

The MI Farm Brief #152

Saturday August 1, 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)

Saturday, August 1, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Steele County, MN

Today: High **79F**. Mostly Sunny.

Tonight: Low **57F**. Mostly Cloudy.

What this means for today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 79. North wind 5 to 15 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	64F	6%	N 6 mph	Cloudy
5 AM	63F	8%	N 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
6 AM	62F	6%	N 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
7 AM	62F	1%	N 5 mph	Partly Sunny
8 AM	65F	1%	N 5 mph	Partly Sunny
9 AM	67F	1%	N 10 mph	Mostly Sunny
10 AM	71F	0%	N 10 mph	Mostly Sunny
11 AM	73F	0%	N 10 mph	Sunny
12 PM	75F	0%	N 10 mph	Sunny
1 PM	77F	0%	N 15 mph	Sunny
2 PM	77F	0%	N 15 mph	Sunny
3 PM	78F	0%	N 15 mph	Sunny
4 PM	79F	0%	N 15 mph	Sunny
5 PM	79F	0%	N 10 mph	Sunny
6 PM	78F	0%	N 10 mph	Clear
7 PM	77F	0%	N 10 mph	Mostly Clear
8 PM	74F	0%	N 5 mph	Mostly Clear
9 PM	71F	0%	NNE 5 mph	Mostly Clear
10 PM	67F	0%	NNE 5 mph	Mostly Clear
11 PM	65F	0%	NE 5 mph	Mostly Clear
12 AM	64F	0%	NE 5 mph	Mostly Clear

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

Spray Window

Do NOT spray right now. Wind at your nearest weather station is about 16 mph right now, gusting 16 (the hour-by-hour table above is the NWS forecast, which can read lower). 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

Friday's close. Markets closed for the weekend. These are the most recent settled prices; the boards reopen the next trading day.

Futures board (front month): corn Dec 2026 \$4.4075/bu (-0.0500, -1.12%); soybeans Nov 2026 \$11.7200/bu (-0.0525, -0.45%). Chicago board, as of 2026 to 07 to 31.

Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.6400/bu -0.0450
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$11.8750/bu -0.0125
Live Cattle (CME)	\$231.75/cwt +0.2%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$98.85/cwt +0.4%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

At Friday's close, corn slipped about 4 cents; and beans slipped about 1 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 corn slipped about 4 cents and beans eased about a penny at Friday's close, and honestly the facts do not point to one clean cause. The likeliest reads are quiet, position squaring ahead of the weekend with no USDA report on the calendar to trade off of. Boozman's updated farm bill draft, with year round E15 per Brownfield and Agri-Pulse, landed late Friday, likely too late to lift corn in that session.

Stocks point higher into the open, S&P; futures up about 0.3 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	52,485 +0.5%
S&P; 500	7,490 +0.7%
Nasdaq	25,374 +1.0%
Russell 2000	2,931 to 0.5%

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

- 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 down about 1 cents going into the day. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to speak at Minnesota Farmfest (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. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to speak at Minnesota Farmfest U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins is set to speak at Minnesota Farmfest on Tuesday, Aug. 4 at 10:10 a.m. in the Wick Buildings Farmfest Center. Before leading the USDA under the second Trump administration, Rollins ran the America First Policy Institute and steered domestic policy during Trump's first term. Her appearance joins an already packed lineup of political forums covering Minnesota's governor's race, a U.S. Senate contest, and five congressional races across Greater Minnesota, all zeroing in on farm and rural issues. If you cannot make it in person, Farmfest will livestream Rollins' remarks on Farmfest.com, so you can hear the nation's top ag official direct from your own place. [Read the full article](#). AgWeek, Fri Jul 31, 2026 5:07 PM CT

