

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update September 4, 2025

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates - whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed - please send an email or call the St. Joseph County Extension office.

Contents:

- Announcements
- Field Crops Update
- Irrigation and Water Use Update
- [Weather Update](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [MSU Extension Digest Briefs](#)

FREE Soil Health Field Day Sept 10 in Mendon



The St. Joseph County Conservation District will hold a FREE summer field day on September 10 from 9 am to 12 pm at 24241 M-60 in Mendon. Find out practical ways to assess your soil health this fall and improve future soil health. Topics include updates on Farm Bill and MAEAP and two **hands-on** soil health presentations featuring Mila Resetar (MDARD) and Nicolle Ritchie (MSU Extension). **One RUP credit is available.**

Immigration Essentials for Farm Employees Webinar Series

Farm owners, managers, and ag professionals are invited to attend the Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers webinar series this September. This free three-part event is designed to help agricultural employers confidently navigate immigration enforcement and workforce documentation. Sessions include:

- **Sept. 11 at 10am – ICE Insight:** Learn proactive strategies to reduce the risk of immigration audits or raids and how to respond if officials arrive.
- **Sept. 18 at 10am – I-9 Compliance:** Discover how to conduct self-audits, fix common errors, and prepare for inspections to strengthen your I-9 practices.
- **Sept. 25 at 10am – Immigration Policy:** Explore the history and future of U.S. immigration policy and its impact on agricultural labor.

Registration is free at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/ImmigrationEssentials/>. For questions, contact Corey Clark at (517) 420-2042. Don't miss this essential series to prepare your farm for addressing any immigration-related issues.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension

Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers

WEBINAR SERIES

For more information, call Corey Clark at clarkc@msu.edu or 517-420-2042

Register Here

SEPTEMBER 11 | 10AM

ICE Insight
Josh Vlau | Partner, Fisher & Phillips LLP

SEPTEMBER 18 | 10AM

I-9 Compliance
Shawn Packer | Principal Member, JPH Law Firm

SEPTEMBER 25 | 10AM

Immigration Policy
Rich Stup | Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development

Updated MIWWAT Tool Launching this Fall



“The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is excited to announce upcoming enhancements to the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool (WWAT), an online resource that helps evaluate the impact of proposed large quantity water withdrawals and streamlines the registration process.” Learn more by reading the full article: [EGLE's updated Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool launching this fall](#).

‘Tis the Season for Cover Crop Seed and/or Custom Application



Check out the Cover Crop Service Provider Directory to find cover crop providers in your region: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/cover-crop-provider-directory>

If you provide cover crop services but don't see yourself in the directory, fill this form out to be added: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0BZXQgFalcOMunI

Save the Date! Beyond the Bin Grain Marketing Workshop Dec 4

More details to come!



Topics covered

- Cost of production
- Marketing
- Marketing decision process
- Contracts
- Return on investment of crop protection products

1 RUP credit has been requested

December 4

9:00 am - 2:00 pm,
lunch provided

LOCATION

Van Buren MSUE Office
57418 CR 681, Suite A,
Hartford, MI 49057

Contact us:

Nicolle Ritchie
Jon LaPorte

ritchi67@msu.edu
laportej@msu.edu

269-858-8739
269-414-6418

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension

JOB OPENING: Morgan Composting



[Morgan Composting](#) is looking to hire a full-time employee, preferably with a conventional ag background. The position would be mostly agronomy with some sales and based out of Sears, MI. Reach out to Justin to learn more: justin@dairydoo.com.

Field Crops Update



Soybeans are mostly at R6 (full seed). Some fields have hit R7, which is where one pod anywhere on the plant has reached mature pod color. **White mold** and **sudden death syndrome** (SDS) are out in fields. **SDS**, **brown stem rot** and **red crown rot** all have similar symptoms, so don't hesitate to send in samples for disease confirmation. Watch especially for red crown rot, which has not been confirmed in Michigan yet. Learn more about it from the article [Red crown rot: A new threat to soybean production](#).



Corn is mostly at R5 (dent) and approaching R6 (black layer). Corn enters R6 when a black layer forms on the tip of the kernel where it attaches to the cob. Scrape the tip, and if a hard, black layer is visible, corn has reached physiological maturity.

Seed corn harvest began, and defoliation sprays continued to go out on some acres.



Scout for ear rots as corn is in R5. The Crop Protection Network published a helpful [overview of ear rots](#) to guide identification and scouting. Foliar diseases such as **tar spot** and **southern rust** are in fields throughout southwest Michigan. However, at this point in the season, applying fungicides for any foliar disease is not likely to provide any benefit.



In **potatoes**, fresh crop harvest continued. Storage harvest will begin this week. Upcoming cooler temperatures and dry weather spell out better conditions than usual for the beginning of storage harvest.

Many growers cut **alfalfa** and **forages** last week. As fall approaches, potassium is especially important to help perennial plants overwinter well. Watch MSU forage specialist Kim Cassida's [Virtual Breakfast presentation on potassium for forages](#) for more information.

