

The MI Farm Brief #035

Wednesday July 8, 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)

Wednesday, July 8, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Owatonna, MN

Today: High **85F**. Chance Showers And Thunderstorms.

Tonight: Low **69F**. Mostly Cloudy.

What this means for today: A chance of showers and thunderstorms between 10am and 4pm, then showers and thunderstorms likely. Partly sunny. High near 85, with temperatures falling to around 80 in the afternoon. Southwest wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter 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	72F	6%	S 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
5 AM	71F	6%	SSW 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
6 AM	70F	9%	SSW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
7 AM	71F	14%	SSE 10 mph	Partly Sunny
8 AM	73F	12%	SSW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
9 AM	75F	12%	SSW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
10 AM	77F	17%	S 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
11 AM	79F	19%	SSW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
12 PM	80F	22%	SSW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
1 PM	81F	31%	SW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
2 PM	81F	43%	WSW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
3 PM	81F	52%	W 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
4 PM	81F	60%	SW 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
5 PM	80F	59%	WSW 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
6 PM	79F	56%	W 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
7 PM	77F	51%	NNW 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
8 PM	75F	52%	NNE 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
9 PM	73F	51%	E 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
10 PM	71F	39%	E 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
11 PM	70F	31%	N 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
12 AM	69F	21%	N 5 mph	Slight 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)	\$4.4250/bu +0.0175
Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.6225/bu -0.0200
Soy (Jul 2026)	\$11.9675/bu +0.1450
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$11.9700/bu -0.0075
Wheat (Jul 2026)	\$6.1200/bu +0.0275
Live Cattle (CME)	\$238.43/cwt -0.3%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$93.45/cwt +0.1%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn added about 2 cents; beans added about 14 cents; and wheat added about 3 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 overnight. Beans led the way with about 14 cents while corn and wheat added just 2 to 3 cents, and honestly the headlines on our desk do not point to one clean cause. There is no USDA report on the calendar to hang it on, so our best assessment is that this was routine bean strength and light short covering rather than any fresh export or weather news. We would not read too much into a quiet overnight move like this.

Stocks point lower into the open, S&P; futures off about 0.3 percent. A softer tape can tighten the credit and input-cost mood your lender watches, worth a glance, but it does not set your cash bid.

Cal

Wall Street, yesterday's close

Dow Jones	52,925 to 0.2%
S&P; 500	7,504 to 0.4%
Nasdaq	25,819 to 1.2%

Russell 2000	2,982 to 0.9%
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Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Reminder, still on your list: Hot, dry stretches raise spider-mite pressure on field edges. Scout the south and west borders of soybeans and corn.

Farm context: Skala Farm, Steele County demo (synthetic data bed; family heritage acres are the reference point). Real intake replaces the synthetic figures the moment you send your farm shape, acreage by field, and bin inventory.

What to Watch Today

- Rain watch: through the workday the best rain chance is around 4 PM (60%). Time spray and field passes to the drier hours, and check the wind first.
- Market watch: corn up about 2 cents, beans up about 14 cents going into the day. Wheat up about 3 cents. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Identifying Nutrient Deficiency Symptoms in Soybeans (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. Identifying Nutrient Deficiency Symptoms in Soybeans

When soybean leaves start turning pale or yellow this season, the cause could be a nutrient shortage, and knowing which nutrient is missing starts with checking whether the discoloration shows up on the lower, older leaves or the upper, younger ones. Mobile nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium show symptoms on the bottom leaves first because the plant shifts them to new growth, while immobile nutrients such as iron, manganese, sulfur, and zinc turn the top leaves yellow. The guide, built on K-State Extension photos from Dorivar Ruiz Diaz, walks through the telltale signs, from nitrogen chlorosis tied to poor root nodulation, to potassium yellowing along leaf margins, to sulfur shortages that are getting more common thanks to cleaner air and higher yielding varieties. Since high yielding soybeans pull large amounts of nutrients out of your soil, reading these leaf symptoms correctly can help you catch a deficiency before it costs you bushels at harvest.

