

The MI Farm Brief #149

Wednesday July 29, 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)

Wednesday, July 29, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Steele County, MN

Today: High **86F**. Mostly Sunny then Patchy Smoke.

Tonight: Low **67F**. Partly Cloudy.

What this means for today: Patchy smoke after 1pm. Mostly sunny, with a high near 86. South wind around 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	66F	0%	N 0 mph	Clear
5 AM	69F	0%	SSE 5 mph	Partly Cloudy
6 AM	69F	0%	SSE 5 mph	Mostly Sunny
7 AM	68F	0%	SSE 5 mph	Mostly Sunny
8 AM	71F	0%	S 5 mph	Mostly Sunny
9 AM	77F	1%	S 5 mph	Sunny
10 AM	80F	1%	S 5 mph	Sunny
11 AM	82F	2%	SSW 5 mph	Sunny
12 PM	83F	2%	S 5 mph	Sunny
1 PM	84F	2%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
2 PM	85F	3%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
3 PM	86F	3%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
4 PM	86F	3%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
5 PM	86F	3%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
6 PM	86F	4%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
7 PM	84F	4%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
8 PM	82F	3%	SSE 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
9 PM	77F	1%	SSE 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
10 PM	75F	0%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
11 PM	73F	0%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke
12 AM	73F	0%	S 5 mph	Patchy Smoke

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

Spray Window

Spray window is MARGINAL today. Wind at your nearest weather station is about 4 mph right now, gusting 4 (the hour-by-hour table above is the NWS forecast, which can read lower). If you go, check your product label first, keep the boom low and the speed down, and watch your gusts and any ground-level inversion.

Grain and Livestock, corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle

Futures board (front month): corn Dec 2026 \$4.7800/bu (+0.1950, +4.25%); soybeans Nov 2026 \$12.0775/bu (-0.0425, -0.35%). Chicago board, as of 2026 to 07 to 29.

Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.7800/bu -0.0250
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$12.0775/bu -0.1225
Live Cattle (CME)	\$227.48/cwt +1.0%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$103.10/cwt +0.1%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn slipped about 2 cents; and beans slipped about 12 cents.

Recent trend, over the last 5 sessions, corn has eased and beans have eased. 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 Tri-State Neighbor: Red Angus mama surprises family. 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 0.5 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, yesterday's close

Dow Jones	52,747 +1.0%
S&P; 500	7,429 +0.2%
Nasdaq	24,877 to 0.2%
Russell 2000	2,954 +0.2%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- 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.

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 2 cents, beans down about 12 cents going into the day. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Red Angus mama surprises family (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. Red Angus mama surprises family Granddaughter Aspen Shuman feeds Clementine and Cleo while Buck explores in the background, and mom enjoys her mineral and grain. Their family farm, Shuman Cattle Company, is the home of new triplet Red Angus calves. Later generations learn from the stories, and ancestors live on in a tightly woven fabric of family farming. In addition to working with his... [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Wed Jul 29, 2026 1:00 AM CT

2. Farm Expenses Climb Again: US Production Costs Hit \$490.3B in 2025, Says USDA According to a newly released USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) report, the national average farm production expenditure rose 3.1% to \$263,955 per farm. The largest expenses for grain and row-crop producers centered on labor (\$30.8 billion), farm services (\$30.5 billion), rent (\$28.8 billion), and fertilizer, lime, and soil conditioners (\$28.3 billion). Fuel expenses ticked upward slightly to \$15.6 billion overall. As input costs remain stubbornly high heading further into 2026, producers continue to sharpen their pencils, focusing heavily on operational efficiency to protect profit margins. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Tue Jul 28, 2026 6:15 PM CT

3. Lean Hogs The market has a slightly positive tilt with the close over the swing pivot. The near-term upside target is at 103.85," The Hightower Report said. "Commodity pressure continues today with crude oil still sinking, and that may result in additional (hog market) weakness this morning, but th... [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Tue Jul 28, 2026 5:25 PM CT

4. Butter Cow unveiled in newly renovated Dairy Products Building This year, visitors are not only seeing a new Butter Cow display, but also experiencing it inside a newly renovated Dairy Products Building that offers a fresh look at one of the fair's longest-standing traditions. Crabtree said the display requires around 2,000 pounds of butter each year. "The relocation of the butter sculpture into the central building where it's in a theater-style setting," Higgins said, allows visitors to better experience the exhibit. Visitors can still enjoy the iconic Butter Cow, dairy exhibits and milkshakes they have come to expect, but now in a facility designed to better accommodate growing crowds and improve comfort during the summer fair season. [Read the full article](#). Ohio Country Journal, Tue Jul 28, 2026 4:50 PM CT

5. Senate confirms Jay Clayton as director of national intelligence attorney who served as chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission under the first Trump administration, does not have the broad foreign... [Read the full article](#). The Hill, Tue Jul 28, 2026 6:15 PM CT

