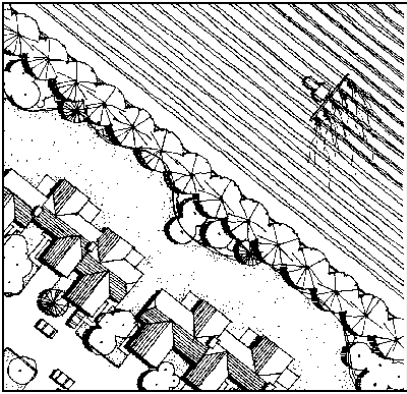


URBAN-RURAL EDGE AREA NUISANCE MITIGATION STRATEGIES IN KINGS COUNTY, NOVA SCOTIA

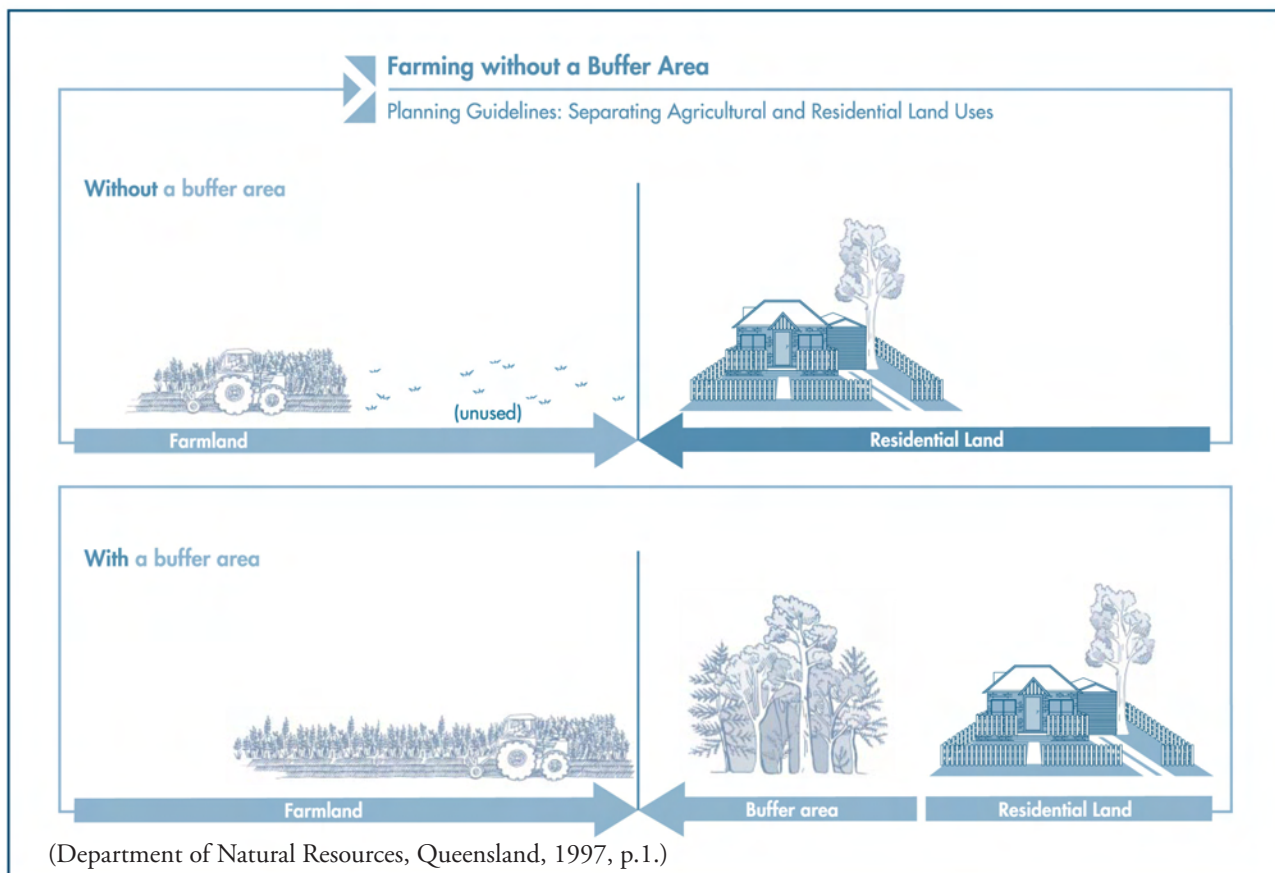


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Urban-rural edge areas are often scenes of conflict, where residential and agricultural uses compete for limited land. Kings County, Nova Scotia contains both the most productive and lucrative agricultural land in the province, and areas under considerable development pressures. Currently, the Municipality of Kings County lacks a comprehensive urban-rural edge planning strategy, and the municipality and province split responsibility for nuisance prevention and mitigation. This approach can lead to policy gaps and limited focus, and contributes to continued nuisance complaints and loss of productive agricultural land.

Any proposed mitigation measures must comply with Kings County's twin goals of preserving farmland and protecting farmers. Edge planning literature suggests design-based land use policies, and recent research supports using vegetative buffers. British Columbia offers a government guide for incorporating vegetative buffer standards into plans and policies. Some of their suggestions may be suitable for adapting to the Kings County policy and land use context.

How should the plans and policies in Kings County change in order to integrate higher standards for vegetative buffers to mitigate urban-rural land use conflicts?



Analysis suggests adopting vegetative buffers on the urban side of the urban-rural boundary may shield homeowners from some of the negative effects of farm practices, and shield farmers from the complaints associated with these nuisances. Vegetative buffers may also allow reduced setbacks between some farm types and residential areas, potentially saving productive farmland around the County's urban growth centres.

The Province and Municipality may not be keen for further regulating the urban-rural edge, but new design guidelines could potentially reduce land use conflict and preserve farmland, serving two major goals of the Kings County Municipal Planning Strategy. The two levels of government need not change their legislative framework, but rather work proactively and in close concert with one another to implement these new measures on privately owned residential land in edge areas.

For administrative ease and lower demands on County resources to achieve the greatest measure of mitigation and preservation, my final recommendation is:

Standardizing vegetative buffer requirements in all residential lots bordering agricultural land, which would entail:

Provincial work

- establishing a baseline vegetative buffer requirement

Municipal work

- changing minimum lot sizes and building envelopes in non-farm developments in the Agricultural zone and residential properties on the outer ring of urban growth centres, and
- reducing setbacks requirements for farm operations.

Before making these changes, the provincial and municipal governments must first jointly investigate potential costs and impacts on property ownership and development in urban growth centres, evaluate the local natural context, and implement other nuisance mitigation measures recommended in the literature.



(www.plannersweb.com/sprawl/images/tn-farmburbs.jpg)