

## Waiting on the Weather

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In every state that I've spent any amount of time in—from Minnesota to Maine to good old New Hampshire, I've heard this said about the weather: "If you don't like the weather here in (fill in the blank), just wait five minutes and it'll change."

Usually the speaker conveys an attitude of irritated pride at the fickle, coy weather of their beloved state, and usually the speaker is absolutely right, no matter which state they happen to reside in. Wait five minutes, or half a day, or at most until you wake up the next morning and the weather *will* have changed. Having spent most of my life in the northeast, you'd be hard-pressed to find a day of the year when I don't have a sweater, a waterproof jacket, and a wool hat thrown in the back of my car. I'm irrationally proud of our New England weather too, for its wit, its unpredictability, and its big, bold sass. Or I was proud of it, up until this last, endlessly hot, tirelessly humid summer.

When I'm not working in the moderate, cool climate of the Cooperative Extension office, I'm working in the fields of a vegetable farm. Because of this, no matter how cool and rainy the summer ends up being, I always feel like I've had my share of sunburned, sweat drenched days by the time fall rolls around—even if it has rained every weekend. *Just wait a few minutes and the weather will change*, I would cheerfully think to myself when people complained about cold weather in July. This summer I've paid in full for any past smugness.

This summer the weather did *not* change in a few days, let alone a few minutes. This summer it was one sweltering, saturated day after the next. Every morning I would roll over to the window hoping to at last inhale some cool, snappy air, and every morning I would find the foul, warm breath of another 180% humidity day patiently waiting for me. I started out the day frizzy-haired and sluggish, not caring that the clothes I pulled from the line were still damp. I worked long hours at the office just to stay cool, and watched my farm friends fizzle and turn blank-eyed despite drinking gallons of water in an attempt to stay hydrated. If anyone happened to say, "Well, it's nice to finally have a summer," or some such innocent comment, I envisioned throwing a tomato at them as they walked away. I felt the global warming grief of the drowning polar bear and thought surely I'd have to leave my family and friends and move north if the weather didn't change in another week. I didn't even find consolation in the fact that vegetables—which not only nourish my body like everybody else, but also indirectly and directly pay my bills—loved this weather. I didn't care. In my delirious, miserable state I swore off tomatoes and eggplant and peppers, and vowed 100% loyalty to broccoli, kale, and the other cool weather crops. I could live on cabbage, if only the weather would change.

Finally, come sweet September, it has. Here in the third week we've already had two frost warnings, the last one actually touching the small farm where I work. I feel only slightly guilty for being delighted about this turn in the tides of weather. This is, after all, New Hampshire. I pretend to empathize when people mourn the passing of what they call our first summer in years. I smile and nod in feigned agreement. I don't have to throw tomatoes now; I'm wearing my wool hat.

Note: The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the individual and do not represent the views of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, the Grafton County Commissioners office, or the majority of the residents of Grafton County.

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