From Your Commissioner

Drought or Drowning?

Last year, NH experienced a water shortage. For a small state like NH, it makes sense that we all have a similar amount of rainfall. Granted, there can be differences, but I can’t recall such an extreme difference as this year. Maybe I wasn’t paying enough attention, but I don’t think that was it. At any rate, the Northern portion of the state has been declared a drought disaster area and the Southern area is all but drowning.

When I was in Lancaster for the fair, everything was green, so I am hopeful that the hay and corn yields are not suffering too much. It seems that there has been enough moisture to keep the crops growing, but not enough to recharge the groundwater. I am told that if you dig down six inches it is just powder. Meanwhile, down on the Massachusetts boarder in Hudson, we can’t get things to dry out.

This past Sunday morning, as I was working in what is left of my vegetable garden, I was thinking how nice it would be if we didn’t get any rain for two weeks. I don’t think I have ever had that thought before, but barely twelve hours later the heavens opened up again. It rained all night long and before 5 AM it started to come down in buckets. Then, the thunder and lightning started. I can tell you that in the nearly 50 years I have been mowing lawns, I have never mowed anywhere near as many times as I have this year.

I spoke with the Alvirne High School Farm Manager, Emery Nadeau, on Monday to see if he had gotten all the hay in that he had down. Thankfully he had some help and they were able to put up about 1,000 bales on Sunday. It is fortunate that they now have enough wagons that they don’t have to unload any of them to do that, otherwise they wouldn’t have made it. Emery told me that some of it wasn’t as dry as he would have liked, but it will stay on the wagons and be fed out. Things have been so wet that he still has one field in Litchfield that he hasn’t been able to get on all year. I went by one of his fields on Monday morning and there was standing water on it and I don’t recall ever seeing that before.

As to my vegetable garden, it hasn’t been a great year at all. I got the first of my corn in early, but it was late to produce, and I won’t get anything out of the last half of it. What I have had has been great, though. My beans finished up way too early. The onions were about a third of the size of last year’s crop and my peppers were pathetic. The butternut squash is on the small side and there are fewer of them than normal. I’ll stop complaining now and start hoping that we don’t get as much snow this year as we had rain. It is New England and if you don’t like the weather, wait a minute, it will change.

Shawn N. Jasper – Commissioner