

The MI Farm Brief #036

Wednesday July 8, 2026, Cal "Corn-Bread" Halvorsen

MI Farm AI

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For internal review

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For Nate Meixell, Lake Crystal, Minnesota (Blue Earth County)

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

Weather, Lake Crystal, MN

Today: High **83F**. Showers And Thunderstorms Likely then Chance Showers And Thunderstorms.

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

What this means for today: Showers and thunderstorms likely before 10am, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy. High near 83, with temperatures falling to around 79 in the afternoon. West southwest wind 0 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

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

Hour by Hour, the day ahead

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
4 AM	73F	3%	S 6 mph	Clear
5 AM	70F	3%	0 mph	Mostly Cloudy
6 AM	69F	35%	0 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
7 AM	70F	66%	SSW 5 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
8 AM	70F	46%	SSW 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
9 AM	72F	26%	SSW 5 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
10 AM	75F	40%	SSW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
11 AM	77F	54%	SW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
12 PM	77F	49%	WSW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
1 PM	79F	44%	W 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
2 PM	80F	45%	W 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
3 PM	80F	47%	NW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
4 PM	81F	35%	NNW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
5 PM	79F	24%	NNW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
6 PM	79F	21%	N 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
7 PM	77F	19%	N 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
8 PM	74F	19%	N 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
9 PM	72F	19%	NNE 5 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
10 PM	71F	20%	NNE 5 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
11 PM	70F	21%	NNE 5 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
12 AM	69F	16%	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

Cal's Grain Call: Book about a third of your old crop corn today above your \$4.11 breakeven, and put a floor under the rest. You are never a forced seller below your cost.

Source: Hold/Sell CMBS + 2-round Devil's Advocate: 10 analysts, then an adversarial re-examination that corrected the call, as of 2026 to 07 to 06.

Corn (Jul 2026)	\$4.4250/bu +0.0175
Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.6450/bu +0.0025
Soy (Jul 2026)	\$12.0775/bu +0.1100
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$12.0200/bu +0.0425
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 11 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. Cutting the other way, demand still reads firm per Morning Ag Clips: Dairy Pasture Walks Featured in Iowa Grazing Academy. Honest truth, the tape does not hand us one clean reason today, so take this as our best read, not gospel.

Stocks point lower into the open, S&P; futures off about 1.1 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%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Acting on today's read: Sell 20,100 bu corn to Crystal Valley Lake Crystal at \$4.06 cash.
- Reminder for this week: Corn is approaching the canopy and tasseling weeks are ahead, now is the time to book your fungicide window if you plan a VT/R1 pass, before the applicator calendar fills.
- 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.

Farm context: Meixell Farms, 3,700 acres (1,600 owned + 2,100 rented), corn/soybean rotation, Crystal Valley cooperative (real intake on file)..

What to Watch Today

- Rain watch: through the workday the best rain chance is around 7 AM (66%). Time spray and field passes to the drier hours, and check the wind first.
- Market watch: corn up about 2 cents, beans up about 11 cents going into the day. Wheat up about 3 cents. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Dairy Pasture Walks Featured in Iowa Grazing Academy (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. Dairy Pasture Walks Featured in Iowa Grazing Academy

Shelby Gruss, extension forage specialist at Iowa State, will walk attendees through species identification, biomass estimation techniques, the value of rotational stocking for plant health and productivity and pasture problem diagnosis and renovation. For more information about the dairy pasture walks, contact Larry Tranel at or 563 to 580 to 6635. To better serve PFI's growing [...] AMES, Iowa Iowa Learning Farms, in partnership with the Joia Food & Fiber Farm, Savanna Institute, University of Minnesota Forever Green, and USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), will host a field day Wednesday, Sept. The agenda this year again focuses [...]

[Read the full article.](#) Morning Ag Clips, Wed Jul 8, 2026 4:59 AM CT

2. Minnesota Soybean Set for Farmfest

4 to 6 at the Gilfillan Estate in Morton to raise the banner and stake its claim as the State of Soy. "It's always fun to see new and familiar faces in our booth and talk about all the ways we're working for our farmers." With the entire Minnesota Legislature on the ballot, along with federal midterm elections, the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association (MSGA) expects a heavy policy presence in its booth. "Watching everyone from kids to grandparents participate in the Game of Soy and interact at each stop was wonderful," said Joe Serbus, Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council chair. 11 to 12 at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, has solidified its agenda and locked in its keynote speakers, which include CHS President and CEO Jay Debertin, NDAWN Director and North Dakota State Climatologist Daryl Ritchison and Frayne Olson, crop [...]

[Read the full article.](#) Morning Ag Clips, Wed Jul 8, 2026 4:42 AM CT

3. U.S. farmers pay more for inputs than Brazil, corn group says

"The price gouging that is happening for U.S. It also is calling for heightened transparency from input providers and for pricing to reflect "the realities of the current economic environment." Swanson stressed that the study shows cost differences even when taking into account that U.S. growers have enough choices," Swanson said. crop science unit said the domestic glyphosate business as it stands today isn't sustainable and that China has engaged in "predatory trade practices and subsidized imports of glyphosate." The corn group said its report stems from months of work by NCGA's Inputs Task Force, chaired by Frostic and formed to identify factors contributing to sustained record or near-record input cost highs in recent years.

[Read the full article.](#) Agri-Pulse, Wed Jul 8, 2026 3:00 AM CT

4. 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

5. 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

6. 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

7. 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

8. At NATO summit, Trump pressures allies on loyalty, defense spending and Greenland

strikes on Iran come against the backdrop of the NATO summit in Turkey, where leaders are hoping to strengthen Europe's ability to defend itself. It's the United States alone that can protect this giant mass of land, this giant piece of ice, develop it and improve it. could reduce its security presence too quickly and leave Europe vulnerable, the official replied the transition will be manageable if Europe steps up, Amna. Nick Schiffrin is PBS News Hour's Foreign Affairs and Defense Correspondent and serves as the host of Compass Points from PBS News.

[Read the full article.](#) PBS NewsHour, Tue Jul 7, 2026 5:55 PM CT

9. 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

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

We note the passing of neighbors across your area, gathered from the local papers this morning. Our thoughts are with their families.

Fleming, Marjory, Mankato Free Press obituaries. [Read the full obituary.](#)

Bergemann, Arlene, Mankato Free Press obituaries. [Read the full obituary.](#)

O'Donnell, Lucille, Mankato Free Press obituaries. [Read the full obituary.](#)

Marvel Peterson, Mankato Free Press obituaries. [Read the full obituary.](#)

Harlan & Janet Belgard, Mankato Free Press obituaries. [Read the full obituary.](#)

Peterson, Pastor Earl, Mankato Free Press obituaries. [Read the full obituary.](#)

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Sears Roebuck catalog 1894

In 1894, the Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog reached 322 pages and became the rural farm-family general store. By 1908 Sears was selling mail-order houses; by 1918, mail-order Allis-Chalmers tractors. The catalog was rural America's Amazon for 80 years. Source: Smithsonian National Museum of American History; Sears Archives at Hagley Museum.

Cal's Quiz

How many county-level Extension agents were placed in the country by 1920 under the Smith-Lever Act?

- (a) About 300
- (b) About 1,500
- (c) About 3,000
- (d) About 7,500

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

The LP gas truck started his route at 4 AM in January. The farmer left a thermos by the tank. The driver took the thermos with him. He returned it Friday. Empty. Both of them counted that a success.

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(c) About 3,000, nearly one in every U.S. agricultural county within six years of the 1914 signing. The Extension Service is still the single largest applied-research network in American farming. Source: USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture historical record.

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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