2. Boozman releases updated farm bill draft with E15 expansion, SNAP revisions Senator John Boozman, who chairs the Senate Ag Committee, dropped an updated farm bill draft late Friday that carries big news for ethanol country. The headline for corn growers is a permanent green light for nationwide, year-round E15 sales, a move meant to lock in demand for biofuels and give the industry long-term regulatory certainty. On the food aid side, the draft would push states to help pay for SNAP benefits, starting in fiscal year 2029 for states with payment error rates of six percent or higher, and requiring a 20 percent share by 2031 for those at 10 percent or above. Both of those cost-sharing dates were pushed back a year from the first draft, and the whole package heads to a committee markup on Thursday, August 6, right before the August recess. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Fri Jul 31, 2026 8:30 PM CT

3. New Senate farm bill includes SNAP cost delays, year-round E15 Senate Ag Chairman John Boozman, R-Ark., has unveiled "Farm Bill 2.0, the Agricultural Act of 2026," a package that would finally let gas stations sell 15% ethanol blends, known as E15, year round instead of the usual 10%, a big win for corn demand. The bill also pushes back SNAP cost sharing deadlines for states by a year, to FY29, though states with error rates of 10% or higher would owe 20% of costs instead of 15%, and the national SNAP error rate hit nearly 11% last year. All of this comes as farm bankruptcies climb, with corn growers facing a fourth straight year of net income losses estimated at almost \$150 an acre, prompting the National Corn Growers Association to press Majority Leader John Thune for action. Lawmakers are also working to pass up to \$12 billion more in farmer aid on top of \$12 billion already flowing this year, with the committee set to mark up the bill Thursday, Aug. 6, so the coming week could shape your bottom line. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Fri Jul 31, 2026 7:35 PM CT

4. Reclamation lays out framework for managing Colorado River past 2026 The Bureau of Reclamation has finalized a framework for running the drought stricken Colorado River after 2026, opening the door to yearly cuts as large as 3.6 million acre-feet for Arizona, California, Nevada and Mexico through 2036. If Lake Mead drops below 1,145 feet, Arizona would lose 760,000 acre-feet a year, California 440,000, Nevada 50,000, and Mexico 250,000, and the lake already sat near a low 1,041 feet as of July 26. Rather than fixing exact rules, the plan sets outer limits Reclamation calls sideboards, with actual two year operating rules for Lakes Powell and Mead to come later, while Interior Secretary Doug Burgum says states can still strike their own longer term deal. This matters because seven states blew past a February deadline without agreement, with lower basin states demanding the upper basin share mandatory cuts, so the federal government stepped in to manage a river that millions of people and countless farms depend on. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Fri Jul 31, 2026 5:38 PM CT

5. Lean Hogs Lean hog futures managed to close higher this past Friday, with contracts finishing anywhere from 12 to 70 cents up according to Austin Schroeder at Barchart.com. Even so, momentum studies have climbed into overbought territory, a warning sign that the recent run may be running out of steam. Sinking crude oil prices are adding broad commodity pressure, which analysts say could drag on the hog market and bring fresh weakness. For anyone watching livestock prices or feed markets, this tug of war between rising momentum and falling energy costs is worth following closely. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Fri Jul 31, 2026 4:57 PM CT

6. Healey-Driscoll Administration Celebrates Massachusetts Farmers Market Week Governor Maura Healey has proclaimed August 28, 2026, as Massachusetts Farmers Market Week, and Agriculture Commissioner Ashley Randle plans to tour three regional markets in Hingham, Billerica, and New Bedford to spotlight family farms and local food access. The numbers are striking, as Massachusetts ranks fifth nationally in direct market sales, with more than a quarter of its 7,000 farms selling straight to consumers and generating over \$254 million a year. Officials including Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll and Secretary Rebecca Tepper argue these markets keep dollars in-state, sidestep volatile national supply chains, and let shoppers shake hands with the growers who raised their food. It matters because most of these markets accept SNAP, HIP, WIC, and senior nutrition benefits, turning them into vital food access points at a moment of real anxiety about the national food system. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Fri Jul 31, 2026 4:02 PM CT

