

The Mi Farm Brief #031

Saturday July 4, 2026, Cal "Corn-Bread" Halvorsen

Mi Farm AI

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For internal review

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For Sheridan Skala, Owatonna, Minnesota (Steele County, family farm heritage)

Saturday, July 4, 2026. Filed by The Mi Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Owatonna, MN

Today: High **82F**. Patchy Fog then Chance Showers And Thunderstorms.

Tonight: Low **67F**. Patchy Fog.

What this means for today: Patchy fog before 8am, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 82. Northeast wind 0 to 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%. New rainfall amounts less than a tenth of an inch possible.

Source: NOAA National Weather Service point forecast for Owatonna, MN, pulled this morning.

Hour by Hour, the day ahead

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
4 AM	68F	9%	0 mph	Mostly Cloudy
5 AM	68F	11%	0 mph	Patchy Fog
6 AM	67F	7%	0 mph	Patchy Fog
7 AM	68F	4%	0 mph	Patchy Fog
8 AM	70F	5%	0 mph	Partly Sunny
9 AM	72F	6%	SE 5 mph	Partly Sunny
10 AM	76F	6%	SE 5 mph	Partly Sunny
11 AM	78F	6%	E 5 mph	Partly Sunny
12 PM	78F	5%	N 5 mph	Partly Sunny
1 PM	80F	5%	NW 5 mph	Partly Sunny
2 PM	81F	11%	NW 5 mph	Mostly Sunny
3 PM	81F	17%	NNW 5 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
4 PM	81F	25%	NNW 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
5 PM	80F	33%	N 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
6 PM	80F	32%	NNE 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
7 PM	79F	32%	NNE 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
8 PM	76F	34%	NE 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
9 PM	73F	37%	NE 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
10 PM	70F	36%	0 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
11 PM	69F	35%	0 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
12 AM	68F	30%	0 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms

Source: NOAA National Weather Service hourly forecast and station observations, pulled this morning.

Grain and Livestock, corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle

Corn (Jul 2026)	\$4.2500/bu +0.0400
Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.4150/bu -0.0075
Soy (Jul 2026)	\$11.3175/bu +0.0550
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$11.4775/bu -0.0150
Wheat (Jul 2026)	\$5.9050/bu -0.0150
Live Cattle (CME)	\$239.23/cwt -1.1%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$93.85/cwt +0.5%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn added about 4 cents; beans added about 6 cents; and wheat slipped about 2 cents.

Recent trend, over the last 5 sessions, corn has firmed and beans have firmed. That is the backdrop your cash bid is moving against.

Here is our read on why the board firmed for corn and beans while wheat eased back. Honestly the facts do not point to one clean cause this morning, so we would name the two likeliest as the USDA acreage report from Brownfield Ag News, which matched the March plantings with more corn and soybean acres, and the EU lifting tariffs on American nuts, fruits, vegetables and lobsters per Agri-Pulse. That is our read, not a sure thing.

Stocks are steady going into the open, S&P; futures close to flat. A calm Wall Street is what your banker likes to see, it keeps the rate and input-cost backdrop behind your operating note quiet for another day.

Cal

Wall Street, Thursday's close

Dow Jones	52,900 +1.1%
S&P; 500	7,483 +0.0%
Nasdaq	25,833 to 0.8%
Russell 2000	2,996 to 0.5%

Wall Street, today's futures (where the market is at going into the day)

Dow	53,162 +0.8%
S&P; 500	7,557 +0.0%

Nasdaq	29,902 to 0.9%
Russell 2000	3,024 to 0.4%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Paperwork: FSA crop acreage reporting is due July 15 for spring planted crops. That is in 11 days, so prep now, get your planted acres by field, planting dates, and any prevented planting ready for your county Farm Service Agency office now, a late certification can put your farm program payments and crop insurance at risk.
- Reminder for this week: Hot, dry stretches raise spider-mite pressure on field edges. Scout the south and west borders of soybeans and corn. Verify in-field.
- Standing reminder: Dig an 8-inch root cube on a few plants in continuous-corn fields to confirm your rootworm trait is holding, and rescout soybeans for early defoliators. Verify in-field.
- Reminder: Corn is moving through V5-V8 on seasonal normals, the rapid-growth, nitrogen-demand window. If you split-applied N, this is the sidedress window; confirm your stage with a field check.

