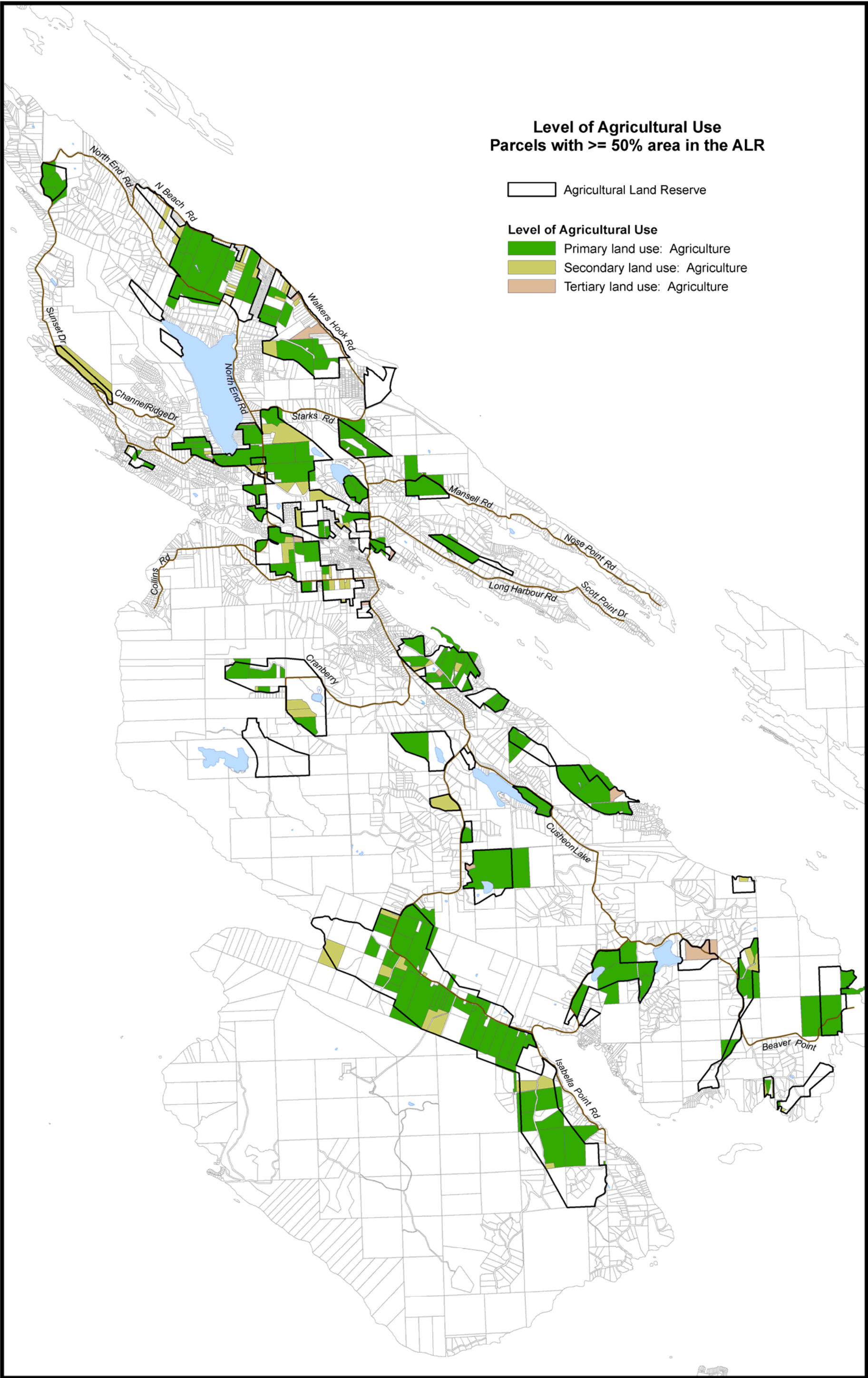


Table 4. Levels of agricultural land use on parcels in the ALR

Parcels with greater than half their area in ALR						
Agricultural Land Use	Number of parcels	Percent of ALR parcels	Area of parcels (ha)	Area of ALR (ha)	Percent of ALR	Mean parcel size (ha)
Primary land use: Agriculture	152	33%	1,681	1,451	59%	11.1
Secondary land use: Agriculture	59	13%	254	227	9%	4.3
Tertiary land use: Agriculture	11	2%	47	43	2%	4.3
Total	222	48	1,982	1,721	70	

Figure 8. Levels of Agricultural Use on parcels in the ALR



AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Agricultural activities (e.g. horses, nursery, etc.) were captured for each parcel that exhibited some level of agricultural use (Refer to Table 4). Up to four levels of agricultural activities (primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary) were identified with the primary activity being the most intensive activity utilizing the greatest extent of land. The following analysis considers only the primary agricultural activity on those parcels with “Agriculture” as the primary general land use.

Figure 9. Primary agricultural activities by parcel area (ha) in the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture

