

The MI Farm Brief #137

Thursday July 16, 2026, Cal "Corn-Bread" Halvorsen

MI Farm AI

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Generated by Mark's Claude AI

For internal review

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

Thursday, July 16, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Owatonna, MN

Today: High **88F**. Areas Of Fog then Smoke.

Tonight: Low **68F**. Areas Of Fog.

What this means for today: Areas of fog and areas of smoke before 7am, then smoke and patchy fog. Sunny, with a high near 88. Southwest wind 0 to 5 mph.

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	1%	0 mph	Areas Of Fog
5 AM	71F	1%	0 mph	Areas Of Fog
6 AM	70F	2%	0 mph	Areas Of Fog
7 AM	72F	2%	0 mph	Smoke
8 AM	76F	5%	0 mph	Smoke
9 AM	79F	7%	0 mph	Smoke
10 AM	83F	9%	0 mph	Smoke
11 AM	84F	9%	0 mph	Smoke
12 PM	85F	13%	0 mph	Smoke
1 PM	86F	14%	0 mph	Areas Of Smoke
2 PM	87F	14%	SW 5 mph	Areas Of Smoke
3 PM	87F	14%	SW 5 mph	Areas Of Smoke
4 PM	88F	13%	SSW 5 mph	Areas Of Smoke
5 PM	87F	11%	SSW 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
6 PM	87F	8%	SSW 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
7 PM	86F	6%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
8 PM	83F	4%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
9 PM	79F	3%	SSE 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
10 PM	76F	1%	SSE 5 mph	Mostly Clear
11 PM	75F	1%	S 5 mph	Mostly Clear
12 AM	74F	1%	S 5 mph	Mostly Clear

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

Grain and Livestock, corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle

Corn (Jul 2026)	\$4.3375/bu -0.0400
Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.7225/bu +0.0275
Soy (Jul 2026)	\$12.0725/bu +0.0525
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$12.0550/bu +0.0375
Wheat (Jul 2026)	\$6.3125/bu +0.0425
Live Cattle (CME)	\$230.12/cwt -0.6%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$95.18/cwt +0.1%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn slipped about 4 cents; beans added about 5 cents; and wheat added about 4 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: MDA to Gather Input on Socioeconomic Impact of Large-Scale Dairies in Minnesota. 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 0.2 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	52,659 +0.3%
S&P; 500	7,572 +0.4%
Nasdaq	26,269 +0.6%
Russell 2000	2,976 +0.4%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Paperwork: The fall ARC and PLC and Dairy Margin Coverage election window opens in late summer. That is in 16 days, so prep now, pull last year's yields and base acres so you can run the payment scenarios before you elect.
- Reminder for this week: Watch for the corn VT/R1 tassel-silk window for fungicide, and scout soybeans entering R1-R3 for white mold risk in thick, wet canopies.
- Standing reminder: Scout soybeans for aphids, the 250-per-plant treatment threshold drives the spray decision. Check corn ears for fill and tip-back.

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

- Field window: any rain risk eases by 6 AM, then the working day looks dry enough for field passes. Check the wind first.

- Market watch: corn down about 4 cents, beans up about 5 cents going into the day. Wheat up about 4 cents. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: MDA to Gather Input on Socioeconomic Impact of Large-Scale Dairies in Minnesota (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. MDA to Gather Input on Socioeconomic Impact of Large-Scale Dairies in Minnesota Information will be gathered through two virtual meetings and an online form (www.mda.state.mn.us/dairyinput). Comments will be accepted from July 28 to October 1 at 5 p.m. Tony Evers celebrated National Agriculture Day on March 22 in his hometown of Plymouth, Wis. (DMI) President and CEO Barbara O'Brien outlined "now, next, and future" checkoff strategies to more than 800 dairy farmers and industry representatives at the 2024 joint annual meeting of the United Dairy Industry Association, National Dairy Promotion and Research Board and National Milk Producers Federation held in Phoenix, Oct. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Thu Jul 16, 2026 4:57 AM CT

