

The MI Farm Brief #129

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 **83F**. Showers And Thunderstorms Likely.

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

What this means for today: Showers and thunderstorms likely after 10am. Mostly cloudy. High near 83, with temperatures falling to around 78 in the afternoon. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half 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	3%	S 5 mph	Cloudy
5 AM	70F	2%	0 mph	Mostly Cloudy
6 AM	69F	6%	SW 5 mph	Partly Sunny
7 AM	70F	10%	SSW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
8 AM	72F	9%	SSW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
9 AM	74F	8%	SSW 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
10 AM	77F	18%	SW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
11 AM	79F	29%	SW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
12 PM	79F	39%	SW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
1 PM	81F	50%	SW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
2 PM	80F	58%	WSW 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
3 PM	80F	66%	W 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
4 PM	81F	62%	W 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
5 PM	78F	58%	WNW 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
6 PM	78F	42%	NNW 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
7 PM	76F	27%	N 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
8 PM	73F	25%	N 10 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
9 PM	71F	23%	NE 5 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
10 PM	69F	16%	ENE 5 mph	Slight Chance Rain Showers
11 PM	69F	9%	0 mph	Mostly Cloudy
12 AM	68F	10%	0 mph	Mostly Cloudy

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)	\$4.6450/bu +0.0025
Soy (Jul 2026)	\$12.0775/bu +0.1100
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$12.0150/bu +0.0375
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 3 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:

- Paperwork: FSA crop acreage reporting is due July 15 for spring planted crops. That is in 7 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: 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: 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 3 PM (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 turn pale or yellow this season, K-State agronomist Dorivar Ruiz Diaz says nutrient shortages are one likely culprit, and where the color change shows up tells you a lot. Mobile nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium show symptoms first on the lower, older leaves, while immobile ones like iron, manganese, and sulfur strike the upper, youngest leaves first. The article walks through the telltale signs, pale green nitrogen-starved plants tied to poor nodulation, interveinal iron and manganese chlorosis on high pH or sandy ground, purple phosphorus-cupped leaves in cool wet soils, and yellow leaf margins from potassium loss. It matters because high-yielding soybeans pull heavy amounts of nutrients per bushel, and sulfur shortfalls are on the rise thanks to cleaner air, so reading these leaf clues early can protect your yield.

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

5. Lean Hogs

October lean hog futures opened steady but slid to close just under Monday's low, a letdown for bulls after Monday marked the highest close in a month, according to The Hightower Report. Last week's hog slaughter and pork production ran significantly above year ago levels, which added pressure to the market. Cutout prices did tick higher at midsession, yet they are still running behind normal seasonal levels. Futures ended mixed, with front months up 50 cents to \$1.70 while deferred months slipped 7 to 30 cents, as reported by Austin Schroeder for Barchart.

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

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

Meeting NATO leaders in Ankara, Turkey, President Trump leaned hard on European allies over their defense budgets and their refusal to back the U.S. and Israeli war on Iran, even as fresh American strikes hit Iran during the summit. In a surprise, Trump signaled he would finally sell Turkey the F-35, the most advanced U.S. fighter jet, calling President Erdogan more loyal than other allies, despite Israeli and congressional objections tied to Turkey's Russian air defense missiles. He also revived his threat to take Greenland from NATO ally Denmark, mocked Europe as decaying, and questioned why the U.S. keeps spending hundreds of billions while allies decline to help. NATO chief Mark Rutte pushed back by unveiling new European-built planes, long-range missiles, and satellites toward the 5 percent of GDP defense goal set for 2035, though the report warns Europe will stay dependent on American power for years while those weapons are still being fielded.