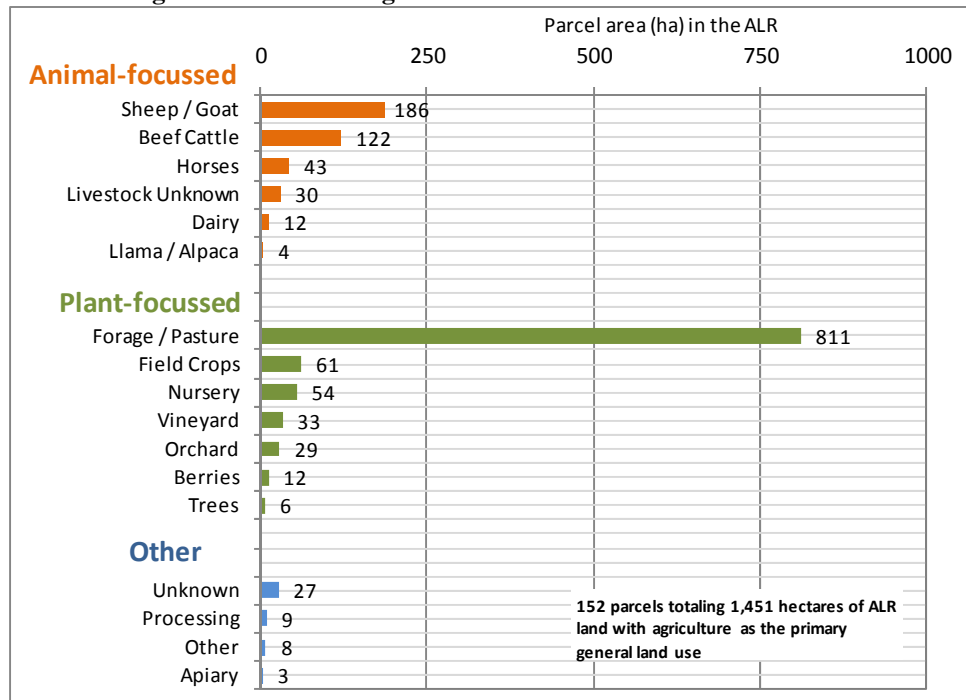


Figure 9, Figure 10 and Table 5 show that Forage / Pasture is the most widespread primary agricultural activity, covering 811 ha or 33% of the ALR area.

Sheep and goat farms are the second dominant agricultural activity with 17 sheep and/or goat farms, covering 186 hectares of the ALR.

Figure 10. Primary agricultural activities by number of parcels in the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture

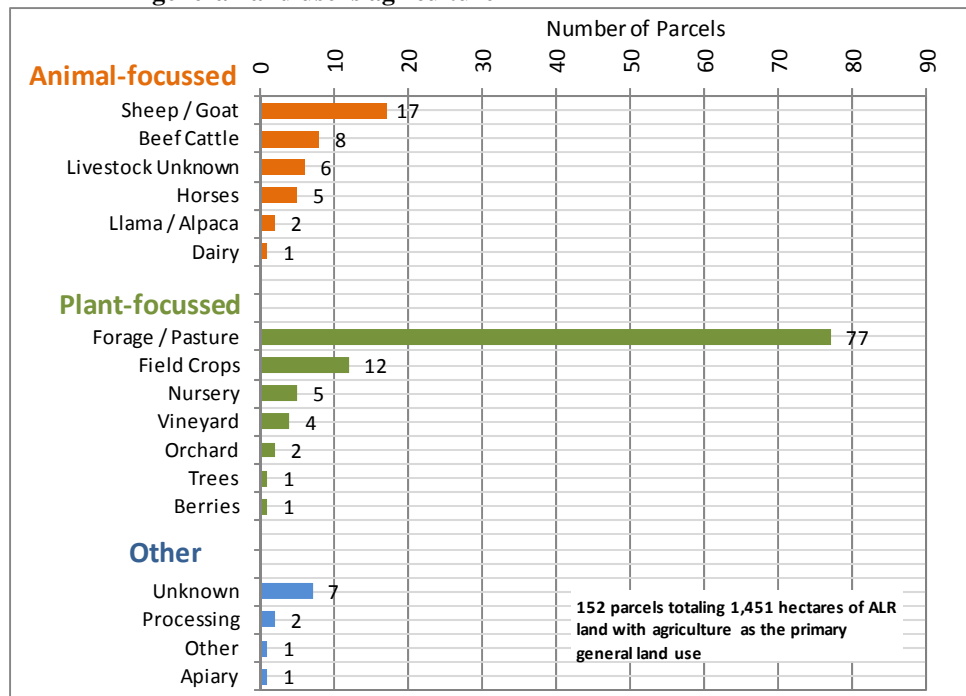
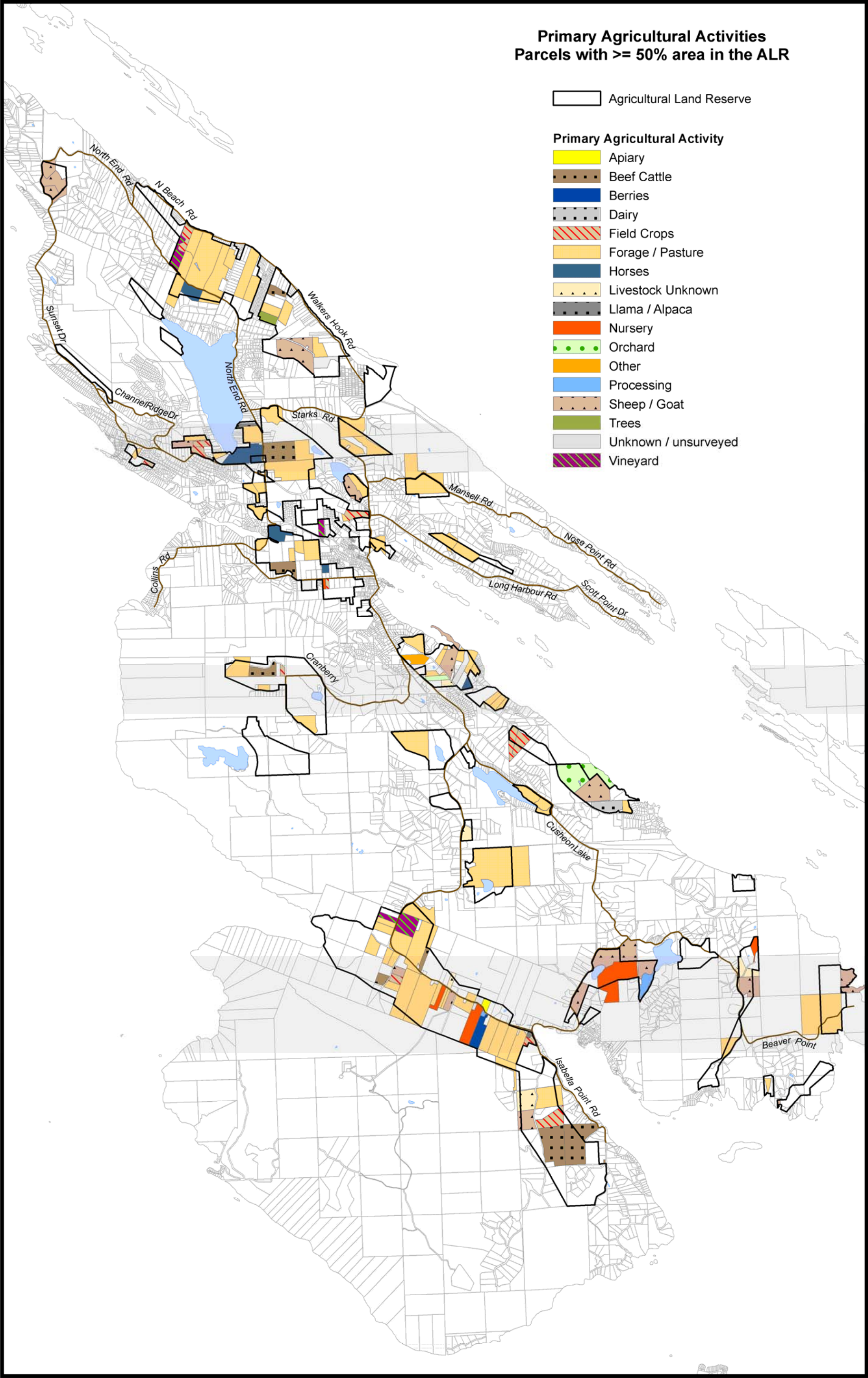