2. Facility Tours Highlight Calf Management Practices On-site discussions are a key focus of the upcoming PDP Calf Facility Tours presented by Professional Dairy Producers (PDP). See how automated calf feeders support healthy calf growth in a system where calves begin in a nursery barn before transitioning to group housing with auto feeders. Follow along digitally in advance of and during the event by following PDP on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X. Two repeating sessions of [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Thu Jul 16, 2026 4:43 AM CT

3. No-Till Cropping & Business Insights The 2025 No-Till Farmer Operational Benchmark Survey is being promoted here as a deep online resource for no-tillage practices, with the pitch that a single good idea can pay back a subscription many times over. The piece also spotlights an advanced XPR concave system that threshes all crops with one set, cuts rotor loss, and delivers cleaner grain samples and better grain quality. Titan International gets a strong plug too, described as one of the largest North American makers of wheels, tires, and undercarriage products for farm, construction, forestry, mining, and other off road equipment, backed by a worldwide dealer network. It matters because these tools and suppliers all point toward the same goal for your operation, namely better productivity and profitability through smarter no-till decisions and reliable equipment. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Wed Jul 15, 2026 11:00 PM CT

4. House GOP fast-tracks reconciliation 3.0 with farm aid, Save America Act House Republicans are fast-tracking a spending package called reconciliation 3.0 that pairs the Save America Act, which would require proof of citizenship to register and photo ID to vote in federal elections, with fresh money for troops and farmers. Speaker Mike Johnson and Vice President JD Vance are pushing GOP unity to pass it, tied to President Trump's \$87.6 billion supplemental request that includes \$11.1 billion in farm aid plus year round E15 ethanol sales. The plan would let the House Agriculture Committee, led by Chairman Glenn Thompson, boost farm funding by up to \$12 billion, with Thompson saying farmers need the cash now amid bad weather, shaky trade, high input costs, and the war with Iran driving up fuel and fertilizer prices. This follows the December 2025 aid using Secretary Brooke Rollins' Section 5 authority, which sent \$11 billion to row crop farmers and \$1.625 billion for specialty crops through the Farmer Bridge Assistance Program, though it is not yet decided how the new money would reach your bank account. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Wed Jul 15, 2026 6:46 PM CT

5. High soil pH could trigger iron deficiency chlorosis in soybeans Agronomist Brian Ternus with Mustang Seeds warns that soybeans across the Upper Midwest may struggle with iron deficiency chlorosis, or IDC, this season. The trouble starts when soil pH climbs above 7, forming free carbonates that block the plant's roots from pulling in enough iron even as it exudes acids to dissolve it. Watch for yellowing on the second, third, and fourth trifoliates around the V2 to V3 stage, though Ternus says many plants green back up later unless the affected area is severe. Why it matters to your bottom line, in bad spots IDC can cut soybean yields by 20 to 30 percent, so knowing your field's pH is worth the look. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Wed Jul 15, 2026 3:41 PM CT

6. Trump's intelligence nominee refuses to say who won 2020 election We need 500 donors to help us close it. I know you, but it strains credibility to think that you were not aware of Director Gabbard's intervention in a domestic election activities in Fulton County. Does it concern you about the most recent director of national intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, that she got involved in domestic politics? His pieces have broken new ground on an array of military issues, exposing debates simmering outside the public eye. [Read the full article](#). PBS NewsHour, Wed Jul 15, 2026 5:50 PM CT

7. Van Hollen, mulling White House bid, says Democrats doing a bad job telling voters what they're for "I chaired the DSCC once, I chaired the DCCC... [Read the full article](#). The Hill, Wed Jul 15, 2026 6:17 PM CT