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

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

Marilyn Smith told her milkman boyfriend Vladimir "Bud" Shiftar back in 1950 that she would return to Wisconsin only if he bought a new Divco milk truck to spare her from the exhaust fumes, and he did, leading to their 1956 wedding in La Crosse. Their farm life near La Crosse got wild, including a troublemaking pet monkey given to Bud by a milk customer, a monkey that watched the family barn burn before being handed off to a traveling circus. In one of the boldest moments, Bud spotted a tiger-wrestling show at the La Crosse County Fairgrounds, jumped up when the announcer asked for volunteers, and started wrestling the tigers himself, not knowing a hired stuntman was sitting right there in the crowd. The old Shiftar farm and salvage yard is now the headquarters of Kwik Trip, and this second part of Sarah Pfaff-Cavadini's story follows the July 2 opening chapter in Agri-View.

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

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

A federal judge, Beryl Howell, ordered USDA on June 30 to restore \$127 million in grants under the Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access program, reversing the agency's March cancellation of 49 of the 50 awards. The USDA

had claimed the grants involved discriminatory DEI preferences and possible fraud, but Howell said the government repeatedly failed to back up those claims and that records showed officials mostly just scanned documents for words tied to diversity or climate. Several upper Midwest groups get their money back, including the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust, Iowa Valley RC&D, and South Dakota's Four Bands Community Fund and NDN Collective, all aimed at helping young and underserved producers buy land and secure loans. Advocates call this the largest public investment in land access in the nation's history, and with an aging farm population and a tight land market, the fight over its survival continues in court through September.

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

9. Cattle futures mostly lower ahead of direct business

Live cattle slipped at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, with August closing 67 cents lower at \$238.42, while feeder cattle were mixed and traders now expect the bulk of this week's cash business to wait until Thursday or Friday. Country auctions stayed strong, as Missouri's Kingsville sale saw heifers hold steady to \$10 higher and Medium and Large 1 feeder steers in the 668 to 695 pound range fetch \$426 to \$442. On the beef side, Choice boxed beef eased 71 cents to \$385.77, the Choice to Select spread widened to \$19.88, and estimated slaughter of 110,000 head ran nearly 9,000 behind last year. Hogs told a different story, with August lean futures dropping \$1.60 to \$96.92 on fund and technical selling even as pork cutout values climbed \$1.66 to \$97.91 on sharply higher bellies, all matters worth watching if you feed livestock alongside the corn and beans.

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

10. Protecting stored grain

John Mays of Central Life Sciences warns that your crop stays at risk even after it leaves the field, with hungry pests ready to take money straight out of your pocketbook. He says shifting weather patterns are favoring insects and spreading the threat into states like Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, where growers once never worried about bugs in their grain. In just the last two years, Mays says Central Life Sciences has fielded hundreds of calls from producers in those four states alone. His advice is simple but important, clean your bins thoroughly between crops and look into insecticides you can apply to both the bins and the stored 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

Match the pesticide label's personal protective equipment (PPE) to the job, every time. Chemical-resistant gloves go on before mixing, and you wash them off before taking them off. The label is the law, if it lists a respirator, do not spray without one. Source: EPA Worker Protection Standard; National Pesticide Information Center.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Lincoln signs Bureau of Agriculture commissioner 1862

On May 15, 1862, the same day he created USDA, Lincoln named Isaac Newton (a Pennsylvania dairy farmer, not the physicist) as the first Commissioner of Agriculture. Newton served until his death in 1867. The role became Secretary of Agriculture and a cabinet seat in 1889. Source: USDA history office.

Cal's Quiz

Rural Free Delivery (RFD) began in 1896 with experimental routes in which state?

- (a) Iowa
- (b) West Virginia
- (c) Pennsylvania
- (d) Ohio

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

Why is the grain bin a two-person job? Because the corn doesn't care which one of you stops being alive, but the family does. The two-person rule is the family's rule, not the corn's.

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) West Virginia. Five experimental routes began October 1, 1896, and by 1902 RFD served the whole country, meaning a farmer could read yesterday's grain prices at his own mailbox. Source: U.S. Postal Service historical archive; Smithsonian Postal Museum.

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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