

The MI Farm Brief #138

Friday July 17, 2026, Cal "Corn-Bread" Halvorsen

MI Farm AI

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

Friday, July 17, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Owatonna, MN

Today: High **91F**. Sunny.

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

What this means for today: Sunny, with a high near 91. Heat index values as high as 97. South southwest wind 5 to 10 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	73F	2%	S 7 mph	Clear
5 AM	72F	0%	S 5 mph	Mostly Clear
6 AM	71F	0%	S 5 mph	Sunny
7 AM	70F	1%	S 5 mph	Sunny
8 AM	74F	1%	SSW 5 mph	Sunny
9 AM	77F	0%	SW 5 mph	Sunny
10 AM	83F	0%	SW 5 mph	Sunny
11 AM	85F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
12 PM	87F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
1 PM	88F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
2 PM	89F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
3 PM	90F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
4 PM	90F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
5 PM	90F	0%	SW 10 mph	Sunny
6 PM	91F	0%	SW 10 mph	Clear
7 PM	89F	1%	SW 10 mph	Mostly Clear
8 PM	88F	3%	SSW 10 mph	Mostly Clear
9 PM	83F	4%	SSW 10 mph	Mostly Clear
10 PM	79F	7%	SSW 10 mph	Mostly Clear
11 PM	79F	11%	SW 5 mph	Mostly Clear
12 AM	78F	8%	W 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)	\$4.6125/bu -0.0275
Soy (Jul 2026)	\$12.0725/bu +0.0525
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$11.9000/bu -0.0500
Wheat (Jul 2026)	\$6.3125/bu +0.0425
Live Cattle (CME)	\$227.07/cwt -1.3%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$100.28/cwt +5.4%

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 eased 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: Iowa Learning Farms to Host Conservation On Tap Event with ISU Brew Lab. 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	52,553 to 0.2%
S&P; 500	7,534 to 0.5%
Nasdaq	25,882 to 1.5%
Russell 2000	2,975 to 0.1%

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 15 days, so prep now, pull last year's yields and base acres so you can run the payment scenarios before you elect.
- Standing reminder: Scout soybeans for aphids, the 250-per-plant treatment threshold drives the spray decision. Check corn ears for fill and tip-back.
- Reminder: Corn is filling grain (R3-R5 on seasonal normals) and beans are setting pods, the yield is being built now. Late-season disease and moisture stress matter most here.

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: How to properly compensate for 'sweat equity' (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. How to properly compensate for 'sweat equity' A farm's future often hinges on one hard question, how do you fairly reward the son or daughter who spent decades building the operation while siblings pursued other careers. Simply splitting the inheritance equally can shortchange that child's years of underpaid labor, a contribution known as sweat equity. Experts say the fix lies in proper valuation of that work and a written succession plan, so the on farm heir gets credit before the estate is divided. Getting this right can keep both the land and the family relationships intact, which is why MI Farm AI thinks every farm family should read the full story. [Read the full article](#). Farm Progress, Fri Jul 17, 2026 2:00 AM CT

2. Honey bees can detect viruses in food Researchers looked at whether honey bees can directly sense viruses in the food they gather, not just spot sickness in their hive mates. One major threat is deformed wing virus, which crumples the wings of developing bees and spreads fast when the parasitic mite Varroa destructor feeds on pupae and adults. Because bees pick up viruses while foraging on flowers, the ability to detect and avoid contaminated food could cut down on infections and slow the spread of disease across a colony. For anyone who depends on pollinators for crops, healthier hives mean better pollination and yields, so this finding could point toward new ways to protect bee populations. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Fri Jul 17, 2026 1:00 AM CT

3. Syngenta Sues BASF to Block Ridivex Corn Herbicide Launch Two crop protection giants are headed to a Delaware federal court after Syngenta filed a patent infringement lawsuit against Germany's BASF to stop the launch of Ridivex, a new corn herbicide the EPA is expected to approve within days. Syngenta claims Ridivex, which mixes the weedkiller pyroxasulfone with a corn safener called isoxadifen-ethyl, copies U.S. Patent No. 8,404,618 behind its own premium product, Storen. Syngenta wants the court to block sales immediately, arguing that letting a rival in during the critical June to September distributor buying window would cause irreparable harm, and it is also seeking damages and lost profits. For corn growers, the stakes are real, because an injunction could mean one fewer tool against herbicide resistant superweeds, higher prices from less competition, and more uncertainty for the dealers stocking your chemicals this fall. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Thu Jul 16, 2026 8:15 PM CT

4. Trade progress with China offers hope for U.S. corn, soybean markets China and the U.S. appear ready to roll back tariffs, with the U.S. dropping its 10 percent fentanyl tariff while China cuts 10 percent on American grain imports, a move that market analyst Don Roose of U.S. Commodities calls a real demand boost. Back in May, the White House said China committed to buying at least 17 billion dollars in U.S. farm products every year through 2028. Roose says this progress opens a quicker path for China to buy its prorated 17 million metric tons of corn by year's end and in the years ahead, making American grain more competitive. Recent Chinese purchases are already helping prop up corn and soybean prices, so this thaw in trade tensions could mean stronger markets right when you need them. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Thu Jul 16, 2026 3:47 PM CT

