

The MI Farm Brief #142

Wednesday July 22, 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 22, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Steele County, MN

Today: High **74F**. Sunny.

Tonight: Low **52F**. Mostly Clear.

What this means for today: Sunny, with a high near 74. North wind 0 to 5 mph.

Source: NOAA National Weather Service via the MI Farm AI weather layer for Steele County, MN, pulled this morning.

Hour by Hour, the day ahead

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
4 AM	56F	0%	N 0 mph	Cloudy
5 AM	57F	0%	0 mph	Mostly Clear
6 AM	55F	0%	0 mph	Sunny
7 AM	56F	0%	0 mph	Sunny
8 AM	60F	0%	0 mph	Sunny
9 AM	61F	0%	0 mph	Sunny
10 AM	65F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
11 AM	67F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
12 PM	69F	0%	N 5 mph	Mostly Sunny
1 PM	70F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
2 PM	72F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
3 PM	72F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
4 PM	73F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
5 PM	74F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Sunny
6 PM	73F	0%	NNW 5 mph	Mostly Clear
7 PM	73F	0%	N 5 mph	Mostly Clear
8 PM	71F	0%	0 mph	Mostly Clear
9 PM	65F	0%	0 mph	Mostly Clear
10 PM	62F	0%	0 mph	Clear
11 PM	60F	0%	0 mph	Clear
12 AM	59F	0%	0 mph	Clear

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

Spray Window

Do NOT spray right now. Wind is about 13 mph, gusting 13 today. That is over the wind ceiling most labels set (glyphosate and fungicides cap at 10 mph, dicamba and 2,4-D at 15). It will drift onto neighbors or off your field. Wait for a calmer window.

Grain and Livestock, corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle

Futures board (front month): corn Dec 2026 \$4.7900/bu (+0.2625, +5.80%); soybeans Nov 2026 \$12.2450/bu (+0.0500, +0.41%). Chicago board, as of 2026 to 07 to 22.

Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.7925/bu +0.0400
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$12.2475/bu +0.0200
Live Cattle (CME)	\$226.68/cwt +0.1%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$101.50/cwt +0.2%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn added about 4 cents; and beans added about 2 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 AgWeek: USDA restores prevented planting buy-up option for producers. Honest truth, the tape does not hand us one clean reason today, so take this as our best read, not gospel.

Stocks are steady going into the open, S&P; futures close to flat. A calm Wall Street is what your banker likes to see, it keeps the rate and input-cost backdrop behind your operating note quiet for another day.

Cal

Wall Street, yesterday's close

Dow Jones	52,225 +0.7%
S&P; 500	7,509 +0.9%
Nasdaq	25,837 +1.3%
Russell 2000	2,987 +1.5%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Standing reminder: 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

- 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 up about 4 cents, beans up about 2 cents going into the day. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Lean Hogs (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. Lean Hogs October lean hog futures pushed to another new high for the move before settling with modest gains, according to The Hightower Report. The pork cutout value has been the real bright spot, climbing to its strongest level since October 2025 by the close of last week. Open interest keeps sliding, hitting a fresh low for 2026 on Monday, yet the analysts still hand the bulls the edge despite a recent price break. With USDA supply and demand figures out last Friday adding to the picture, this market is worth a closer look for anyone watching hog prices. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Tue Jul 21, 2026 5:09 PM CT

2. Mamdani says he lacks authority to arrest Netanyahu but urges Trump to do so New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani admitted Tuesday that his office cannot arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his September visit for the U.N. meeting, so he is calling on President Trump to enforce the International Criminal Court warrant instead. Mamdani, a socialist who labeled Netanyahu an "architect of genocide," accused him of killing thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, withholding aid, and targeting hospitals, all charges Netanyahu strongly denies. Trump quickly defended Netanyahu online and said the real criminals are Iran's leaders, whom he blamed for killing 52,000 people, meaning the arrest is almost certain never to happen. The story matters because it shows growing anti-Israel sentiment spreading through American politics, with over half of House Democrats recently voting to cut military aid to Israel and Mamdani style socialists winning primaries ahead of the 2026 elections. [Read the full article](#). Washington Examiner, Tue Jul 21, 2026 9:38 PM CT

3. Republicans eye Arizona comeback with Hobbs-Biggs governor matchup: Primary takeaways Arizona held primaries Tuesday that set up a fierce November battle for control of the state's top offices. Democratic Governor Katie Hobbs, seen as the most vulnerable incumbent governor in the country this cycle, will face Republican Representative Andy Biggs, a House Freedom Caucus member carrying President Trump's endorsement. Republicans are hoping to flip the governor's seat and also chip away at the Democratic hold on the attorney general and secretary of state posts in this key battleground. With so many toss up races on the ballot, Arizona could prove to be one of the most closely watched political fights in the nation come fall. [Read the full article](#). The Hill, Wed Jul 22, 2026 12:47 AM CT

4. USDA restores prevented planting buy-up option for producers Senator John Hoeven of North Dakota announced Tuesday that Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins agreed to bring back the prevented planting buy-up option, a safety net the USDA's Risk Management Agency had planned to eliminate starting with the 2027 crop year. This buy-up lets producers cover a bigger share of their pre-planting costs when weather or other disasters keep them from getting a crop in the ground, and it has been used on more than 67 million acres nationwide, including 10 million in North Dakota. Analysis from North Dakota State University found that farmers trying to replace this lost protection through higher overall coverage would face premium jumps of up to 1,429 percent, or about 25 dollars per acre, and those already at the 85 percent maximum could not buy back the protection at all. For Iowa growers who have battled soggy springs, this reversal matters because it keeps an affordable tool in place that helps cover sunk costs when the fields simply will not let you plant. [Read the full article](#). AgWeek, Tue Jul 21, 2026 4:37 PM CT