Table 5. Primary agricultural activities on parcels in the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture

<i>Parcels with greater than half their area in ALR</i>						
Primary Agricultural Activities	Number of parcels	Percent of agriculture use parcels	Area of parcels (ha)	Area of ALR (ha)	Percent of ALR	Mean parcel size (ha)
Forage / Pasture	77	51%	952	811	33%	12.6
Sheep / Goat	17	11%	222	186	8%	22.3
Beef Cattle	8	5%	133	122	5%	3.3
Field Crops	12	8%	69	61	2%	3.4
Nursery	5	3%	66	54	2%	9.6
Horses	5	3%	48	43	2%	2.4
Vineyard	4	3%	33	33	1%	4.3
Livestock Unknown	6	4%	36	30	1%	12.3
Orchard	2	1%	41	29	1%	3.0
Unknown	7	5%	27	27	1%	4.0
Dairy	1	< 1%	12	12	< 1%	2.2
Berries	1	< 1%	12	12	< 1%	4.9
Processing	2	1%	9	9	< 1%	4.4
Other	1	< 1%	8	8	< 1%	1.9
Trees	1	< 1%	6	6	< 1%	2.2
Llama / Alpaca	2	1%	4	4	< 1%	5.5
Apiary	1	< 1%	3	3	< 1%	2.4
Total	152	100%	1,681	1,451	59%	

Figure 11. Primary agricultural activities on parcels in the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture
For agriculture outside of the ALR, see Figure 20



PARCEL SIZE DISTRIBUTION

Parcel size is generally related to the usability of a parcel for agriculture. This section describes parcel sizes in Salt Spring Island's ALR and the relationship between parcel size and primary land use.

Figure 12. Parcel size distribution in the ALR

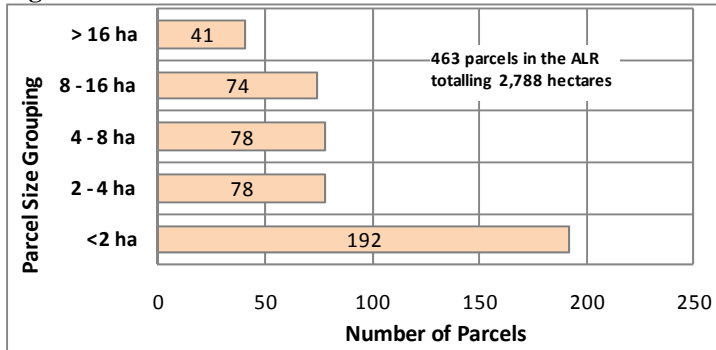


Figure 12 and Table 6 illustrate that of the 463 parcels in the ALR:

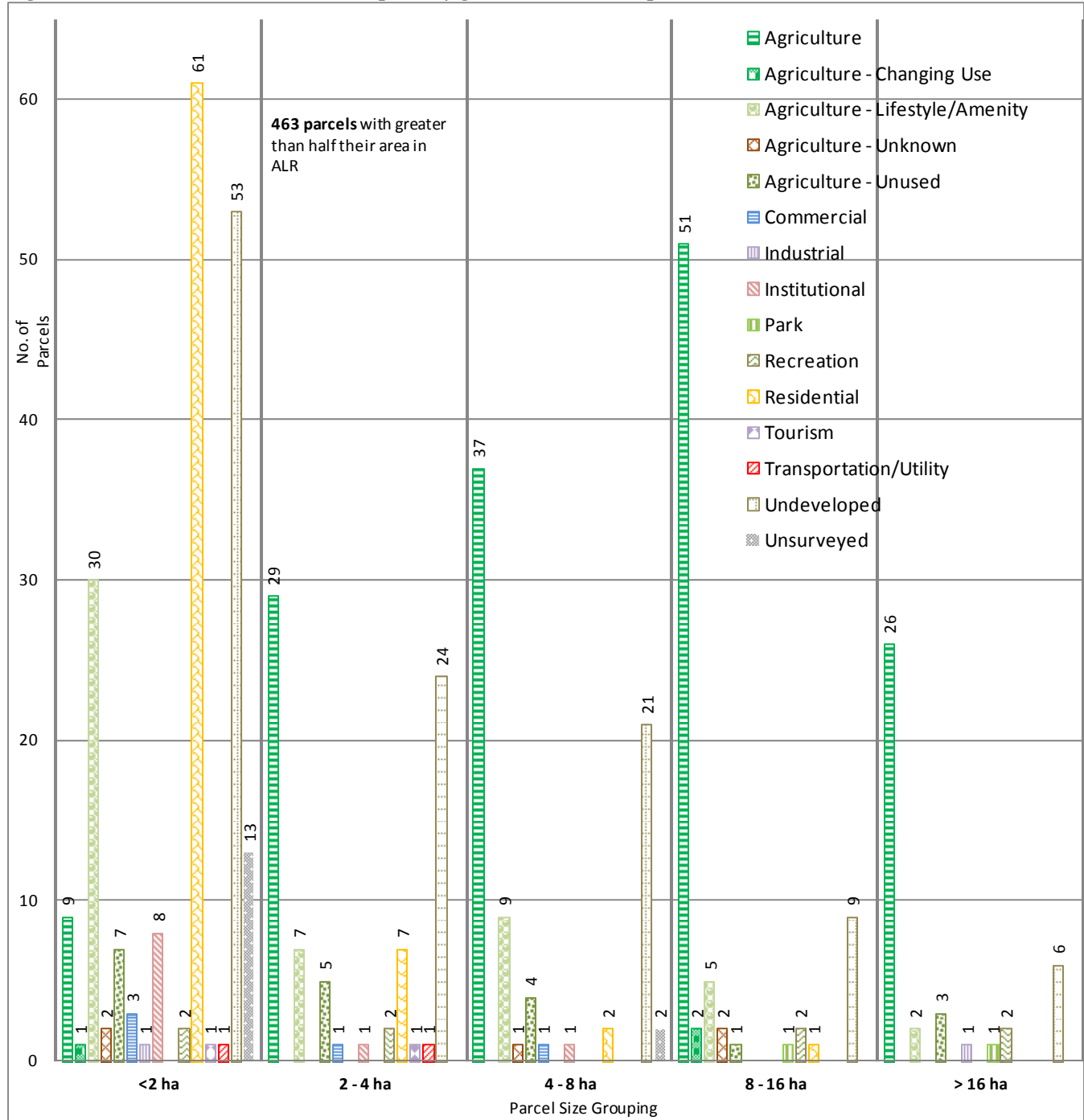
- 41% (192 parcels) are less than 2 hectares
- 17% (78 parcels) are between 2 and 4 hectares
- 17% (78 parcels) are between 4 and 8 hectares
- 16% (74 parcels) are between 8 and 16 hectares
- 9% (41 parcels) are greater than 16 hectares.

