

The MI Farm Brief #140

Monday July 20, 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)

Monday, July 20, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Owatonna, MN

Today: High **91F**. Showers And Thunderstorms Likely then Mostly Sunny.

Tonight: Low **67F**. Chance Showers And Thunderstorms.

What this means for today: Showers and thunderstorms likely before 8am, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms between 8am and 11am. Some of the storms could produce heavy rain. Mostly sunny, with a high near 91. Heat index values as high as 98. Southwest wind around 15 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	69F	28%	ENE 5 mph	Light Rain and Fog/Mist
5 AM	70F	50%	S 15 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
6 AM	68F	63%	S 15 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
7 AM	70F	69%	S 15 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
8 AM	72F	47%	SSW 15 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
9 AM	74F	28%	SSW 15 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
10 AM	79F	16%	SSW 15 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
11 AM	82F	6%	SW 15 mph	Mostly Sunny
12 PM	83F	4%	WSW 15 mph	Sunny
1 PM	86F	5%	WSW 15 mph	Sunny
2 PM	89F	7%	WSW 15 mph	Sunny
3 PM	90F	5%	WSW 15 mph	Sunny
4 PM	90F	7%	W 15 mph	Sunny
5 PM	91F	6%	W 15 mph	Sunny
6 PM	89F	3%	WNW 15 mph	Mostly Clear
7 PM	87F	2%	WNW 15 mph	Mostly Clear
8 PM	85F	2%	W 10 mph	Patchy Smoke
9 PM	80F	0%	WNW 15 mph	Patchy Smoke
10 PM	76F	0%	W 15 mph	Mostly Clear

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
11 PM	75F	0%	WNW 10 mph	Mostly Clear
12 AM	73F	0%	WNW 10 mph	Patchy Smoke

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

Grain and Livestock, corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle

Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.7325/bu +0.0575
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$12.1825/bu +0.1525
Live Cattle (CME)	\$224.43/cwt -1.2%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$101.65/cwt +1.4%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn added about 6 cents; and beans added about 15 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: Iowa Corn Farmers Advocate for Policy Priorities. Honest truth, the tape does not hand us one clean reason today, so take this as our best read, not gospel.

Stocks point higher into the open, S&P; futures up about 0.2 percent. A firmer tape eases the borrowing and input-cost mood your lender watches, though it does not move your cash bid by itself.

Cal

Wall Street, Friday's close

Dow Jones	52,146 to 0.8%
S&P; 500	7,458 to 1.0%
Nasdaq	25,520 to 1.4%
Russell 2000	2,962 to 0.4%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Reminder, still on your list: 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.

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 7 AM (69%). Time spray and field passes to the drier hours, and check the wind first.
- Market watch: corn up about 6 cents, beans up about 15 cents going into the day. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Land base continues to change (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. Land base continues to change Visit www.fb.org/market-intel for more information. If your social media feed has suddenly filled with content about ultra-processed foods, you're far from alone. Since Health and Human Services... [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Mon Jul 20, 2026 1:00 AM CT

2. Sabanto Takes Autonomy 'Leap' with Bayer Investment Farm-tech company Sabanto just landed a major funding round from Leaps by Bayer, Bayer's strategic investment arm, to grow its dealer network and crank out more of its retrofit kits that turn ordinary tractors into fully autonomous machines using cloud communications, GNSS receivers, cameras, obstacle sensors and AI. CEO Craig Rupp says the payoff is real, pointing to Kentucky farmer Quint Pottinger, who used a Sabanto kit to autonomously plant over 800 corn acres, much of it no-tilled into thick cereal rye. Rupp predicts that within three years autonomy will be mainstream, and he favors running several smaller 100 horsepower machines instead of one \$2 million, 400 horsepower tractor, arguing the small units are cheaper, more fuel efficient, easier to fix and offer redundancy. To keep the technology grounded in real farm needs, Rupp built a 24 member farmer advisory board that meets monthly with COO Corey Spaetti, which matters to you because it signals autonomous field work is moving fast from a wild idea to something you could actually put to work saving on labor and equipment. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Mon Jul 20, 2026 12:00 AM CT

