

The MI Farm Brief #155

Tuesday August 4, 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)

Tuesday, August 4, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Steele County, MN

Today: High **71F**. Showers And Thunderstorms Likely.

Tonight: Low **54F**. Showers And Thunderstorms Likely.

What this means for today: Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 71. Northwest wind 10 to 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New rainfall amounts less than a tenth of an inch possible.

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	68F	70%	SW 15 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
5 AM	68F	60%	WSW 15 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
6 AM	66F	55%	W 10 mph	Showers And Thunderstorms Likely
7 AM	65F	31%	WNW 15 mph	Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
8 AM	65F	22%	WNW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
9 AM	65F	10%	NNW 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
10 AM	66F	5%	NW 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
11 AM	67F	6%	NNW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
12 PM	69F	12%	NW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
1 PM	71F	9%	NW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
2 PM	71F	12%	NW 10 mph	Partly Sunny
3 PM	71F	12%	NW 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
4 PM	71F	21%	NW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
5 PM	70F	22%	WNW 10 mph	Slight Chance Showers And Thunderstorms
6 PM	69F	20%	WNW 10 mph	Patchy Smoke
7 PM	67F	10%	WNW 10 mph	Mostly Cloudy
8 PM	65F	7%	WNW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
9 PM	63F	5%	WNW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
10 PM	62F	4%	WNW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy

Hour	Temp	Rain	Wind	Sky
11 PM	60F	3%	WNW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy
12 AM	59F	2%	NW 5 mph	Mostly Cloudy

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 13 mph right now, gusting 22 (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

Futures board (front month): corn Dec 2026 \$4.7375/bu (+0.3300, +7.49%); soybeans Nov 2026 \$11.8850/bu (+0.1650, +1.41%). Chicago board, as of 2026 to 08 to 04.

Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.7325/bu +0.0075
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$11.8850/bu -0.0375
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

Overnight, corn steady; and beans slipped about 4 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 beans slipped about 4 cents while corn held steady, and honestly the facts do not point to one clean cause. Our best assessment is a pair of soft weather drivers, since Brownfield Ag Weather Today has a cold front bringing 1 to 3 inches of rain or more to the Midbelt this week, which eases crop stress and leans bearish on beans. The other likely weight is that quiet dryness elsewhere, like the drought Tri-State Neighbor reports in northern Wisconsin, was not enough to spook corn.

Stocks point lower into the open, S&P; futures off about 0.1 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	52,485 +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: 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 6 AM (55%). Time spray and field passes to the drier hours, and check the wind first.
- Market watch: corn steady, beans down about 4 cents going into the day. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: Brownfield Ag Weather Today (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. Brownfield Ag Weather Today A cold front sweeping out of the northern Plains will hit the Midwest by midweek, then stall against a pool of moisture over the eastern U.S. and could drop 1 to 3 inches of rain or more over five days. That same front will pull in much cooler air across most areas east of the Rockies, giving farmers a break from the heat everywhere except the Deep South. Out along the East Coast, scattered showers will keep hanging around for several more days. The relief is short lived in some spots, though, since heat bounces back late in the week across the southern Plains and the Northwest, while the Southwest stays hot with only spotty monsoon showers. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Tue Aug 4, 2026 5:00 AM CT

2. 5 warning signs that fertilizer prices will stay high indefinitely Farmers are getting squeezed as fertilizer costs, already climbing before recent trouble, jumped even higher after conflict in the Middle East pushed crop production expenses up. That price surge is quietly pulling profit straight out of growers' pockets this season. The piece lays out five warning signs to watch, catalysts that could either keep prices stuck at painful levels or finally signal relief. If you want to know whether to buy now or wait, these are the indicators worth understanding before your next fertilizer purchase. [Read the full article](#). Farm Progress, Tue Aug 4, 2026 2:00 AM CT

3. Defending the Flock, Purdue Researchers Lead USDA Study on Foggers for Avian Influenza Right now, when highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) strikes, farmers have no choice but to depopulate their entire flock, and often those on neighboring farms as well, to halt the spread of the deadly disease. Through controlled trials, Sayedahmed's team will measure the effectiveness of the fogging system in reducing virus titers in the air, on surfaces and in the birds. They will also test whether the compound provides an additional layer of antiviral protection once the birds inhale the oil into their upper respiratory tracts. By marrying robust new biosecurity methods, vaccines and environmental interventions like fogging, farmers may one day be able to contain the spread of the virus without losing their entire flock. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Mon Aug 3, 2026 10:47 PM CT

4. Vaden says federal action on input costs is nearing Deputy Agriculture Secretary Stephen Vaden told the International Sweetener Symposium on Monday that federal antitrust probes into fertilizer, seed, chemical, and farm equipment makers will soon produce formal action, with announcements expected in the weeks and months ahead. Vaden, a vocal critic of high input costs, said the Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission have both civil and criminal investigations underway and that there is "some there there," warning that companies which have not cooperated should not feel comfortable. The push traces back to a December executive order from President Trump directing the agencies to root out anticompetitive behavior in food supply chains, and Vaden praised Trump's recent move to suspend countervailing duties on Moroccan phosphate. He also touted the department's support for sugar growers, including \$150 million in aid through the Farmer Bridge Assistance Program, and made clear the time for talking is ending and the time for action is coming. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Mon Aug 3, 2026 7:10 PM CT