What to Watch Today

- Rain watch: through the workday the best rain chance is around 8 PM (34%). Time spray and field passes to the drier hours, and check the wind first.
- Market watch: corn up about 4 cents, beans up about 6 cents going into the day. Wheat down about 2 cents. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Iowa groups sue over USDA funding loss (see Cal's News Desk below).

From Cal's News Desk

The 10 stories that moved across the wires since yesterday's Brief, sourced, dated, and verifiable. Each one carries Cal's review, the same one the news page shows, with a link to read it straight from the source.

1. Iowa groups sue over USDA funding loss

Two Iowa farming organizations have taken the federal government to court, joining a nationwide lawsuit after the USDA abruptly pulled millions of dollars in promised grant money. That funding was meant to help under-served farmers gain access to land, a resource that is getting harder and pricier to come by. The dispute has ties to the historic Johnson County Poor Farm near Iowa City, where surviving structures include an early 20th century dairy barn, a late 19th century barn, five smaller buildings, and the old asylum and cemetery. For anyone watching how Washington keeps or breaks its promises to agriculture, this case out of West Branch is one worth following closely.

[Read the full article](#). Iowa Farmer Today, Fri Jul 3, 2026 1:00 PM CT

2. Holiday Travelers May Find Relief at the Pump with E15

This Fourth of July weekend, drivers who filled up with E15 could have saved more than \$21 million collectively, a welcome break as AAA expected nearly 61 million people to travel by car. E15 is a blend made with 15 percent American grown ethanol, and it usually sells for several cents less per gallon than regular E10 while delivering the same performance in most 2001 and newer vehicles. Emily Skor, CEO of Growth Energy, says ethanol producers, farmers, and retailers are proud to hold down prices, noting the fuel is already approved for more than 96 percent of cars on the road and sold at thousands of stations despite what she calls arbitrary federal restrictions. For corn growers, this matters because every gallon of E15 pumped means stronger demand for homegrown corn, and Skor is now pushing Congress to give families the freedom to buy the cheaper blend all year long.

[Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Fri Jul 3, 2026 10:37 AM CT

3. New Ways to Supercharge No-Till Yields

At the 2026 National No-Tillage Conference, Illinois no-till pioneer Marion Calmer laid out how early planting pays, showing Beck's PFR data where April 16 soybeans grossed \$882 versus just \$653 on May 15, provided you pair that early start with seed treatments worth \$44 an acre. He argues for cutting seeding rates hard, dropping beans from 200,000 down to 100,000 seeds an acre, which actually lifted net revenue to \$554 versus \$511 at 160,000 while improving airflow against white mold. On weed and disease control, Calmer says adding a dry AMS slurry to Roundup jumped his kill from 70% to 97%, and nailing fungicide timing matters enormously, since soybeans at R3 returned \$18 an acre while R2 and R4 both lost money, and corn paid best at R1 at \$22.42. He also preaches the little things that stack up, from deflating radial tires to fight compaction, to swapping the rubber John Deere closing wheel for Yetter units worth 5.1 bushels an acre, proving no-till profit often hides in precision, not horsepower.

[Read the full article.](#) No-Till Farmer, Fri Jul 3, 2026 10:14 AM CT

4. Start scouting for soybean disease lookalikes

Soybean cyst nematode quietly drains at least 1.5 billion dollars from American soybean growers every year, making it the single most costly pest in the crop. The trouble is that its damage often hides behind other problems, so the article urges you to start scouting now for the disease lookalikes that can mask an infestation before yields quietly slip. One telltale sign is tiny white SCN females clinging to the roots, each about the size of the period at the end of a sentence, which means you have to dig and look closely rather than trust the leaves alone. Catching it early matters because these nematodes can rob bushels for years without an obvious above ground warning, and knowing what to look for is the first step to protecting your bean checks.

