

The MI Farm Brief #157

Thursday August 6, 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)

Thursday, August 6, 2026. Filed by The MI Farm AI Desk.

Weather, Steele County, MN

Today: High **78F**. Sunny.

Tonight: Low **60F**. Mostly Clear.

What this means for today: Sunny, with a high near 78. South wind 5 to 10 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	54F	0%	0 mph	Mostly Clear
5 AM	54F	0%	0 mph	Clear
6 AM	53F	0%	S 5 mph	Sunny
7 AM	55F	0%	S 5 mph	Sunny
8 AM	61F	0%	S 5 mph	Sunny
9 AM	65F	0%	SSW 5 mph	Sunny
10 AM	70F	0%	SSW 5 mph	Sunny
11 AM	72F	0%	SSW 5 mph	Sunny
12 PM	75F	0%	S 5 mph	Sunny
1 PM	76F	0%	S 10 mph	Sunny
2 PM	78F	0%	S 10 mph	Sunny
3 PM	78F	0%	S 10 mph	Sunny
4 PM	78F	0%	S 10 mph	Sunny
5 PM	78F	0%	S 10 mph	Sunny
6 PM	76F	0%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear
7 PM	75F	1%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear
8 PM	72F	1%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear
9 PM	68F	1%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear
10 PM	66F	1%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear
11 PM	65F	1%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear
12 AM	64F	1%	S 10 mph	Mostly Clear

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 \$4.6025/bu (+0.2350, +5.38%); soybeans Nov 2026 \$11.7550/bu (+0.2400, +2.08%). Chicago board, as of 2026 to 08 to 06.

Corn (Dec 2026)	\$4.6050/bu +0.0050
Soy (Nov 2026)	\$11.7275/bu -0.0200
Live Cattle (CME)	\$234.18/cwt +1.0%
Lean Hogs (CME)	\$96.60/cwt -1.3%

Source: Chicago Board of Trade.

Cal's Market Read

Overnight, corn steady; and beans slipped about 2 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 the board moved the way it did overnight, and honestly the headlines do not point to one clean cause. Corn held steady and beans slipped about two cents, with no USDA report on the calendar to swing things. Our best assessment is this is quiet, position squaring trade tied to the Senate Ag Committee taking up its five year farm bill this Thursday, per Agri-Pulse, alongside the global shipping snags moving grain through Port Duluth Superior, per Tri-State Neighbor. Neither is a hard mover, so we would not read much into two cents.

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	54,349 +0.5%
S&P; 500	7,724 to 0.2%
Nasdaq	26,363 to 0.8%
Russell 2000	3,019 to 0.6%

Decision Delivered

Your decisions for today and the week ahead:

- Reminder for this week: Scout soybeans for aphids, the 250-per-plant treatment threshold drives the spray decision. Check corn ears for fill and tip-back.

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 steady, beans down about 2 cents going into the day. Watch the cash bid at your elevator.
- On the wire: US Senate candidates exchange political jabs during Farmfest forum (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. US Senate candidates exchange political jabs during Farmfest forum At Farmfest on August 5, U.S. Senate candidates clashed ahead of the August 11 primary to fill Tina Smith's seat, with DFL contenders Angie Craig and Peggy Flanagan facing off separately from Republicans Michele Tafoya and Royce White, while GOP-endorsed Adam Schwarze skipped the event for failing to hit the 15 percent polling threshold. All agreed on backing biofuels and opposing California's Prop 12 pork law, but they split hard on tariffs, with Craig and Flanagan slamming Trump's tariffs as bad for farm stability while Tafoya and White defended them as leverage against other nations. The candidates also traded sharp jabs over farm labor, SNAP cuts, and data centers eating up farmland, with White demanding mass deportations of what he called 15 to 20 million people and Flanagan warning that AI billionaires like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are the real winners from Big Tech projects. With early voting already underway, this fiery forum is your preview of the two very different visions battling for Minnesota's open Senate seat, and it is worth the full read to see exactly where each candidate stands on the issues hitting your farm. [Read the full article.](#) AgWeek, Wed Aug 5, 2026 6:35 PM CT

2. 250+ Agriculture Groups Call for Bipartisan Senate Farm Bill More than 250 food and agriculture organizations, rallied by the American Farm Bureau, sent a letter today pressing the Senate Agriculture Committee to move a bipartisan farm bill forward. They are pushing for the Agricultural Act of 2026, a full five-year bill, noting that farmers have gone nearly ten years without a new one and have limped along on outdated 2018 policy and patchwork ad hoc support. The letter points out real momentum, since the House already passed its own version, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026, marking the first full House passage of a farm bill since 2018. The groups call this the closest the country has come to a modernized farm bill, and they argue that families who depend on American food, fiber, and fuel deserve action now. [Read the full article.](#) American Farm Bureau Federation, Wed Aug 5, 2026 7:00 PM CT

