

Hail storm spares marsh

BRADFORD - The storm which skirted Bradford with golfball-size hailstones last week spared the bulk of the already ravaged Holland Marsh.

The storm, which struck early last Tuesday evening, rained across the Bradford marsh where farmers reported some damage to lettuce. It continued westward, missing the Keswick marsh.

Some trees in town were dealt by the twice-chunked ice, but no other damage was reported.

Despite escaping the hail storm, many crops are suffering from the excessive moisture caused by the 10 to 12 in. July rainfall.

GRAIN DOWN

Highland farmers report some spring grain is down with the high rainfall. Hastening proper tillage, and others have had problems getting in the second cut of hay.

"The rainfall has played havoc with the potato crops," said Bob Taylor at the agriculture ministry office in Aylmer.

"The crop is late, but the extra moisture really hasn't hurt it that much," he said.

Total damage is difficult to estimate until the actual harvest begins, but Mr. Taylor warned, "We need two weeks of dry weather," or losses could be extensive.

TOO EARLY

Bill Williams at the agricultural inspection station in Bradford agreed that much of the damage is hard to assess at this point.

"It's a little too early to estimate how serious the damage is. You've got to give the crop a little time to go one way or the other," he said.

He added, however, that many crops are suffering from rot and related diseases because of the wet conditions.

"The rot is very hard to . . . It's affected the quality of the lettuce too. It tends to have a more shorter shelf life."

MUCH HEAVIER

Nat Vack at the truck crop research station reports that rainfall in that section of the marsh has been about

twice the normal rate, but notes that points further north, like Cookstown, have received much more.

Sections of the Cookstown marsh suffered heavy damage due to flooding about two weeks ago.

Although water levels are quite high in Lake Simcoe, the pumps on the marsh have been able to handle the heavy rainfalls.

"They've been keeping ahead of it very well," Mr. Vack said.



Giant hail