[Read the full article.](#) Iowa Farmer Today, Fri Jul 3, 2026 6:55 AM CT

5. USDA acreage report reflects crop profitability

Farmers who guessed where acres would land this spring got it right, because the USDA acreage report out this week lined up almost exactly with the March Prospective Plantings estimates, showing more corn, soybean and cotton acres and fewer rice and wheat acres. University of Arkansas Extension ag economist Hunter Biram told Brownfield the shifts come down to one thing, which crops actually pencil out a profit for producers. Notably, he says soybeans were sitting closer to breakeven than the other crops, so the extra bean acres reflect thin margins rather than easy money. It matters because Biram points out most of these planting calls were locked in before the Middle East conflict flared up, meaning the numbers do not yet reflect how that turmoil could swing prices from here.

[Read the full article.](#) Brownfield Ag News, Fri Jul 3, 2026 5:59 AM CT

6. European Union lifts tariffs on nuts, fruits, vegetables and lobsters

The European Union has scrapped tariffs on American nuts, fruits, vegetables and lobsters while opening a 500,000 metric ton quota for tree nuts, a change the Council approved on June 25 that took effect July 1. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins called it a MAJOR win, saying the deal delivers billions in new market access and helps shrink an EU farm trade deficit that once threatened to reach nearly 50 billion dollars but is now forecast to fall to 29 billion. California, which grows more than 99 percent of U.S. walnuts and roughly half the world supply, stands to gain since the EU is the walnut industry's biggest export market, and lobster exporters win too, with a 0 percent tariff applied retroactively to August 2025. The bigger story is the horse trading behind it, as the U.S. capped tariffs on EU goods at 15 percent, the Supreme Court struck down Trump's reciprocal tariffs, and he reimposed a 10 percent global tariff under a 1974 trade law, so plenty of sectoral levies still remain in play.

[Read the full article.](#) Agri-Pulse, Thu Jul 2, 2026 9:48 PM CT

7. White House suggests 'no better addition' to Mount Rushmore than Trump

The White House, through spokesperson Taylor Rogers, is pushing the idea that Donald Trump would be the perfect fifth face to carve into Mount Rushmore, calling him "no better addition" ahead of his Independence Day speech there Friday evening. This is not a new notion, as Rep. Anna Paulina Luna of Florida introduced a bill back in January 2025 to place Trump alongside Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. Trump himself has never openly

asked for it, once calling a 2020 story about it "fake news," yet he admitted it "sounds like a good idea." The Rushmore push is just one of several efforts by Republican lawmakers to honor him, including a Nobel Peace Prize, renamed airports, and a federal holiday on his birthday, all as he delivers holiday speeches in South Dakota and again Saturday for the Declaration of Independence's 250th anniversary.

[Read the full article.](#) Washington Examiner, Fri Jul 3, 2026 7:47 PM CT

8. Pope Leo XIV celebrates America's 250th in Liberty Medal award acceptance speech

Pope Leo XIV used his acceptance speech for the 2026 Liberty Medal on Friday to mark the 250th birthday of the United States. The honor comes from the National Constitution Center, which each year recognizes one person who works to secure the blessings of liberty for people across the globe. In his remarks, the pope offered a prayer tied to receiving the award and the nation's milestone anniversary. It matters because a sitting pope praising America's founding ideals during this landmark year is a rare and notable moment worth hearing in full.