7. Real Property Law at 250: Where Do We Go Next? Attorney Todd Janzen, reflecting on America's 250th birthday, explains how two old laws shaped the farmland you work today. The Land Ordinance of 1785 carved the country into six mile square townships and 640 acre sections, with Section 16 set aside for schools, and it still governs the way over 75 percent of the continental US is described in deeds. Lincoln's Homestead Act of 1862 built on that grid, letting settlers claim up to 160 acres by living on and improving the land for five years, which is why many title searches trace all the way back to that original federal grant. Janzen argues that with modern GPS and digital records we could reimagine this whole system, sparing landowners the title searches, title insurance, and thousands in closing costs that buying a car never demands. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Fri Jul 31, 2026 11:00 PM CT

8. Back Home Columnist Chris Hardie opens with a tongue in cheek apology to whoever cursed his power equipment, kicking off another one of his "Back Home" country tales. Hardie and his wife Sherry farm his great grandparents' land in Jackson County, and he brings serious credentials, a 2001 Pulitzer Prize nomination plus past leadership in Wisconsin's Freedom of Information Council and Newspaper Association. The piece then turns personal, sharing how McKenna Reichling remembers her big brother Myles for his outgoing and sometimes wild personality. It is the kind of honest, seasonal farm writing that mixes humor with heartfelt family memories, and this installment leaves you wanting to know the rest of Myles's story. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Sat Aug 1, 2026 1:00 AM CT

9. Missouri rice farmer: higher fertilizer costs outpace gains in rice prices Missouri Rice Council chairman Rance Daniels, who farms in southern Dunklin County, says urea ran roughly \$300 to \$350 a ton higher this year than in 2025, and high fuel prices piled on top of that. Rice is fetching maybe a dollar more than last year, but Daniels says that gain comes nowhere close to covering how much his input costs climbed. He is watching two possible lifelines this fall, higher reference prices in farm program payments and the \$12 billion in farmer aid Congress is weighing, which he hopes could arrive by late 2026 or early 2027 to help growers still dig out from the 2025 crop. Daniels also points to a longer game, the Trump administration working to fight unfair trade from countries like India and boost domestic demand, and he recently sat down with Congressman Jason Smith to press the case on trade, aid, and rising costs. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Fri Jul 31, 2026 4:14 PM CT

10. Virtual Fencing, Continuous Covers Pay for Award-Winning No-Tillers Greg and Janis Thoren of Stockton, Illinois just earned the prestigious Leopold Conservation Award after 50 growing seasons of no-till and conservation work. They graze beef cattle on cover crops and use virtual fencing to make adaptive grazing easier in busy or muddy conditions while protecting fragile ground from erosion. The couple skips insecticides and fungicides entirely, and Janis argues the real measure is profit in the middle, not bushels per acre, since far lower input costs leave them more profitable even with smaller yields. Greg also helps lead the Fields of Sinsinawa, a farmer run learning center in

southwest Wisconsin, making this a practical look at how healthier soil can pay off. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Sat Aug 1, 2026 12:00 AM 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

On a hot field day, drink water before you are thirsty, about one cup every fifteen to twenty minutes. Watch a working partner for confusion, no sweating, or a stumble; those are heat stroke, a medical emergency. Take shade breaks during the worst afternoon heat. Source: OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety guidance.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act 1937

On July 22, 1937, the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act authorized federal loans to tenant farmers and sharecroppers to buy their own land. It also funded the purchase of submarginal land for conservation, 11.3 million acres ultimately, much of it now National Grasslands. Source: USDA Farm Service Agency history; USDA Forest Service National Grasslands archive.

Cal's Quiz

Over its nine-year run, how many trees did the Civilian Conservation Corps plant?

- (a) 30 million
- (b) 300 million
- (c) 3 billion
- (d) 30 billion

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

A farmer's grandson asked, "Grandpa, what's the best thing you learned in college?" The farmer said, "How to fix a tractor without spending \$400 at the dealer. That class was free, and it was held in the back forty."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(c) 3 billion trees. The CCC, signed into law March 31, 1933, also built 800 state parks and ran soil-erosion projects on thousands of farms. Many Midwest shelterbelts still standing were planted by CCC crews. Source: National Park Service CCC archive; USDA Forest Service 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.

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