



October 2017

Wow, what a heat wave. Where was this weather in June, July, and August? As I write this column (September 27th) which is forecast to be the last day of an unprecedented heat wave here in Ontario. We've had more consecutive days of over 30 degrees Celsius in the last five days than we had in total for the aforementioned months of June, July, and August.

Weather can be so fickle. When I attended the Renfrew County Plowing Match at the farm of Mel and Lynne Langton in the Beachburg area on September 16th, we were right in the midst of the unseasonably hot weather. In speaking to some farmers there, they informed me that if they got another week or two of warm weather the corn crop would be just fine. They certainly got their wish on the weather; I hope that the yield and the quality of the corn has responded in-kind. I'm told that in measuring heat-unit days, we've received more than a month's worth of heat in just 10 days. While I couldn't spend the whole day at the Plowing Match due to other commitments, I must say that based on the number of people I met in my time there, I would expect that it was one of the most successful plowing matches we've ever had. A big thank you to Mel and Lynne for providing the land and being great hosts.

From Renfrew County I went on to the International Plowing Match that was held in Walton, Ontario this year. As luck—or bad luck—would have it, we were not blessed with the same nice weather on the day we were there for the parade; it rained so heavily that not only was the parade cancelled, but the tented city itself was closed on the Wednesday. In spite of all that, my colleague from Huron-Bruce, MPP Lisa Thompson told me that the rest of the week was tremendous. While I couldn't be there myself on September 23rd, one of our local farm families, the Cull family from Douglas, was honoured as one of province's 2017 BMO Ontario Farm Family Award Recipients. It is an honour for us all when one of our own is recognized with a prestigious award. I would like to congratulate Preston and Terry for making us all proud. The Cull Family not only supports us by providing their share of the food we all partake in, but spend a great deal of their time organizing and supporting community events.

Thanksgiving is fast approaching which is traditionally the time to reflect on all of the things we are grateful for. And there is so much. Regardless of the challenges we have and continue to face, the disappointment we often share in the policy of government, it is still crystal clear that we live in a wonderful country and inhabit one of the best parts of it. When you look at the unprecedented number of disasters that have taken place in just the last several weeks: the loss of life, the destruction of homes, and property damage calculated in the hundreds of billions of dollars—we have to count our blessings that we have remained safe and secure.

For the first time in many years, we won't have everyone home for this Thanksgiving. While we will have no less to be thankful for, there will be an emptiness that Vicky and I are not used to. As our family grows and build lives of their own, we have to accept that sometimes getting together is not always possible. We're already looking forward to Christmas when we expect everyone home. In the meantime, Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours. Enjoy one another.