

Tuesday's rain came as relief for homeowners, farmers

BY LISA QUEEN
lqueen@yrmg.com

Tuesday's steady rain came as welcome relief in a summer marked by weather extremes.

Most of the summer has been plagued by drought, interrupted by a couple of severe storms, including a hailstorm July 8 that caused serious damage to crops in the Holland Marsh and one last Saturday in Georgina that saw an F1 tornado touch down near Sunset Beach on the southeast shore of Lake Simcoe.

Even Tuesday's rain came with a severe thunderstorm watch and a severe rainfall warning in York Region from Environment Canada, which also cautioned about severe weather in other parts on southern Ontario.

You won't find Markham farmer Jay Reesor or Holland Marsh farmer Avia Eek complaining about the rain since Saturday.

"We had a long period of drought but we had two inches of rain on Saturday, I guess it was, and we're grateful for that," said Reesor, who has a farm at 9th Line and Elgin Mills Road.

"And we're grateful for any more rain that comes our way. There's not been too much rain at all at this point. It's been really, really, really dry all spring and summer. The ground needs more rain. We really welcome that rain. Obviously (Saturday's rain), we would have liked it to have come down a bit slower and gentler over two days but it came down over a period of an hour or whatever. But we're

very grateful."

Eek, a King Township councillor, is ecstatic about the rain.

"If I could do a happy dance, I would," said Eek, who has an 85-acre carrot and onion farm in the Holland Marsh.

"(The summer has been) brutal, awful, challenging. It's been incredibly challenging."

Pointing to a wet spring with threats of frost, two days of severe winds about three months ago, the hailstorm in July and the ongoing drought, Eek has spent \$14,000 on additional labour this season and an extra \$3,000 a month on additional irrigation costs.

"Our farmers, God bless them, if I hear anybody complain about the price of food, I'll have some choice words for them because I know what our farmers have been going through," she said.

"They have been working like 19 hours a day just to try and keep the crops irrigated, to keep them so that they're not dying. Well, they're protecting their investment but (also) so we can feed people."

Environment Canada senior climatologist Dave Phillips called Tuesday's steady rain that was able to seep into the ground good news.

"It's a slow motion, percolating kind of rain. It's an all day affair. Not like the two hours we got on Saturday, or a couple of hours, when we got a heavy dose of rain," he said.

At Buttonville, 37 millimetres of rain fell

on Saturday.

"That's a good, healthy amount of rain," Phillips said.

"(Tuesday's rain) is all day across the province and it will take a day to get rid of it. It's not the rain that just runs off into the sewers (because it comes down so quickly) but it soaks into the ground and gives the grass a good drink of water."

Even with Tuesday's rain, the result of a storm system from Texas that left Louisiana with devastating floods, there is a precipitation deficit this summer.

Still, York Region has had more rain than other communities such as Niagara farm country, which is experiencing a record-breaking drought, Phillips said.

Between May 1 and Aug. 14, York had 187mm of rain, only two-thirds of the average 276mm that would fall during that time.

That is a 90mm rain deficit but it is far less than Toronto's 130mm deficit during the

same period, Phillips said, adding York got 316mm during the same time last year.

Where Buttonville got 37mm of rain Saturday, Niagara got 5mm and has only received about 20 per cent of the rain it should have received since early July, Phillips said.

York has 28 days with temperatures above 30C, double the 14 it would get on average.

"The thing is, you can have a dry summer but if it's warmer than normal, then normal rainfall doesn't even cut it," Phillips said.

He called Tuesday a "million dollar rain" for Ontario's farmers and overall economy.

"Also, I think it's a psychological winner, too. It's Tuesday, not Saturday so who cares that it's a Tuesday rain? It may spoil somebody's golf game or a family reunion picnic," he said.

"But, hey, we've had so few days that you can spend indoors, at the mall or at the library, it was a good kind of time out day."

747 AUTOPARTS
THE RIGHT PRICE, THE RIGHT CHOICE

Bosch Brake Pads
25% OFF

Everest Semi-Synthetic Motor Oil
5L Jug
\$11.99
5w20, 5w30 & 10w30
API certified

Dayco Belts
Buy one and get a
\$5 Gift card
for Tim Horton's or Subway

905.471.4447 905.294.5773 416.285.4447
7025 Markham Rd. Unit 5 15 Heritage Rd. Unit 14 2300 Lawrence Ave. E. Unit 30
Markham, ON. Markham, ON. Scarborough, ON M1P 2R2

747 AUTOPARTS
OEM and aftermarket automotive parts at discount prices!

Herongate Barn Dinner Theatre
Presents.. Our New COMEDY!

Another Hit Comedy!

The Affections of May
by Norm Foster

This Small Town Romance has lots of laughs!

Save \$12.00 off per couple
Dinner & Show Valid till September 3
with this coupon
Reserve 905-472-3085 herongate.com

Canadian-made Solid Wood Furniture & Upholstery
Bedroom | Dining Room | Upholstery | Entertainment | Office

ALMIRA FINE FURNITURE

4747 Highway 7 East, Markham
905.477.5524 | www.almira.com