3. Smart Manure Aeration System 'Fits Like a Glove,' for No-Till & Cover Crop Users Pennsylvania no-tiller Grant Troop is talking up a Smart Manure Aeration System that pushes air through storage in one minute cycles, keeping the manure constantly homogenized and oxidizing dangerous compounds like hydrogen sulfide, methane, and ammonia. That oxidation cuts roughly 90 percent of the odor, so what you spread smells more like compost, and it makes nutrients instantly available to the crop so you can trim your planting time nitrogen and still get a strong start. Because the manure stays mixed, there is no agitation needed to haul it, and unlike regular pit manure it flakes off forage instead of leaving a sticky coating that hurts feed quality at harvest. Troop, who calls it a soil health dream, says users are reporting about a 15 percent bump in hay yields alone, which is why any no-till or cover crop operator should want the full story. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Mon Jul 20, 2026 12:00 AM CT

4. Iowa Corn Farmers Advocate for Policy Priorities Priority issues included nationwide, year-round passage of E15 in the Senate, renewal of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), bipartisan development and passage of a new Farm Bill and reduction of high input costs through increase exploration of consolidation within the fertilizer industry and removal of countervailing duties and tariffs. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary Luke Lindberg, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Throughout the week, Wisconsin corn growers and Wisconsin Corn staff [...] CHESTERFIELD, Mo. The signatures advocate for priorities that directly impact growers, including year-round, nationwide access to E-15 fuel, the implementation of vital trade agreements and [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Mon Jul 20, 2026 4:06 AM CT

5. Joint Study Shows Pressure Increasing Across Iowa Ag Economy The study, 2026 Iowa Agricultural Outlook: The Pressure is Rising, finds that negative margins are increasing farmer financial vulnerability across the state. "Despite multiple years of challenging economic conditions, Iowa farmers have shown remarkable resilience," said Adam Gregg, president and CEO of the Iowa Bankers Association. works to secure agreements with trading partners, global competition continues to intensify, underscoring the importance of strong, reliable export markets. The statewide survey has been conducted by Iowa State [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Mon Jul 20, 2026 3:55 AM CT

6. Perfect storm: Hail and tornadoes rip through the Corn Belt Central Illinois farmers Alex and Lena Head watched a historic severe storm tear across their land, leaving more than 500 acres of crops battered by hail and wind. The couple's losses show just how quickly a single storm can wipe out a season's work in the Corn Belt. Experts note that Tornado Alley is shifting east, putting Midwest grain country in the path of more frequent and violent weather. The story makes the case that crop insurance is no longer optional but essential for farms hoping to survive these growing threats. [Read the full article](#). Farm Progress, Mon Jul 20, 2026 2:00 AM CT

7. Governor Braun's Fuel Tax Freeze Hits Legal Limit in August-Threatening a 61-Cent Gas Price Spike Governor Mike Braun has used four emergency executive orders to suspend Indiana's fuel taxes since April, giving the state the cheapest gas in the country at a nation low average of \$3.12 a gallon. That relief runs out on August 6, because state law bars the governor from renewing an emergency proclamation again without legislative approval, and letting it lapse would slam drivers with a combined 61 cent per gallon jump overnight. The timing lands right as fall harvest ramps up, when farms burn far more fuel in their pickup trucks and service vehicles, potentially adding thousands of dollars in weekly costs per operation and squeezing grain elevators and co ops that pass higher hauling fees back as lower crop bids. With input costs already up about 50 percent and a special legislative session only floated but not scheduled, this looming tax cliff could thin already razor thin farm margins right when producers can least afford it. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Sun Jul 19, 2026 8:53 PM CT