5. Lean Hogs Hog futures slipped lower on Monday, giving back Friday's gains while still holding within Friday's trading range, according to The Hightower Report. The October contract opened steady but quickly drew sellers, weighed down by last week's weak technical showing. Broader commodity weakness added to the pressure, with crude oil still sliding and threatening more early softness in the hog market. For anyone weighing hog marketing plans, the bigger question is whether that intermediate trend can steady the market or whether the selling has further to run. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Mon Aug 3, 2026 5:04 PM CT

6. Ad Age Recognizes Wisconsin's Born to Dairy Campaign Featuring Real Dairy Farmers Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin earned a spot on Ad Age's list of "13 Creative Campaigns to Know About Today," standing beside big names like Pepsi, Verizon, Etsy and White Castle for its Born to Dairy campaign. Instead of hiring celebrities, the campaign puts real dairy farm families front and center, telling their stories through billboards, buses, milk trucks, trading cards and social media. The numbers are striking: more than 7 million video views, billions of billboard impressions, an 80 percent drop in negative sentiment, and a measurable bump in dairy sales. Campaign creator Suzanne Fanning and featured farmer Andrew Christenson say the honor proves that authentic farmer voices break through the crowded media noise, a lesson any Iowa producer thinking about telling their own story can appreciate. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Tue Aug 4, 2026 4:48 AM CT

7. Field Day to Showcase Edge-of-Field Conservation Practices in Central Illinois A free field day set for Aug. 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Cisco Event Center in Cisco, Illinois will show farmers and landowners how edge-of-field practices cut nutrient loss while keeping cropland in production. Hosted by the Edge of Field Partnership, the event features live installation of two woodchip bioreactors and a saturated buffer, plus a tour of an automated drainage water management structure that lets growers regulate flow through subsurface tile. Illinois Farm Bureau's Bena Pegg says these emerging tools show real promise for conserving water and nitrates during heavy rain events while potentially boosting yields, and the partnership has already put in eight woodchip bioreactors across Illinois as part of a five year monitoring study. This matters because the data goes straight back to participating farmers, offering a proven way to protect water quality without giving up productive acres, and registration is requested through the Illinois Farm Bureau site. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Tue Aug 4, 2026 4:22 AM CT

8. From the Fields: Jason Maloney Northern Wisconsin baked through a stubborn drought as July turned to August, with some spots along the Lake Superior coast running a rain deficit of more than 8.5 inches for the year and many farms feeding hay just to keep livestock going on short pastures. Amid the dry fields, the Bayfield Fruit Loop still delivered sweet cherries, pin cherries, thimbleberries and wild blueberries, while roadside stands and the Ashland farmers market drew August crowds. There is a sharp money lesson tucked in here, too, as growers who wholesale their produce pocket only about 15 cents of each consumer dollar while those selling straight to shoppers keep the full 100 percent. The dispatch comes from Jason Maloney of Washburn, a retired soldier and educator who grew up on a Marinette County farm and now writes from the country between Lake Superior and Bayfield County's orchards. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Tue Aug 4, 2026 1:00 AM CT

9. US Cropland Value Surpasses \$6k Per Acre for First Time For the first time ever, the average value of U.S. cropland has topped \$6,000 per acre in 2026, according to fresh numbers from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Land prices have climbed every year since 2021, propped up by scarce acres for sale, strong farm balance sheets and hungry investor demand. University of Illinois economists point out that this record comes even while low commodity prices and high input costs squeeze what growers actually pocket. The big question ahead is whether steep interest rates and thin crop margins finally cool things off, though farmland still stands as one of agriculture's best performing assets. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Mon Aug 3, 2026 10:49 PM CT

10. Michigan corn benefits from timely rainfall, but tar spot risk remains Michigan and northern Indiana corn just caught up to four inches of rain at the perfect moment, arriving as the crop finishes pollination and sets kernels, a boost agronomist Charles Scovill with Golden Harvest calls a one million dollar rain. Scovill says the crop looks good overall, planting delays are being made up, and disease pressure is low, though many farmers are weighing fungicide applications. The worry is tar spot, already confirmed in eight Michigan counties, and with recent cool, moist weather and a 21 day window from infection to visible spots, Scovill expects more to show up within a couple weeks. USDA rates Michigan corn 67 percent good to excellent with 37 percent in the dough stage, while soybeans sit at 51

percent good to excellent with over half the crop setting pods. [Read the full article](#). Brownfield Ag News, Mon Aug 3, 2026 4:11 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

Know your overhead clearance before you raise an auger, an elevator, or a grain truck bed. Contact with a power line is often instantly fatal. If equipment does touch a line, stay on the machine and call for help, do not step off unless fire forces you, then jump clear with feet together and shuffle away. Source: Safe Electricity; National Ag Safety Database.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, Combine harvester arrives Midwest 1924

The Massey-Harris No. 5 combine harvester reached the Midwest in 1924. Before that, harvest meant a binder, shocks, and a threshing crew of 10 to 25 men sharing meals at every farm for a week. The combine ended the harvest crew and changed rural social life forever. Source: Smithsonian National Museum of American History agricultural collection.

Cal's Quiz

Illinois joined the Union in 1818 as which numbered state?

- (a) 19th
- (b) 21st
- (c) 29th
- (d) 30th

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

A stranger walked into the diner. Six farmers looked up at once. The stranger waved. The farmers nodded. The stranger sat down. The farmers went back to talking. That was the welcome ceremony. Everybody passed.

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) 21st. Within 50 years its central prairie, the deepest, blackest topsoil in North America, was the heart of the corn belt. The University of Illinois was founded as a land-grant in 1867. Source: Illinois State Historical Society; U.S. Census Bureau.

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.