Table 6. Parcel size distribution in the ALR

Parcels with greater than half their area in ALR			
Parcel Size Groupings	Number of parcels	Area of parcels (ha)	Area of ALR (ha)
<2 ha	192	176	173
2 - 4 ha	78	220	212
4 - 8 ha	78	414	398
8 - 16 ha	74	802	736
> 16 ha	41	1,177	949
Total	463	2,788	2,469

Figure 13 illustrates the mixture of primary general land uses by parcel size groupings for the 463 parcels in the ALR. "Agriculture" occurs on all parcel size groupings but smaller sized parcels tend to have more non-agricultural land uses.

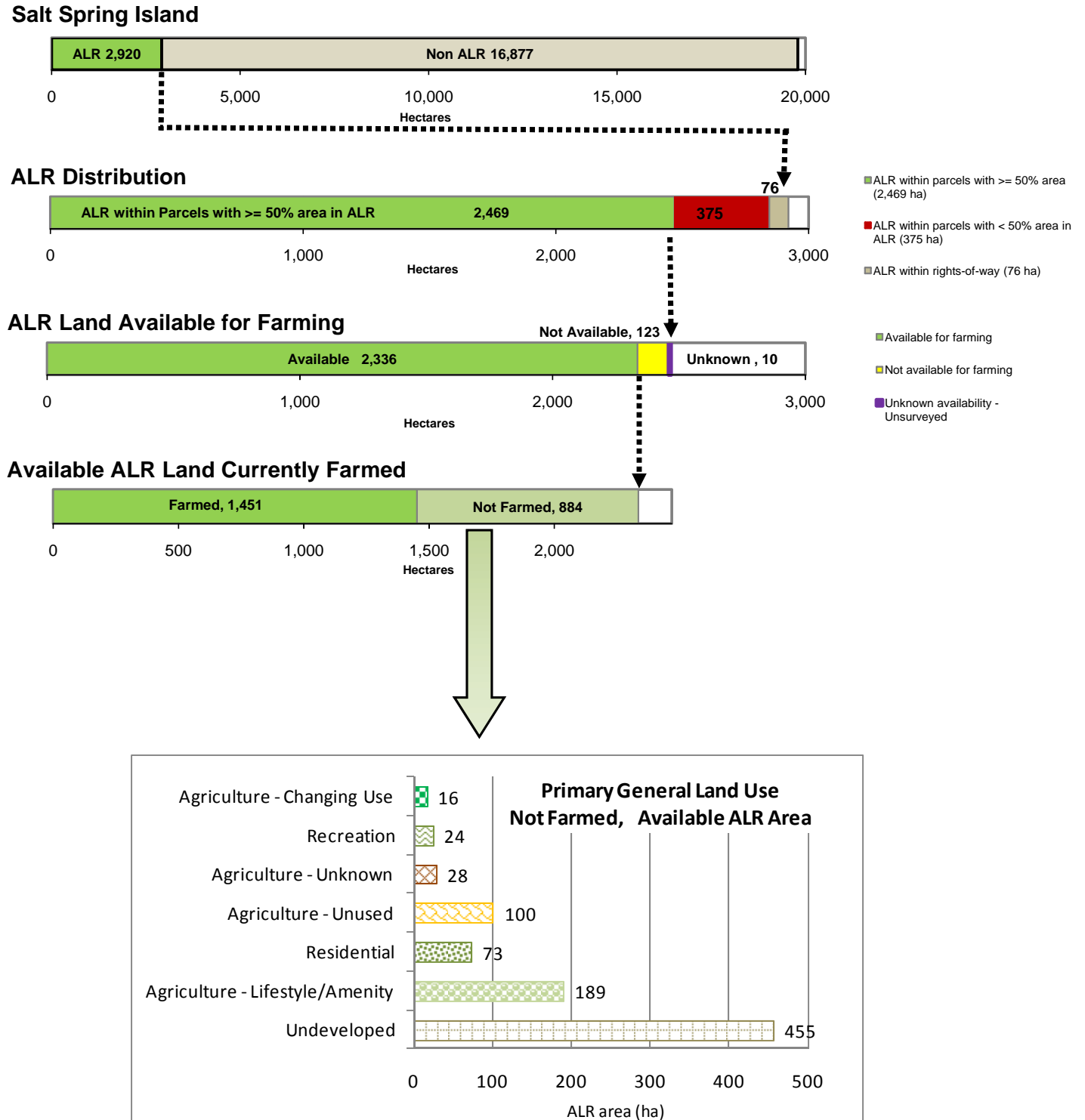
Figure 13. Parcel size distribution and primary general land use for parcels in the ALR



AVAILABILITY OF ALR LANDS WITH RESPECT TO FARMING

The analysis of the availability of ALR lands is meant to examine how much land within the ALR is currently being farmed, is available for farming, or is unavailable for farming.