8. Washington Week Ahead: Congressional time crunch, trade talks in spotlight Congress has just four days in the House and three work weeks in the Senate to tackle a stack of farm priorities before scattering for a five week recess ahead of the November 3 midterms. President Trump is pushing a nearly \$88 billion supplemental package that folds in year round E15 ethanol sales and \$11.1 billion in farmer aid, while Speaker Mike Johnson works a rival \$95 billion reconciliation plan with up to \$12 billion in aid but no E15, and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins is set to testify Tuesday. This matters because a new Iowa study from the Farm Bureau, Iowa State, and the Bankers Association found net farm income in the state dropped 53 percent from 2022 to 2024, with corn input costs up 37 percent and soybeans up 36 percent since 2021, and soy exports still hurting from China trade fights. On top of all that, the Senate farm bill and a tense fight over SNAP food benefit changes remain unresolved, so whether real help reaches struggling growers before the October safety net programs kick in is still very much up in the air. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Sun Jul 19, 2026 7:34 PM CT

9. Ohio Ag Weather and Forecast, July 20, 2026 Storms move into Ohio starting late tonight in the far northwest, then sweep across the state overnight and Tuesday, with a chance of strong to severe weather near daybreak Tuesday in the northeast and far south. Most of the state, about 80 percent, should pick up a quarter inch to an inch and a half of rain by Wednesday sunrise. Behind that front, expect a cool, dry, comfortable stretch Wednesday and Thursday before warmth returns for the weekend, with humidity climbing again the week of the 27th and bringing scattered pop up storms Monday and Tuesday at only about 50 percent coverage. The bigger story is a dry trend forecast from next Wednesday into early August, so watch for talk of crops needing a rain if this pattern holds. [Read the full article](#). Ohio Country Journal, Sun Jul 19, 2026 7:11 PM CT

10. Ohio Ag Net Podcast, Ep. 453, Bringing Certainty and Sustainability Back to the Farm Farmers for Soil Health is the focus of this Ohio Ag Net Podcast, powered by Ohio Corn and Wheat, spotlighting a program that helps growers take the next step in conservation while protecting their land for the long haul. The show digs into how better soil health can improve your operation, guard your resources, and build lasting sustainability. It also turns to Washington, where the Ohio Farm Bureau shares an update on policies that could bring some certainty back to farming. Big items are on the cusp of becoming law, including the Farm Bill, year round E15, and fertilizer availability and prices, and farm groups are pushing Congress hard to get them across the finish line. [Read the full article](#). Ohio Country Journal, Sun Jul 19, 2026 2:45 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

Keep hands, sleeves, and pull-strings away from an unguarded auger intake. A portable grain auger can take a loose sleeve and the arm with it before you can react. Shut it off to clear a jam, and keep the intake guard in place. Source: Purdue Agricultural Safety and Health; National Ag Safety Database.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Deere buys Waterloo Boy 1918

On March 14, 1918, John Deere & Company paid \$2.35 million for the Waterloo Gasoline Engine Company, maker of the Waterloo Boy tractor (built on John Froelich's 1892 design). The purchase put Deere in the tractor business; today Deere is the largest farm-equipment maker in the world. Source: Deere & Company corporate archive; Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Cal's Quiz

After Mendel's 1900 rediscovery, which U.S. corn breeders designed the double-cross hybrid?

- (a) Burbank and Carver
- (b) Shull and Jones
- (c) Wallace and Garst
- (d) Mendel and Darwin

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

Winter egg production dropped. The farmer told his wife. She said, "The hens are on strike." He said, "What are their demands?" She said, "Heat lamps and more daylight. Both are on you."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) George Shull and Donald Jones. Within 20 years of Mendel's rediscovery they had developed the double-cross hybrid, the technology that made Henry Wallace's Pioneer Hi-Bred possible in 1926. Source: American Society of Agronomy; Iowa State University archives.

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.