5. House Budget Committee OKs reconciliation 3.0, rejecting Democratic proposals The House Budget Committee voted 20 to 14 on Thursday to advance a \$95 billion package called reconciliation 3.0, clearing the way for up to \$12 billion in fresh aid to farmers. Democrats offered 14 amendments, all shot down along party lines, including one from Rep. Jimmy Panetta of California that aimed to repeal Trump's global and targeted tariffs. Panetta argued the tariffs have pushed the effective rate to 11.8% and cost the average household up to \$940 a year, saying the \$12 billion only papers over bad trade policy rather than fixing it. Chairman Jodey Arrington of Texas fired back that past leaders were weak on enforcing the China deal and had been scammed for decades, so tune in to hear why this fight over your farm aid is heating up as new tariffs on 60 nations and a 25% hit on Brazil loom. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Thu Jul 16, 2026 2:43 PM CT

6. Fencing and Grazing Clinic in Northeast Iowa on Aug. 11 This hands-on clinic addresses one of the biggest challenges in implementing any grazing system: the infrastructure. Grazing Leases & Fence Law 1:15 p.m. Register online at <https://go.iastate.edu/5MSMOU> or by calling 319 to 377 to 9839. Shelby Gruss, extension forage specialist at Iowa [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Fri Jul 17, 2026 4:34 AM CT

7. Iowa Learning Farms to Host Conservation On Tap Event with ISU Brew Lab in partnership with the Iowa State University Brew Lab located at 1951 Food Sciences Building on campus in Ames. Stacy Groene, ISU Brew Lab Beer and Wine Production Specialist, Robert Brown, Anson Marston Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering, and Erin Norton, Director of the Midwest Grape and Wine Industry Institute will begin the discussion by providing history of the Brew Lab and highlighting the importance of water quality in the brewing process. and Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. The event is open to farmers and landowners at no cost and includes a complimentary meal. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Fri Jul 17, 2026 4:26 AM CT

8. Cyanobacteria returns with summer Warm summer weather brings back a familiar hazard, cyanobacteria, and producers need to watch for these toxins on their operations. Also known as blue green algae, cyanobacteria thrives in standing water and can turn deadly for livestock that drink from contaminated ponds or troughs. The article, datelined out of Black River Falls, Wisconsin, opens with a twist about crop damage from deer before turning to this lesser known summer threat. For anyone running cattle or relying on farm ponds, knowing the warning signs could save animals and money, making this a story worth reading in full. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Fri Jul 17, 2026 1:00 AM CT

9. Secret Seasoning Success: Luke Schilling's Journey from Grandpa's Recipe to National FFA Recognition Purdue student and 2025 Eastern Hancock High School graduate Luke Schilling has turned his grandfather Doug "Big Doug" Brand's secret steakhouse spice blend into Big Doug's Secret Seasoning, and this October he stands as one of just four national finalists for the American Star in Agribusiness Award at the 99th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. Schilling took over the recipe about ten years ago as a kid, scaling up from a small KitchenAid mixer to a 50 gallon commercial mixer and moving from door to door sales to an online store at BigDougSeasoning.com that now ships to over thirty states and several countries. What makes his venture stand out is that it runs entirely as a non-profit, with every dollar reinvested to sponsor children through World Vision and Compassion International, stock local food pantries, and fund FFA and 4-H programs. His mother Natalie, who is also his FFA advisor, serves on the business board and keeps orders and labeling running while he is at college, and through it all the family recipe stays a guarded secret, made, as Luke jokes, with love. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Thu Jul 16, 2026 8:20 PM CT

10. USDA blueberry referendum sparks debate over proposed assessment increase Blueberry growers are voting this month on a five year referendum from the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council that could double their assessment from \$18 to \$36 per ton for fresh berries and imports, with processed set at \$30. Michigan Blueberry Advisory Committee President Chad Reenders is urging growers to grasp the weight of this vote, warning that a bigger marketing budget does not guarantee better returns, especially when a 2024 Michigan State study found the average grower earns just \$240 per acre. The push comes as domestic fresh production jumped about 30 percent over the past decade while imports nearly doubled, and USHBC committee chair Tom Bodke says the two year proposal answers those swelling supplies, citing Cornell research projecting a 10 to one return on the added promotion over six years. It matters because farmers rarely get to vote directly on their own costs, and Bodke notes growers will still get another say on the assessment if the USDA advances the petition. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Thu Jul 16, 2026 3:50 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

Block the wheels and use a safety chain when you hitch or unhitch a loaded wagon or implement. A heavy implement that rolls or drops off the hitch can pin a person fast. Stand clear of the path while backing, and let one person give the signals. Source: National Ag Safety Database; ASABE implement towing guidance.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Iowa statehood 1846

On December 28, 1846, Iowa was admitted to the Union as the 29th state. At statehood its population was about 100,000, mostly farmers along the Mississippi and the Des Moines River. By 1900 it was 2.2 million, and corn was already king. Source: Iowa State Historical Society; U.S. Census Bureau.

Cal's Quiz

After the 1929 stock-market crash, what happened to corn that brought \$0.80/bu in 1929?

- (a) It stayed at \$0.80
- (b) It dropped to \$0.55 by 1932
- (c) It dropped to \$0.31 by 1932
- (d) It rose to \$1.20 by 1932

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

A dairy bull broke through a fence and walked into the neighbor's yard. The neighbor called the farmer. The farmer said, "He's just paying a visit. He'll be home for supper." The neighbor said, "That's what I'm afraid of."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(c) It dropped to \$0.31 by 1932, a price floor that triggered the AAA in 1933. Farm prices fell another 50% after Black Tuesday (October 29, 1929) on top of post-WWI weakness. Source: USDA Economic Research Service historical price series; Federal Reserve 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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