[Read the full article.](#) No-Till Farmer, Tue Jul 7, 2026 11:00 PM CT

2. Free Science For Success Webinar on July 23

Heading into soybean harvest, the Science For Success team will hold a free, one hour webinar on July 23 that anyone can join. An expert panel of researchers from across the country will share fresh findings from national trials on desiccation and harvest timing, with most of the hour saved for your questions. Certified Crop Advisers can pocket 0.5 Crop Management and 0.5 Integrated Pest Management CEUs just for tuning in. Backed by the Soy Checkoff and more than 20 land grant universities, this is straight, research based advice aimed at helping you time your beans right, so it is worth a listen at soybeanscienceforsuccess.org.

[Read the full article.](#) Morning Ag Clips, Tue Jul 7, 2026 9:25 PM CT

3. Judge orders USDA to restore \$127M in farmland-access grants

Howell also granted the organizations' request to formally join an existing lawsuit against USDA, known as Urban Sustainability Directors Network v. "We're grateful the court recognized what's at stake and is ensuring that plaintiffs can continue to tangibly improve land, capital, and market access for young and underserved producers while litigation continues." USDA terminated 49 of the program's 50 grants in March, citing what termination letters

described as "discriminatory preferences" tied to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and concerns about "waste, fraud, and abuse." Howell's opinion states the government has "repeatedly failed to substantiate" those fraud and abuse claims over the course of the litigation. Howell rejected both arguments, citing her earlier rulings in the case. Discovery in the underlying case, including further USDA document production, continues through September.

[Read the full article](#). AgWeek, Tue Jul 7, 2026 5:29 PM CT

4. Lean Hogs

Trade today was disappointing for the bulls after Monday's close was the highest in a month. Last week's hog slaughter and pork production were significantly higher than the same week a year ago. Although cutout prices were higher at midsession today, they continue to lag behind season norms," The Hightower Report said. Lean hog futures were mixed, with front months rallying 50 cents to \$1.70, as deferreds were down 7 to 30 cents, Austin Schroeder wrote for Barchart.

[Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Tue Jul 7, 2026 4:54 PM CT

5. Cattle futures mostly lower ahead of direct business

August live cattle closed \$.67 lower at \$238.42 and October live cattle closed \$.62 lower at \$234.02. Medium and Large 1 feeder steers 668 to 695 pounds brought \$426 to \$442 and feeder steers 870 pounds brought \$364. The industry is also monitoring supplies of market-ready hogs and hog weights. Estimated hog slaughter was 479,000 head, up 13,000 on the week and up about 12,000 on the year.

[Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Tue Jul 7, 2026 4:00 PM CT

6. U.S. launches new strikes on Iran after attacks on tankers in Strait of Hormuz

The U.S. military hit Iran again after Iranian forces attacked three commercial ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz, including a Qatari LNG tanker that caught fire and could still explode and a massive Saudi crude carrier. A U.S. official said the goal is to punish the regime, telling reporter Nick Schiffrin that Iran is not listening so Washington is turning up the volume, and the Trump administration also revoked a key waiver that had allowed Iranian oil sales. Maritime security expert Ian Ralby noted that Iran has not fully claimed responsibility, likely to avoid looking like it is attacking neighbors, and that shipping traffic has collapsed from about 260 vessels to roughly 78 over a weekend and is now turning back. This matters because insurers, ship owners, and governments are rethinking every route through the strait, a chokepoint that carries a large share of the world oil supply, so any further escalation could jolt fuel and input prices that hit farm operations.

[Read the full article](#). PBS NewsHour, Tue Jul 7, 2026 5:57 PM CT

7. More Democrats call for Platner to drop Maine Senate bid after sexual assault accusation

The list of Democrats calling for Maine Senate candidate Graham Platner to withdraw continues to grow a day after a woman he once dated accused him of sexual assault. So this is a different type of scandal or different type of allegation, and I think this cratering of support is indicative of where probably where this is all headed for him. For example, there should be debates and town halls to make sure that Mainers know who they are selecting to take on Senator Collins. Jonah Anderson is an Associate Producer at the PBS NewsHour.