Figure 14. Availability of ALR land on Salt Spring Island



Salt Spring Island ALR land

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR):

- covers 2,920 hectares of Salt Spring Island, approximately 15% of the total island area (total area = 19,797 hectares)
- includes 463 parcels with at least 50% area within the ALR, with total parcel area of 2,788 hectares, of which 2,469 hectares are within the ALR (parcel ALR area).

ALR Available for Farming

Land not available for farming includes parcels in the ALR with topographic constraints (e.g. lakes, rivers, road allowances) or due to a conflicting land use. Such uses include commercial and industrial sites, golf courses and parks, institutional uses (such as schools) and residential properties less than one acre (0.4 hectares).

- On Salt Spring Island, 2,336 hectares or 95% of the parcel ALR area is available for farming
- There are 387 parcels in the ALR that are available for farming.

ALR Land Currently Being Farmed

Land that is still available for farming is broken down further into farmed and or not-farmed categories to determine how much of this land is already developed for agriculture and how much is not being farmed. Not-farmed parcels include those with lifestyle farming, residential, and unused farmland.

Farmed parcels are those on which agriculture is the primary land use. The total area of farmed land includes portions of farmed properties that are devoted to other uses, such as residential footprints and area of natural cover.

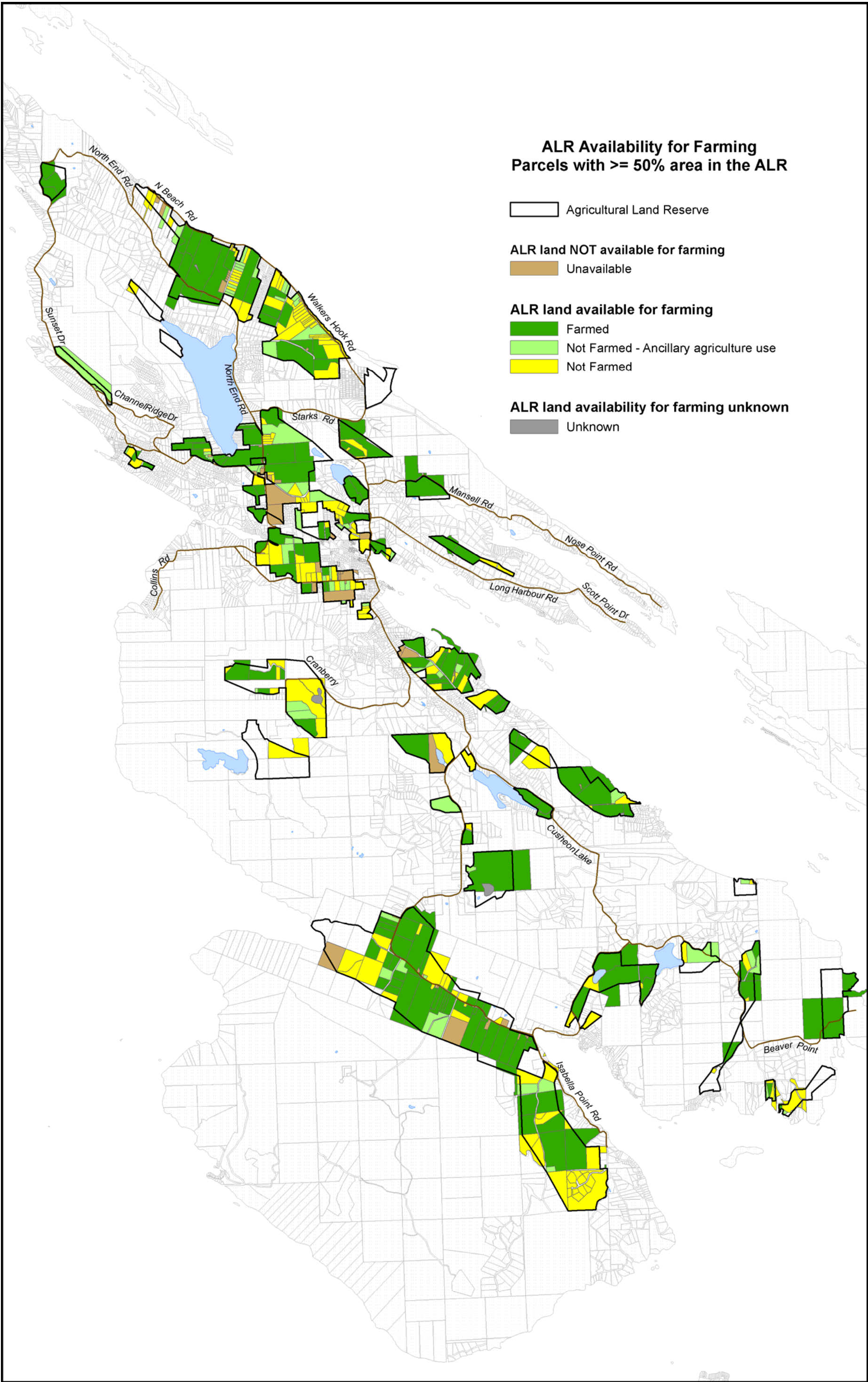
- 152 parcels totalling 1,451 hectares of ALR are currently being farmed
- 33% of parcels in the ALR totalling 59% of the parcel ALR area are being farmed

ALR Lands Not Currently Being Farmed

Of all ALR lands that are available for farming (2,336 ha), 38% or 884 ha (235 parcels) were not being farmed at the time of the survey. This area includes parcels with ancillary agriculture use. The following section summarises these land uses:

- Agriculture – Changing Use (3 parcels; 16 hectares) includes parcels undergoing a land use change at the time of the survey. Some of these may have been converting to agricultural use and others to non-agricultural use;
- Recreational use (4 parcels; 24 hectares) includes properties that were larger than one acre, but were not intensively developed and could potentially be used for agriculture in the future. Golf courses are considered alienated from agriculture;
- Agriculture - Unknown (5 parcels; 28 hectares) is farmland that is currently not in production but it is unclear if it was land in transition or unused farmland;
- Agriculture - Unused (20 parcels; 100 hectares) is farmland that could easily be developed for agriculture in the future;
- Residential use (45 parcels; 73 hectares) includes properties that were larger than one acre, but were not currently being used for agriculture or lifestyle farming. Residential parcels less than 0.4 hectares (1 acre) are considered alienated from agriculture;
- Agriculture – Lifestyle/amenity (53 parcels; 189 hectares) refers to parcels in which agriculture is small in scale and does not generate enough income to qualify for farm status under BC Assessment criteria;
- Undeveloped (105 parcels; 455 hectares) includes parcels that have some or all of their area in a natural state. Theoretically, a portion of these could support agricultural development in the future.

