

# Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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## FELINE OVERLOAD



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Animal care attendant Heather Beadle plays with some of the 15 cats and kittens dumped last week at the Ontario SPCA's Whitchurch-Stouffville facility. People abandoning animals on the centre's doorstep is a growing problem for the agency. If you want to adopt a pet, 905-898-7122, ext. 306 or visit [www.yorkregionospca.com](http://www.yorkregionospca.com)

*Environmental red tape slows clearing of culvert, leaving strawberry grower seeing red*

# WATER WOES FRUSTRATE FARMER

BY CHRIS TRABER  
Staff Writer

Strawberry fields aren't forever. Vincenzo Maiorano will attest to that.

Since 1974, Mr. Maiorano has operated Vince's Fruit Market and Garden Centre on McCowan Road and 19th Avenue. The family business sells produce grown on their 15 acres.

A half-acre strawberry patch in the northwest corner of the inter-

section, beside their covered sales kiosk, was harvested annually for its sweet, plump offerings.

The only items growing in the field this year are fat mosquitoes that thrive in the stagnant water that has flooded the area.

With our record rain, overworked and undersized drainage pipes have become clogged with debris. The major culprit is a plugged culvert under 19th Avenue, which until this season, adequately and dutifully

carried excess water south.

In tandem with a heavy winter thaw, the Maioranos' strawberry field hasn't seen a dry day since last year.

"The flooding started in April and the snow and rain has done a lot of damage to two driveways and the field," Mr. Maiorano said, pointing a wizened, hard-working hand at the obstructed passage thick with mud, damp weeds and grass. "The strawberry plants died. The land is

no good right now.

"I've called everyone. There's been lots of talk, but nothing is getting done. We just want the culvert opened."

In addition to losing several thousand dollars in fruit sales, the farmer had to enclose the south portion of his display and sales area because of the pesky mosquitoes.

Frustration mounted through the spring and summer, with each rainfall turning the field into a swamp.

"It's hard enough for farmers to make a living," he said. "Fertilizer costs are up 40 per cent and diesel fuel is up, too. But, we're selling fruits and vegetables for the same prices as we did 20 years ago."

Calls to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture began reaping results.

"They were very helpful," Mr. Maiorano said. "They said the conservation authority deals with the

See **CULVERT**, page 4.

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