8. Research stations boost leading edge Researchers across three University of Wisconsin agricultural research stations are testing innovations that could reshape how row crops and livestock are managed, according to a report from these leading edge farm sites. At the Hancock station, scientists including postdoctoral researcher Rubens Diogo inoculated more than 150 corn hybrids with three beneficial bacteria to see if the plants can pull nitrogen from the air, a breakthrough that could cut fertilizer costs. Meanwhile, weed scientist Rodrigo Werle is battling herbicide resistant troublemakers like waterhemp, scouting fields at the Arlington and Lancaster stations even as a July heat dome and dry conditions gripped the Upper Midwest. Over at Arlington, animal science teams are running immunology and nutrition trials on beef-on-dairy calves, feeding experimental supplements against placebos, all work that MI Farm AI thinks could pay off for your bottom line down the road. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Thu Jul 16, 2026 1:00 AM CT

9. No-Till Highlights: July 16, 2026 Out in western Ohio, Zimmer Farms is pulling off a neat trick this month, running a CLAAS Lexion 8600 combine to harvest 2026 winter wheat while a Fendt Momentum planter drops no-till double crop soybeans right into the fresh stubble on 15 inch rows. The dollars behind soil health show up in an Alabama study where cotton growers using these practices for at least five years saw net income climb an average of \$108 an acre, findings that Auburn University and Soil Health Institute experts break down in a webinar. Closer to home, the Broke Farmers of Northeast Iowa checked their cover crop soybeans on July 6 and found them thriving after 2 inches of rain, while another farmer admits he went through all seven stages of grief before finally giving up tillage. Down in Mississippi, scientist Dave Spencer is building on twenty years of research to help growers stretch their water further and boost yields, proving that letting go of the plow can pay off in more ways than one. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Wed Jul 15, 2026 11:00 PM CT

10. Early weaning strategies for challenging forage conditions Facing thin pastures or cows that need to gain condition, cow-calf producers can turn to early weaning to ease the strain on the herd. Research from the University of Nebraska Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory shows that by about 90 to 100 days old, a March-born calf already has a fully developed rumen, though it is still small in size. That means calves can be pulled off cows sooner than many folks expect, letting the mothers rebuild body condition on limited grass. In a dry year when forage runs short, this approach could protect both your cows and your bottom line heading into the next breeding season. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Wed Jul 15, 2026 5:45 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

Before you reach into any jammed combine, baler, or chopper, shut the engine off and take the key. Idling power can re-engage in a heartbeat, header and pickup injuries happen when someone clears a plug with the machine still live. Engine off, key in your pocket, then clear it. Source: National Ag Safety Database; ROPS and PTO safety, OSHA.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Stock market crash 1929

On October 29, 1929 (Black Tuesday), the U.S. stock market crashed. Farm prices, already weak from the post-WWI bust, fell another 50% by 1932. Corn that brought \$0.80 a bushel in 1929 brought \$0.31 in 1932, the price floor that triggered the AAA in 1933. Source: USDA Economic Research Service historical price series; Federal Reserve historical record.

Cal's Quiz

How heavy was the butter sculpture at Iowa's pavilion at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition?

- (a) 130 pounds
- (b) 1,300 pounds
- (c) 13,000 pounds
- (d) 130,000 pounds

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

A farmer warms up his tractor for ten minutes before driving. His son said, "It's wasting fuel." The farmer said, "And it's saving an engine. Pick one."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) 1,300 pounds. The Chicago fair (May 1-October 30, 1893) was the first national showcase of Midwest farm productivity. Over 27 million people attended, more than 40% of the entire U.S. population at the time. Source: Chicago Historical Society; Smithsonian Institution.

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.

The MI Farm Brief is the independent daily farm intelligence brief that earns zero when you buy inputs. Cal "Corn-Bread" Halvorsen is the editorial persona of the MI Farm AI desk, the AI-orchestrated production team that produces this Brief every working morning. The Monthly Receipt is signed by the Founder, MI Farm AI. Honest. Independent. Loyal. Transparent. The HILT Covenant.