3. A Few Things to Know about Forage Nitrates High nitrate levels in this year's stressed forages can make animals abort or drop dead, so silage and late hay season is the moment to pay attention. Trouble builds when frost, hail, drought, or cold below 55F stalls the plant's ability to turn nitrate into protein, and warning signs include chocolate colored blood, blue skin, labored breathing, and staggering, at which point you call the vet right away. Since nitrate collects in the lower stalk, cutting higher helps, and ensiling for at least 21 days cuts nitrates by 40 to 60%, though no method is guaranteed safe, so any suspect feed should be tested before it hits the bunk. When a test comes back hot, blend high with low nitrate feed, feed the clean stuff first, add high energy grain, and build tolerance slowly so rumen microbes can keep up. [Read the full article.](#) Morning Ag Clips, Thu Aug 6, 2026 4:11 AM CT

4. Purdue Report: Farm Succession Now Ranks Among Agriculture's Biggest Long-Term Challenges Purdue's July Ag Economy Barometer jumped 13 points to 126 as a mid-summer bounce in corn and soybean prices lifted farmer confidence, but the same survey found 17 percent of producers now rank farm transition as their second biggest long-term worry, trailing only commodity prices. Dr. Michael Langemeier of Purdue's Center for Commercial Agriculture says passing down today's capital heavy operations is tough because larger farms often span multiple generations and operators, all wrestling with big land values, equipment costs, and equity splits. He warns that families tend to procrastinate because daily chores eat up all their time, and he urges them to set a clear timeline for when the older generation will scale back, plus arrangements so off farm heirs rent their ground back to the family instead of shrinking the operation. Langemeier's bottom line is to divide up management duties now, name a point person for finances and marketing with a backup plan, and think hard about what skills younger members should study in college to fill the gaps the farm will face. [Read the full article.](#) Hoosier Ag Today, Wed Aug 5, 2026 6:20 PM CT

5. ISA Applauds Senate Ag Committee's Commitment to Advancing Five-Year Farm Bill The Senate Agriculture Committee, led by Chairman Boozman, is advancing a five-year farm bill that the Iowa Soybean Association praises for three big wins: permanent year-round E15 sales, stronger MAP and FMD export programs, and reauthorization of the BioPreferred Program. ISA says these provisions matter now more than ever, with agriculture under extreme financial strain from years of losses, record-high input costs, and stubborn inflation. Year-round E15 would create fresh demand for soybean-based biofuels, the export programs would open new foreign markets, and BioPreferred would drive new domestic uses that squeeze more value from every bushel. The bill is far from final, but ISA is urging Congress to move quickly to give Iowa farmers the market certainty and policy stability they need to stay competitive. [Read the full article](#). Morning Ag Clips, Thu Aug 6, 2026 4:57 AM CT

6. Senate Ag Committee to debate farm bill with over 200 amendments Senate Ag Committee Chairman John Boozman is racing to push his farm bill through committee this Thursday, calling it a now or never moment before lawmakers scatter to campaign for the Nov. 3 midterms. More than 200 amendments have piled up, including Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley's push to crack down on anti competitive meatpackers and a fight over cuts to USDA conservation programs, while a partisan standoff over SNAP food aid costs threatens to sink the whole effort. For corn growers, the good news is the bill would allow year round sales of E15 higher ethanol fuel, a top priority backed by both parties. Boozman says the legislation carries over 100 bipartisan measures and would finally update programs like farm loan limits that have been frozen since 2018, so the vote count on Thursday will show who really backs farmers. [Read the full article](#). Agri-Pulse, Wed Aug 5, 2026 8:40 PM CT

7. Shipping reflects global turmoil Wisconsin grain reaches world markets through a chain of trucks, trains, barges and ships that pass through Port Duluth-Superior, the largest seaport on the Great Lakes, where vessels queue at the locks in Sault Ste. Marie to be raised or lowered between lakes. The port moves grain alongside taconite iron pellets bound for steel mills, and it hosts giants like the laker Paul R. Tregurtha, which stretches 1,013.5 feet and carries 68,000 gross tons. In recent years many grain elevators in the port have sat idle as shipments have fallen, with foreign-flagged carriers like the Federal Seto loading grain while world events and domestic policy shape how much moves through during the early 2026 Great Lakes season. It matters to you because the same global demand and trade forces steering these ships help set the price you get for your corn and soybeans, and the writer, retired Wisconsin educator and soldier Jason Maloney, reminds us that shipping predictions often miss because so many factors are in play. [Read the full article](#). Tri-State Neighbor, Thu Aug 6, 2026 1:00 AM CT