[Read the full article](#). PBS NewsHour, Tue Jul 7, 2026 5:44 PM CT

8. New truck leads to life of love, part 2

Back in 1950 Marilyn Smith told her milkman boyfriend Vladimir "Bud" Shiftar she would return to Wisconsin only if he bought a new Divco milk truck, since his old cab filled with choking exhaust, and he did, leading to their 1956 wedding in La Crosse. Bud's milk route brought colorful surprises, including a pet monkey given by a customer that caused so much trouble on the farm it was eventually handed off to a traveling circus. In one wild moment, Bud leaped from the crowd at the La Crosse County Fairgrounds to wrestle tigers, not realizing a hired stuntman in a leather jacket was sitting right there to do the job, a stunt that landed him in the La Crosse Tribune. The old Shiftar

farm and salvage yard, later scene of a barn fire, is now the headquarters of Kwik Trip, making this a slice of local history worth reading in full.

[Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Wed Jul 8, 2026 1:00 AM CT

9. Ohio Beef Youth Council to Host 2026 Evaluation Classic

The Ohio Beef Youth Council is launching its first Evaluation Classic on Saturday, Aug. 15, 2026, starting at 8 a.m., teaming up with judging coach Seth Ebert and The Ohio State ATI Livestock Judging Team. Young cattle enthusiasts will ride buses from the OCA office in Marysville to two top operations, Maplecrest Farms in Highland County, a renowned Angus seedstock outfit with a TransOva satellite facility for embryology and reproductive technology, and Raines Farms in Adams County, where they will size up market-ready cattle. Along the way they will practice live and on-paper evaluations, dig into EPDs and performance data, and learn how finish, carcass merit, and feeding all tie back to profitability in the beef supply chain. Spots are limited and registration runs through links on the OBYC Facebook page, with buses not expected back until around 6 p.m. and questions handled by the OCA office at (614) 873 to 6736.

[Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Tue Jul 7, 2026 9:14 PM CT

10. Protecting stored grain

John Mays says it's important to remember that crop risk doesn't end once it's harvested. "When you look at all the pests that are trying to eat the crop that you've spent your whole year trying to make, they can do a ton of damage and take money right out of your pocketbook," he says. He tells Brownfield that shifting weather patterns seem to be favoring the insects and bringing more of the Midwest under threat of damage to stored grain. "It wasn't that long ago that folks in Illinois, Ohio, Indiana and Iowa, they never thought about having bugs in their grain." He says, "I can tell you that the number of calls that we received in the last two years from growers in just those four states, I mean, it's in the hundreds and growers need to be mindful of it." Mays says producers should clean bins as thoroughly as possible between crops and explore insecticides that can be applied to the bins and grain itself.

[Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Tue Jul 7, 2026 3:55 PM CT

Cal's Receipt

Cal's Receipt is the running 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). Append-only, and every dollar cites its source. You will find it on your farm Dashboard, on the Farm Services desk. Open the Dashboard from the button at the bottom of this Brief.

Today in Farm Safety

Wear a properly fitted dust mask or respirator in grain dust, moldy hay, and confinement barns. Years of breathing it cause farmer's lung and chronic bronchitis. A surgical mask is not enough for mold spores, match the respirator to the dust. Source: National Ag Safety Database; NIOSH agricultural respiratory health.

Cal

Local Obituaries

No local obituaries for your area in today's papers.

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Rust on wheat report 1894

In 1894, the USDA Division of Vegetable Physiology and Pathology published the first U.S. scientific bulletin on wheat rust epidemiology. Stem rust would later (1953 to 1955) destroy 40% of the U.S. spring wheat crop and trigger Borlaug's rust-resistant breeding program in Mexico. Source: USDA Agricultural Research Service history.

Cal's Quiz

When was DDT released for civilian U.S. agricultural use?

- (a) 1935
- (b) 1945
- (c) 1962
- (d) 1972

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

The agronomist returned the soil sample results. He said, "Your phosphorus is low." The farmer said, "My checkbook agrees with my phosphorus."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) August 1945, after successful WWII malaria-control deployment. DDT was banned for most U.S. uses in 1972 after Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring*, but it bridged the gap between pre-war arsenicals and modern insecticides. Source: USDA Agricultural Research Service pesticide history; U.S. EPA historical archive.

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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