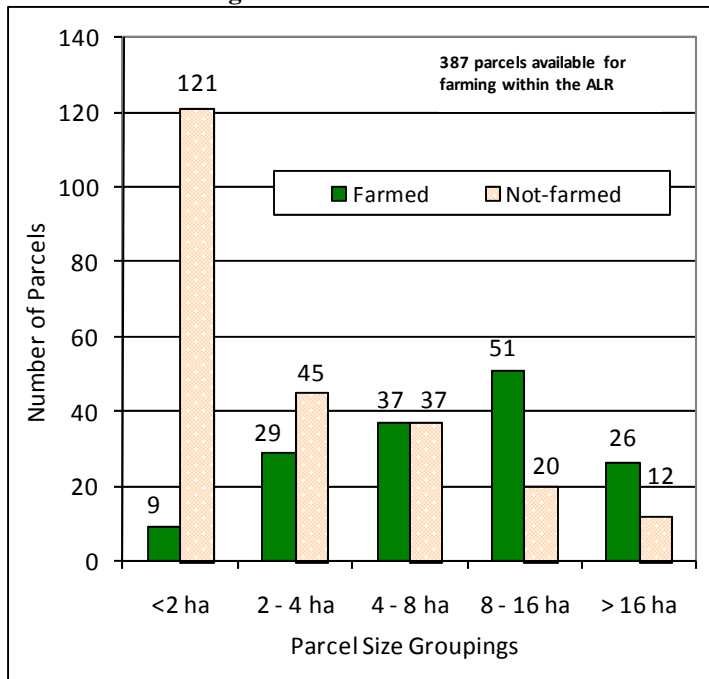
Figure 15. Availability of ALR lands with respect to farming



PARCEL SIZE COMPARISON – FARMED AND NOT FARMED PARCELS IN THE ALR

This section compares the distribution of farmed and not farmed parcels by parcel size groupings for parcels that are available for farming in the ALR. Parcel size may affect the utilization level of parcels for farming and may encourage alternative land uses such as rural residential. Parcel size groupings used in the analysis are arbitrary and do not reflect any Salt Spring Island policies.

Figure 16. Number of parcels farmed and not farmed by parcel size groupings for parcels available for farming in the ALR



Of the 387 parcels available for agriculture in the ALR, 152 are farmed while 235 are not.

Figure 16 and Table 7 show that farmed parcels are found on all parcel sizes however smaller parcels are less likely to be farmed than larger parcels.

Table 7. Parcels farmed and not farmed by parcel size groupings for parcels available for farming in the ALR

Parcel Size	Farmed			Not Farmed		
	Number of parcels	% of Farmed Parcels	% of Available ALR	Number of parcels	% of Not Farmed Parcels	% of Available ALR
<2 ha	9	6%	< 1%	121	51%	6%
2 - 4 ha	29	19%	4%	45	19%	5%
4 - 8 ha	37	24%	8%	37	16%	8%
8 - 16 ha	51	34%	22%	20	9%	8%
> 16 ha	26	17%	28%	12	5%	10%
Total	152	100%	62%	235	100%	38%

Figure 17. Percent of parcels farmed and not farmed by parcel size groupings for parcels available for farming in the ALR

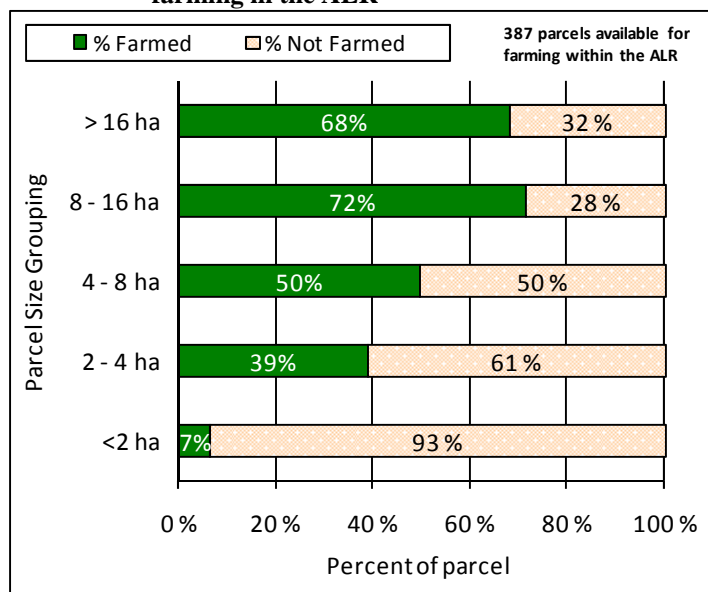
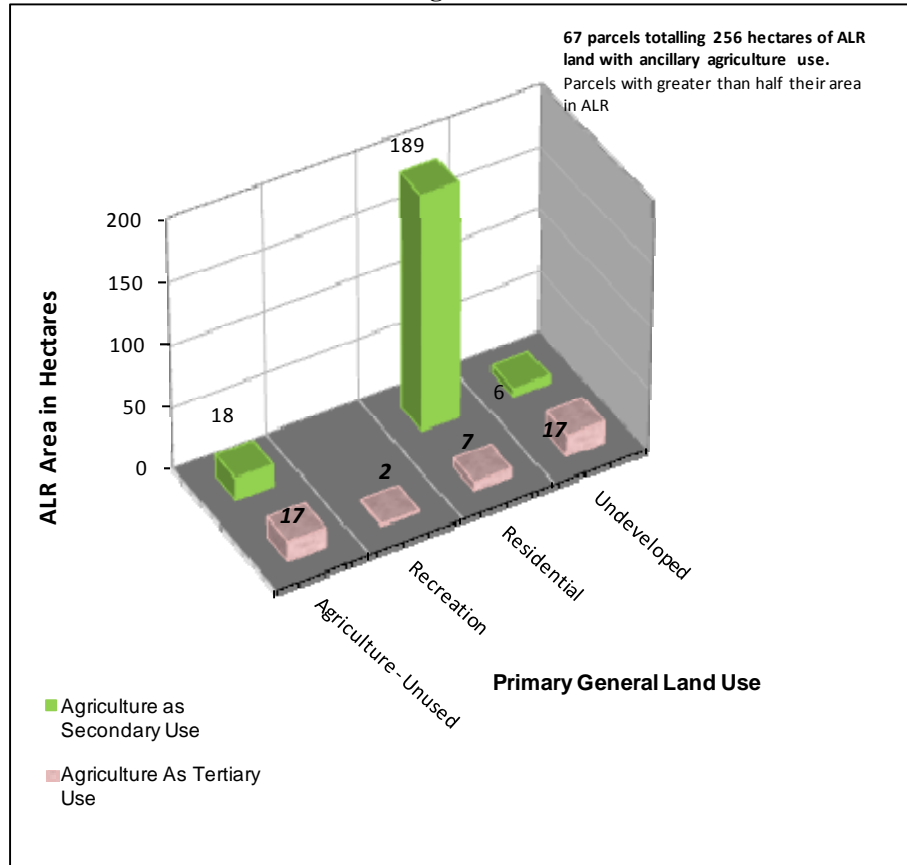