5. Iowa Farmers Union Announces Confirmed Candidates for Barn Party "We are so excited to have these candidates talk about their priorities with our members," said Aaron Lehman, IFU president. Iowa farmers and ranchers, as well as Friends of the Family Farmer, can join IFU throughout the year. The world's political and economic landscape is evolving more quickly than ever and every change has implications for agricultural markets and dairy producers. Their lobbying efforts focused on the Iowa Biofuels Access Bill, a top priority [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Wed Jul 22, 2026 3:11 AM CT

6. Iowa Crop Progress and Condition Report, July 13 to 19 Warm, dry weather with temperatures 5 to 10 degrees above average gave you 6.7 days for fieldwork last week, a full 2.4 days more than this time last year, so hay baling and other jobs moved right along. The dryness has a downside, though, since topsoil moisture sits at 33 percent short to very short and Secretary Mike Naig warns that crops in critical stages could really use a drink. Your corn is running ahead, with silking at 72 percent, 14 points past last year, and rated 80 percent good to excellent, while soybeans are blooming at 70 percent and rated 79 percent good to excellent. Naig sees a few thunderstorm chances early this week before more seasonal temperatures move in, so keep an eye on the sky as July winds down. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Wed Jul 22, 2026 2:40 AM CT

7. Volunteering important for ag way of life Kim Ponterio of Melrose, Wisconsin, milks a herd of 70 Holsteins while her husband Frank handles the crops on their 580 acre Ponterio Holsteins operation, and she still finds time to volunteer for FFA Alumni, 4-H, and the Jackson County Fair board. Her family hosts the John Cain Memorial Tractor Ride, drawing about 45 tractors, and she works an FFA Alumni shake stand at the town's Fourth of July celebration. Kim sums up the farming life simply, saying that sometimes just having a nice cow in the barn is what gets you out to the barn the next day. The story also touches on Sarah Pfaff-Cavadini and Tim Cavadini raising registered Angus and Simmental cattle near Mindoro, showing how volunteering keeps the whole ag way of life going strong. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Wed Jul 22, 2026 1:00 AM CT

8. Opinion: Loan modernization at USDA is reviving rural America USDA is consolidating 130 separate loan and grant systems across its Rural Development and Farm Production and Conservation areas into one integrated platform, the biggest such overhaul in agency history. Officials note the core accounting system dates back to 1968, the same year as the moon landing, and has never been updated until now. The Trump administration says the change will speed up assistance, strengthen cybersecurity, and crack down on fraud, letting farmers, business owners, and families apply for loans from any device while still keeping in person help for those who want it. For Iowa producers who depend on USDA loans for farms, homes, and rural infrastructure, this could mean faster approvals and far less red tape when you need financing. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Tue Jul 21, 2026 10:26 PM CT

9. Navigating Tough Economic Times: INFB to Host Farm Business & Diversification Event Indiana Farm Bureau is opening registration for a new Farm Business and Diversification Conference aimed at helping family farms find fresh income streams during these tough economic times. Vice President Kendell Culp says the point is simple, you cannot keep doing the same things and expect different results if you want to pass the farm to the next generation. Breakout sessions will dig into alternative income, digital marketing, insurance and liability, and even contract finishing for livestock or swine, with Purdue's Patrick Nycz covering new food products and Indiana Grown's Caroline Patrick moderating a panel on direct-to-consumer selling. The all day event runs Thursday, Sept. 10, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET at the Hamilton County Fairgrounds, free for Farm Bureau members and just \$50 for everyone else at infb.org/events. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Tue Jul 21, 2026 7:49 PM CT

10. USB names Knupp as new CEO The United Soybean Board has tapped Courtney Knupp, an Iowa native who grew up on her family's soybean farm and graduated from Iowa State, to become its new CEO starting October 1. She steps into the role after Lucas Lentsch resigned in February, with Darryl Chatman having filled in as interim chief while the board searched for a permanent leader. Knupp brings almost 20 years across agriculture, trade and policy, including a stint at the National Pork Board where U.S. pork exports climbed to \$8.6 billion, plus soybean export work and a current post advising the National Security Council on farm and food supply chains. Board chair Brent Gatton says she is the right leader to boost returns for soybean farmers, and Knupp, who will relocate to the Chesterfield, Missouri headquarters, promises to deliver value straight back to the farm gate. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Tue Jul 21, 2026 4:46 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

Make your equipment seen on the road. A clean slow-moving-vehicle (SMV) emblem, working flashers, and reflective tape cut rear-end collisions. Most farm road crashes are a car hitting equipment from behind in low light, dawn and dusk are the worst. Source: National Ag Safety Database; ASABE SMV emblem standard.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Darwin publishes Origin of Species 1859

On November 24, 1859, Charles Darwin published On the Origin of Species. The book underlay all modern plant and animal breeding, including Gregor Mendel's 1866 pea genetics, rediscovered in 1900, which made hybrid corn possible in the 1920s. Source: Smithsonian Institution; American Society of Agronomy historical review.

Cal's Quiz

Cyrus McCormick patented the mechanical reaper in what year, slashing wheat-harvest labor by roughly 75%?

- (a) 1809
- (b) 1834
- (c) 1847
- (d) 1860

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

Why did the scarecrow get a raise? Because he was outstanding in his field.

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) 1834. McCormick moved production to Chicago in 1847 and by 1860 his factory was building 4,000 reapers a year. The McCormick Harvesting Machine Company merged in 1902 to form International Harvester. Source: U.S. Patent Office records; Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

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.