8. Crop Conditions Hold Strong as Disease Pressure Builds Indiana's corn and soybean crops are holding up in good shape through grain fill and pod development, but a warm, humid, rainy stretch has crop scouts on high alert for disease as harvest approaches. Purdue corn specialist Dan Quinn says to watch for Frogeye leaf spot, Septoria brown spot, sudden death syndrome, brown stem rot, and especially red crown rot, which shows up as early infections at the soil line and telltale interveinal chlorosis that you will miss unless you look low in the canopy. On the soybean side, Purdue specialist Shaun Casteel reports crazy top tied to flooding plus a surprising uptick in bacterial leaf streak, a hard to treat problem that farmers in Illinois and Iowa can easily mistake for gray leaf spot. Both experts stress that steady field scouting and smart fungicide planning for next season are your best bet to protect yield as the crop pushes toward maturity. [Read the full article](#). Hoosier Ag Today, Wed Aug 5, 2026 6:15 PM CT

9. Video of the Week: Tinkering with Fertilizer Placement in No-Till Wisconsin no-tiller Jim Leverich shared with Frank Lessiter how he once welded a quarter inch anhydrous tube onto his planter's firming point to place fertilizer under the seed instead of on top of it. After running side by side tests, he found that fertilizer consistently added 7 to 12 bushels per acre, which is a real bump worth chasing. In the end, though, Leverich abandoned that in furrow setup because he got the same results by putting nitrogen and sulfur in a 2 by 0 band, and cutting the in row 10 to 34 to 0 carried too much risk for too little gain. The takeaway for your own operation is simple, sometimes the easier, lower risk placement pays off just as well as the fancier rig, and this Conservation Ag Update video walks through the whole story. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Thu Aug 6, 2026 12:00 AM CT

10. No-Till Highlights: August 6, 2026 This week's No-Till Farmer roundup gathers standout stories from across the web, from Michigan's Kip Siegler juggling wheat, hay, corn, soybeans and nearly 200 dairy cows, to North Dakota's Phil and Ali Faught explaining why they turned to no-till and conservation. Gearheads will want to see the brand new

John Deere 8RX 440, now landing at dealers, filmed planting double crop soybeans alongside a 9RX 640 in western Kentucky. The headline conversation features Kelly Garrett and Iowa's Lobe Rangers, Matt Bormann, Zack Smith and James Hepp, pushing regenerative farming's third stage by slashing synthetic nitrogen and phosphorus while holding yield, leaning on Iowa State nitrate research and the new 45Z tax credit, and they stress this is a business decision that boosts return on investment first, with environmental wins as a bonus. The piece wraps with a Soil Strategies podcast where Roy Thompson sits down with regenerative pioneer Gabe Brown on working with Mother Nature instead of against her. [Read the full article](#). No-Till Farmer, Wed Aug 5, 2026 11:00 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

Treat a manure pit like a gas chamber. Agitation releases hydrogen sulfide, which can knock a person out in one breath at high levels. Never enter a pit without ventilation, a gas monitor, and a harnessed rescue plan, and never go in after a downed worker without protection, or you become victim number two. Source: NIOSH confined-space-in-agriculture alert.

Cal

Local Obituaries

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

The Coffee Shop

Today in Farm History, USDA founded 1862

164 years ago, on May 15, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the bill creating the United States Department of Agriculture. He called it "the People's Department." At the time about half of all Americans worked the land. Today roughly 1% do, and feed twenty times the population. Source: USDA history office (usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/history).

Cal's Quiz

Charles Darwin published On the Origin of Species in what year?

- (a) 1809
- (b) 1859
- (c) 1866
- (d) 1900

Answer at the bottom of the Brief.

Cal's Joke of the Day

The auctioneer at the local sale knew every farmer by first name. A visitor said, "That's impressive." The auctioneer said, "It's not impressive. It's how I get paid. I know who's bidding before they raise the hand."

The MI Farm AI Desk

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

Quiz Answer

(b) 1859, November 24. The book underlay all modern plant and animal breeding, including Mendel's 1866 pea genetics rediscovered in 1900, which made hybrid corn possible. Source: Smithsonian Institution; American Society of Agronomy historical review.

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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