Figure 17 illustrates that smaller parcels are less likely to be farmed.

ANCILLARY AGRICULTURE LAND USE – NOT FARMED PARCELS IN THE ALR

This section more closely examines the primary general land use on parcels where “Agriculture” was the secondary or tertiary general land use. This analysis considers parcels classified as “Agriculture - Lifestyle/Amenity” to be residential parcels with ancillary agriculture use.

Figure 18. Primary general land use for parcels with ancillary agriculture use and available for farming in the ALR



Of the 2,336 ha of ALR lands on parcels that are available for farming, 38% or 884 ha (235 parcels) were not being farmed at the time of the survey.

Of this 884 ha, 67 parcels totalling 256 ha have some level of ancillary agriculture use.

Figure 18 and Table 8 describe the primary general land uses on the 67 not farmed parcels with ancillary agriculture use.

Table 8. Primary general land use on parcels with ancillary agriculture use and available for farming in the ALR

Parcels with greater than half their area in ALR										
Primary general land use	Percent of ancillary agriculture use parcels	Area of parcels (ha)	Area of ALR (ha)	Percent of ALR	Mean parcel size (ha)	Agriculture as Ancillary Use				
						Secondary (ALR ha)	Tertiary (ALR ha)	Secondary (No. Parcels)	Tertiary (No. Parcels)	Total (No. Parcels)
Agriculture - Unused	3	54	35	1%	27	18	17	1	1	2
Recreation	1	2	2	< 1%	2		2		1	1
Residential	87	202	196	8%	5	189	7	53	5	58
Undeveloped	9	24	24	< 1%	4	6	17	2	4	6
Total	100	281	256	10	38	213	43	56	11	67

OTHER OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LAND USE INVENTORY

Farming Outside the ALR

Parcels with $\leq 50\%$ of their area within the ALR are considered to be outside the ALR. This section describes the farming observed on these parcels.

Although Salt Spring Island's ALR land totals 2,920 hectares, only 2,469 hectares are within parcels considered to be within the ALR. Parcels considered to be outside the ALR contain 375 hectares of ALR land and the remaining 76 hectares are in rights-of-way.

Table 9. Primary agricultural activities on parcels outside the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture

Parcels with half or less of their area in ALR				
Primary Agricultural Activities	Number of parcels	Area of parcels (ha)	Area of ALR (ha)	Mean parcel size (ha)
Forage / Pasture	34	389	44	12.6
Sheep / Goat	16	311	48	22.3
Orchard	11	121	8	3.3
Livestock Unknown	11	109	0	3.4
Unknown	10	97	9	9.6
Beef Cattle	5	76	<1	2.4
Field Crops	7	59	15	4.3
Cultivated Land	2	48	0	12.3
Vineyard	4	27	<1	3.0
Poultry	6	23	0	4.0
Horses	6	21	0	2.2
Trees	1	15	0	4.9
Other	5	14	0	4.4
Nursery	4	10	0	1.9
Llama / Alpaca	1	6	0	2.2
Berries	1	3	0	5.5
Total	124	1,330	124	

There are 124 parcels (1,330 ha) outside the ALR that are being used primarily for agriculture.

When compared with farmed parcels within the ALR (1,681 ha from Table 3), 44% of all farmed area on Salt Spring Island occurs outside the ALR.

Table 9, Figure 19 and Figure 20 describe the primary agricultural activities occurring on these parcels.

Figure 19. Primary agricultural activities on parcels outside the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture

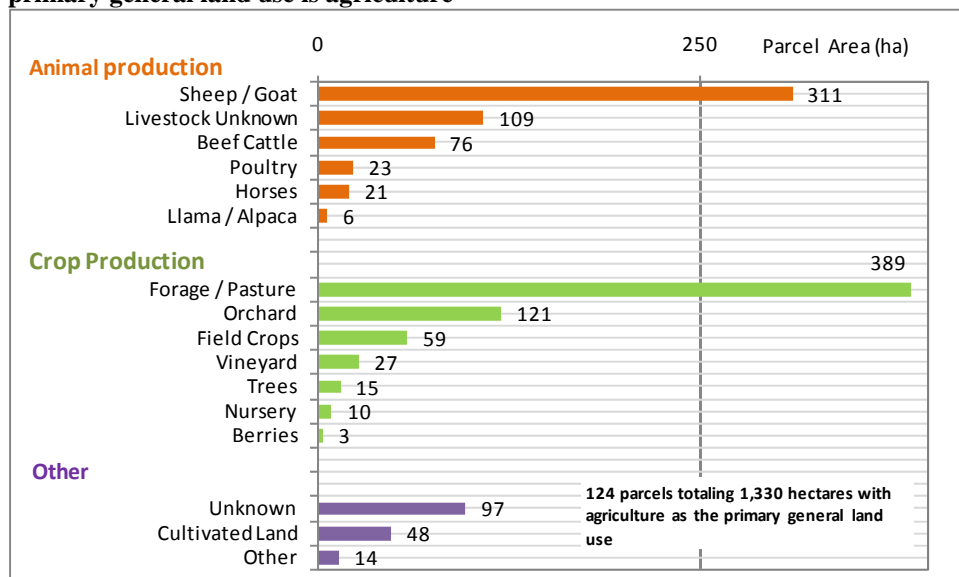
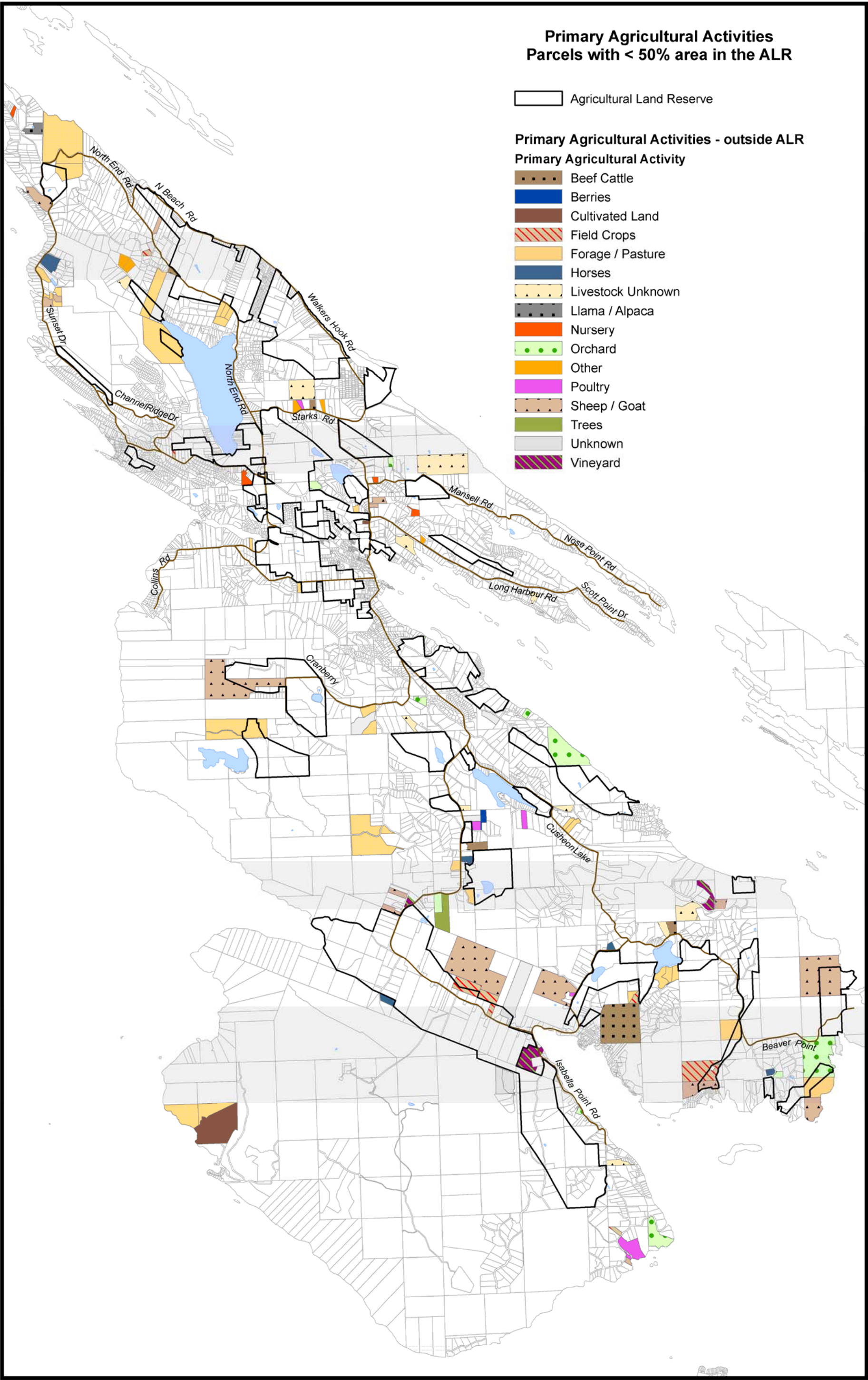


Figure 20. Primary agricultural activity on surveyed parcels outside the ALR where primary general land use is agriculture
For agriculture inside the ALR, see Figure 11



Agriculture and Provincial Parks

There are two protected areas on Salt Spring Island whose boundaries overlap the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR): Ruckle Provincial Park in the southeast of the Island, Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park in the southwest. Table 10 summarises the area and percent of these parks that are within the ALR. Table 11 summarises the types of agriculture occurring within the park and the area associated with each land use.

Table 10. Portion of Burgoyne and Ruckle Parks within the ALR

Park Name	Park Area (ha)	ALR Area (ha)	Percent of Park in ALR
Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park	503	75	15
Ruckle Provincial Park	534	80	15
Total Parcel Count	1,037	155	30

Table 11. Crop area in Burgoyne and Ruckle Parks

Park Name	Crop Cover	Crop Area (ha)	Total Area (ha)
Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park	Pasture	13	63
	Hay	50	
Ruckle Provincial Park	Cultivated land	1	61
	Pasture	29	
	Hay	30	
	Tree fruit crops	<1	
	Vegetables	<1	

Conclusion

The land use inventory has provided insight into Salt Spring Island's agricultural landscape.

In total, there are 3,011 hectares currently being farmed on Salt Spring Island with 44% occurring outside the ALR. This includes 1,681 hectares on parcels with >50% of their area in the ALR and 1,330 hectares on parcels with <= 50% of their area in the ALR.

Of the 2,920 hectares of ALR land, 54% is currently being farmed. This includes 1,451 hectares on parcels with > 50% of their area in the ALR and 124 hectares on parcels with <= 50% of their area in the ALR.

By far the most common agricultural activity both inside and outside the ALR is forage and pasture followed by sheep and goat farms.