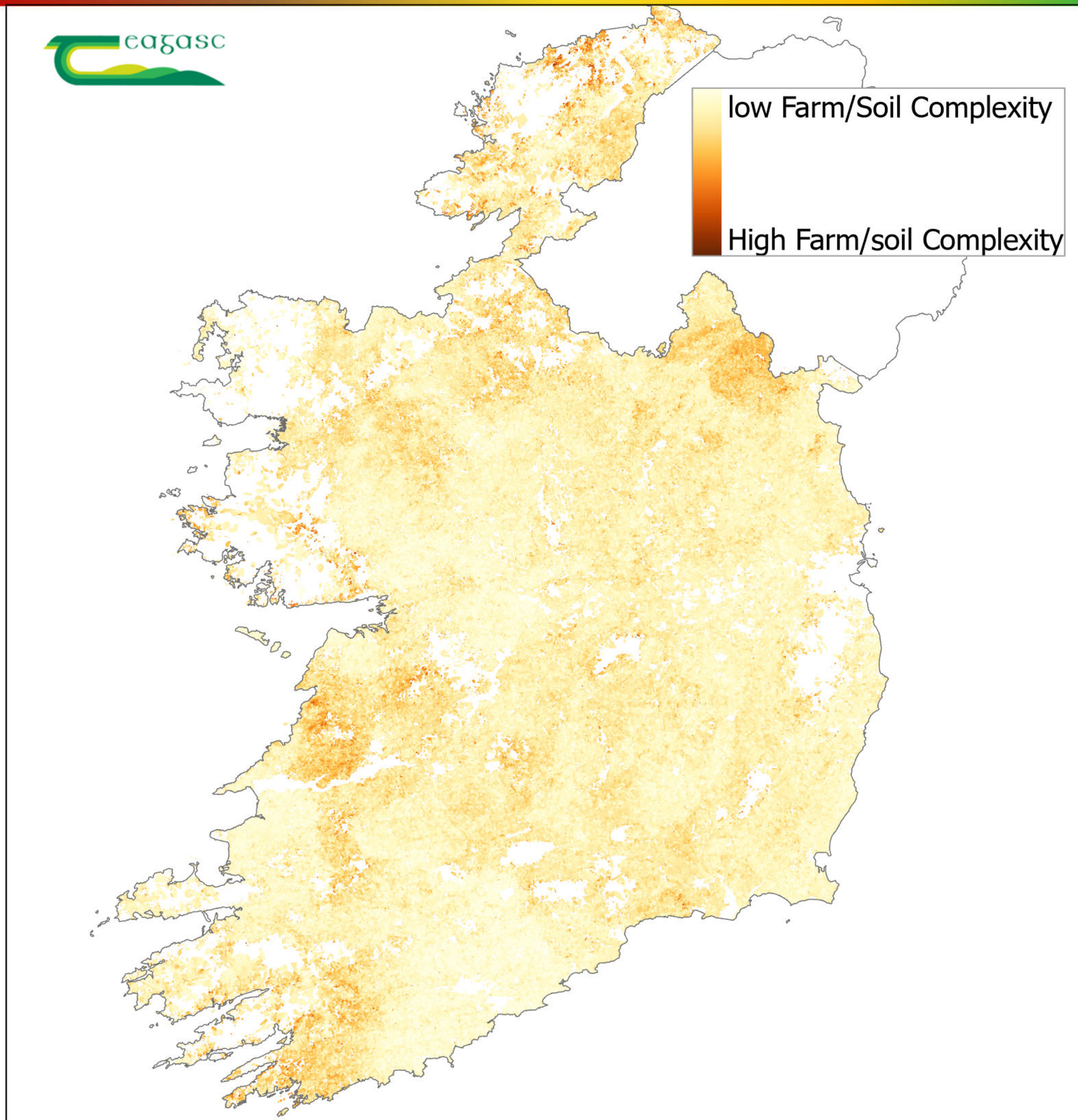


Farm/Soil Complexity



National soil maps such as Teagasc's IFS map are not of the correct scale to be used at field scale - you cannot reliably say that if a field lies within a soil type polygon, the soil in the field is that soil type. This is due to the scale of a map determining the smallest object that can be detected and the scale of national soil maps is greater than the scale at which we can map fields. However we can map broad geographies and we can use the IFS map to identify areas where there are lots of soils types (complex soil geographies) and areas where there are fewer changes in soil (simple soil geography).

Here we present a measure of farm scale soil complexity - we map the length of soil boundaries in a farm divided by the size of the farm (for lowland farms only). It shows an interesting geography; those farms in pale are generally larger farms with low soil complexity and they correlate well to areas of the country with farms in dairy and tillage. In darker areas farms have a high a level of complexity per hectare and we see particularly this in Monaghan and Clare.