6. MDARD Updates Commercial Fertilizer Bulk Storage Regulation "Michigan's commercial fertilizer bulk storage facilities collectively store over 75 million gallons of fertilizer, making comprehensive, up-to-date standards essential to protecting our natural resources from accidental spills," said Mike Philip, Director of MDARD's Bureau of Environment and Sustainability. Working directly with bulk storage firms and industry leaders, the department identified opportunities to modernize the regulation to reflect current technologies, operational practices and environmental safeguards. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in partnership with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), is providing funding for agricultural producers and landowners to implement conservation practices in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). In anticipation of the upcoming growing season, farmers [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Wed Jul 29, 2026 2:55 AM CT

7. Ohio Makes a Generational Commitment to Agriculture "For all of us who care deeply about Ohio agriculture, this really is an exciting moment," said Cathann A. "Through hands-on learning, interactive experiences, and conversations with farmers and industry partners, we have an opportunity to show fairgoers of all ages not only where their food comes from, but the people, innovation and stewardship that make it happen. CFAES, Ohio Farm Bureau, and ODA continue to be essential partners in bringing the facilities to life, as has the public investment that is making the work possible. Ohio Farm Bureau partnered with Ohio agriculture [...] [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Tue Jul 28, 2026 9:05 PM CT

8. Tipton County's Austin Henderson: Fungal Diseases and Waterhemp Creating Challenges for Crops According to USDA's Crop Progress Report from Monday, state-wide ratings peg 63 percent of corn and soybeans in good-to-excellent condition. "The yards were starting to get brown... "Tar spot, for the most part, what the guys have seen and what we have seen, it seems like it is below the ear leaf at this point," Henderson observes, adding that proactive fungicide applications have been a priority for local growers aiming to protect their yield potential. With sound agronomic management, solid stand counts, and timely late-season rains, Indiana farmers are well-positioned to finish the season strong. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Tue Jul 28, 2026 6:20 PM CT

9. Wahpeton 'value-added' chemical company asks for nearly \$300K tax break to start research lab in Fargo The company based in Wahpeton, North Dakota, plans to construct a research and development laboratory at 342 42nd St. Valley Processing plans to invest \$15 million into the project, he said. "The policy that's being referenced is an in-depth review happening this fall," said Mayor Josh Boschee, who also sits on the committee. Term expires: June 2030 Contact: 701 to 241 to 1310, jboschee@fargond.gov Term expires: June 2028 Contact: 701 to 715 to 3269, jstrand@fargond.gov Term expires: June 2028 Contact: 701 to 831 to 5915, mturnberg@fargond.gov Term expires: June 2030 Contact: 701 to 241 to 1310, ngullickson@fargond.gov Term expires: June 2030 Contact: 701 to 241 to 1310, cpeterson@fargond.gov [Read the full article](#). AgWeek, Tue Jul 28, 2026 6:10 PM CT

10. Gov. Larry Rhoden wins South Dakota gubernatorial GOP primary runoff Rhoden became governor in January 2025 after he was promoted from lieutenant governor following former Gov. Rhoden's triumph was made all the more remarkable due to the fact that Doeden beat him by a significant margin last month, taking 30.6% of the vote compared to Rhoden's 25.2%. He argued he had "the proven track record of uniting Republicans from all factions." Doeden, in contrast, contrasted himself as a bold outsider conservative, who was seeking to oust a career politician without the constituents' best interests at heart. The candidates who failed to advance to the runoff saw the vast majority of their supporters flock to Rhoden, ultimately dooming the political outsider. [Read the full article](#). Washington Examiner, Tue Jul 28, 2026 10:11 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

During planting and harvest, fatigue is a real hazard, long days slow reaction time the same way alcohol does. Take a real break every few hours, eat, and stop when your judgment starts slipping. The crop will wait; a tired mistake near moving equipment will not. Source: National Ag Safety Database; Marshfield Clinic agricultural medicine.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Soil Conservation Service 1933

Hugh Hammond Bennett, the "father of soil conservation," testified before Congress on March 23, 1934, while a Dust Bowl storm darkened the room. Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act the next year. Today's NRCS conservation payments to farmers (EQIP, CSP) trace directly to that hearing. Source: USDA NRCS historical archive.

Cal's Quiz

When the Rural Electrification Act was signed on May 11, 1935, what fraction of U.S. farms had electricity?

- (a) 3%
- (b) 11%
- (c) 33%
- (d) 75%

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

The banker said, "When will you pay back the operating note?" The farmer said, "As soon as the combine pays back the dealer."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) About 11%. By 1953, 90% of U.S. farms had electricity. The cooperative model still serves rural America, your local rural electric cooperative is a direct descendant. Source: USDA Rural Utilities Service 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.

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.