[Read the full article.](#) The Hill, Fri Jul 3, 2026 4:23 PM CT

9. Shooting in Michigan mall leaves at least 2 dead: Authorities

A gunfight erupted Friday afternoon around 1:25 p.m. inside Fairlane Town Center in Dearborn, Michigan, killing at least two people and wounding a third. Police Chief Issa Shahin said the violence was not random but grew out of a fight between two groups of young people who knew each other, and it appears both sides were carrying firearms. Officers treating the three victims saw one die at the scene and another die later at a local hospital, while several people involved were taken in for questioning with help from Michigan state police. The mall was locked down and residents were told to stay away as the investigation continues, a reminder of how quickly a simple argument can turn deadly when guns are in the mix.

[Read the full article.](#) Washington Examiner, Fri Jul 3, 2026 3:25 PM CT

10. USDA AgTransport Export Sales Report: Corn, Soybeans, and Wheat Highlights (June 25, 2026)

Corn led all commodities in the USDA AgTransport report released June 25, 2026, posting the highest net sales and the largest outstanding commitments, with soybeans and wheat trailing behind. Mexico was the top corn buyer for the 2025/2026 year at 353,077 metric tons for the week and over 20 million tons accumulated, with Japan close behind at 358,959 tons weekly and Colombia, South Korea, and Spain also buying heavily. On the soybean side, China stayed a major market with 65,389 tons for the week and nearly 11.9 million tons accumulated, while Japan, Mexico, and several European nations added to demand. Wheat sales for the new 2026/2027 year saw the Philippines lead outstanding totals at 358,800 tons, with Japan and South Korea next in line. The report also flagged cancellations, including a big 631,013 ton corn reduction to an unknown buyer plus negative figures from El Salvador, Morocco, Egypt, and Canada. Watching those outstanding sales matters because they signal how much grain is still lined up to ship, and Mexico, Japan, and China remain the key customers keeping demand for your crop strong.

[Read the full article.](#) IndexBox (via world wire), Thu Jul 2, 2026 11:51 AM CT

Cal's Receipt

Cal's Receipt is the public ledger of every call this desk made for your farm, what was at stake, whether you followed it, and what it actually saved (or cost). HILT-Transparent. Append-only. Every dollar cites its source.

- [Open your Weekly Scorecard](#), refreshes every Sunday 4:00 PM CT
- [Open your Monthly Receipt](#), refreshes first Monday 7:00 AM CT

Today in Farm Safety

Never enter a grain bin while the unload auger is running. Flowing grain pulls a person under in about four seconds and fully buries them in roughly twenty. Lock out the auger power, use a body harness and lifeline, and keep a second person watching from outside. Source: OSHA grain handling standard 29 CFR 1910.272; Purdue Agricultural

Safety and Health.

Cal

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Agricultural Adjustment Act 1933

In May 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) into law. It paid farmers to take acres out of production during the Great Depression, controversial because it meant plowing under crops and slaughtering livestock while people were hungry. The price effect: Iowa average corn rose from \$0.31 per bushel in 1932 to \$0.81 by 1937. Source: USDA Economic Research Service historical price series.

Cal's Quiz

What was the result of FDR's September 1936 nine-governor Dust Bowl meeting in Des Moines?

- (a) The CCC was extended
- (b) The Shelterbelt Project and Plains tree windbreaks
- (c) Crop insurance was created
- (d) The AAA was struck down

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

The soil report said the pH was 6.2. The farmer said, "Same as last year." The agronomist said, "You haven't limed since?" The farmer said, "No. The pH and I have an understanding. It stays put, I stay calm."

The Mi Farm AI Desk

[[CAL-SIGNATURE]]

Cal "Corn-Bread" Halvorsen, your AI Agronomist and Editor in Chief

Quiz Answer

(b) The Great Plains Drought Area Committee report and the Shelterbelt Project, the federally-funded tree windbreaks still standing on Plains farms. Source: National Archives FDR Presidential Library; USDA Forest Service history.

Your data stays yours. We sell nothing you buy. Your farm data is never sold, shared, or used to train outside models. It lives on hardware we control, not the public cloud. Loyalty in writing.

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