Irrigation and Crop Water Use

Deciding when to stop irrigation is one of the toughest calls of the season. Stop too early, and crops may not get the water they need, risking yield loss. Keep going too long, and you waste water, energy and time.

The goal of the last irrigation is simple: give crops enough water to finish strong while leaving the soil in good shape for harvest.

Here are three key things to check:

- **Crop maturity:** Corn no longer benefits from irrigation once it reaches black layer. Soybeans need water until at least 50% of the pods on the main stem turn yellow.
- **Soil moisture:** Try to keep at least half of your soil's water capacity. You can use [scheduling tools](#) or do a check with the [USDA "feel and appearance"](#) method.
- **Weather forecast:** A timely rain may save you a pass, but remember that extra moisture can also worsen white mold in soybeans or tar spot in corn.

Right now, **corn** at dent stage uses about 0.14 inches of water per day and drops to 0.09 at black layer. **Soybeans** at R6 are still using about 0.15 inches per day, just over an inch per week.

Watching crop stage, soil moisture, and weather together will help you make the best call for your last irrigation of the season. [Irrigation Scheduling Tools](#) can help estimate crop water needs and decide timing and application.

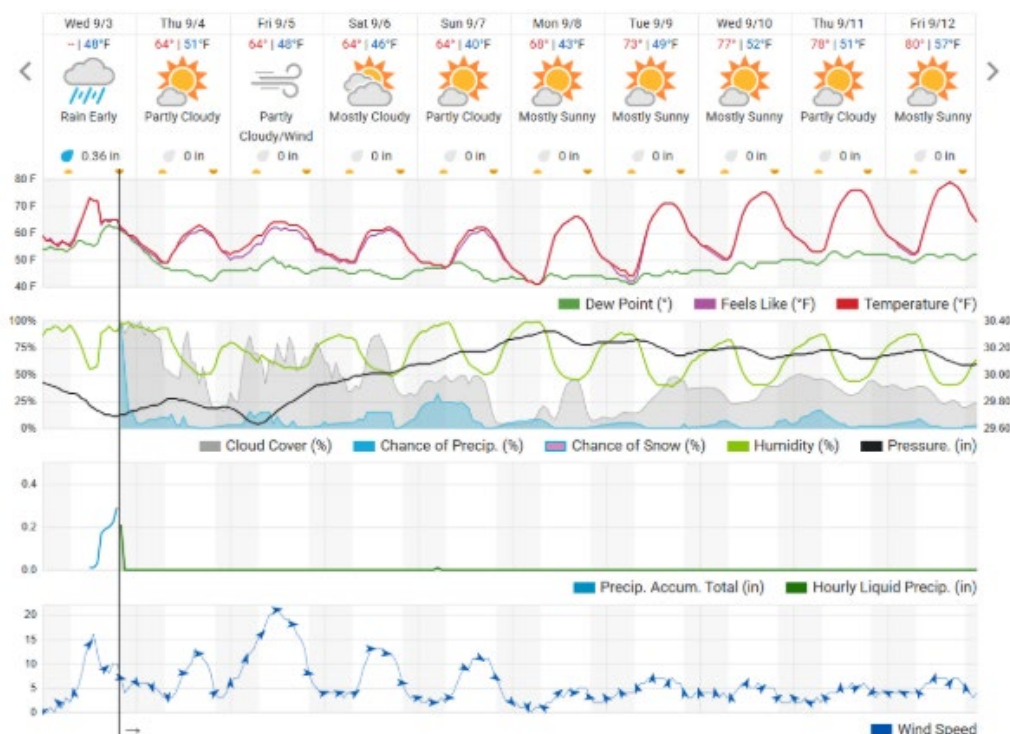
Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – September 4, 2025 - 5

Estimated weekly crop water use for field crops in Michigan (in/week)				
Week of September 1 - 7				
Crop	Growth stage	Constantine	Entrican	Hart
	Reference ET	0.96	0.84	0.74
Corn	VT, Silk, Blister, Dough, Begin Dent	1.06	0.92	0.82
	Full Dent	0.96	0.84	0.74
	Black Layer	0.64	0.55	0.49
Soybeans	R5 Begin seed / R6 Full seed	1.06	0.92	0.82
	R7 Begin Mature	0.96	0.84	0.74
	R8 95% Pods Mature	0.19	0.17	0.15

The table above presents estimated crop water use for various field crops across three locations in Michigan. This data helps irrigation management decisions by showcasing potential crop evapotranspiration, calculated based on reference evapotranspiration and crop coefficients for each crop growth stage. It is crucial to note that crop water use values vary across regions due to differences in weather conditions, growth stages, agronomic practices, and soil properties. When using these values for irrigation scheduling, be mindful that they assume all applied irrigation water will be utilized by the plants without any loss. Additionally, these values do not account for any precipitation that may occur during the week of calculation. Reference evapotranspiration data was obtained from Enviroweather, which also offers a model for determining potential crop evapotranspiration. To access this tool, visit [Enviroweather](#), click on "Crops," select your crop and use the potential evapotranspiration tool by choosing your nearest weather station, the latest date of interest, and other crop information.

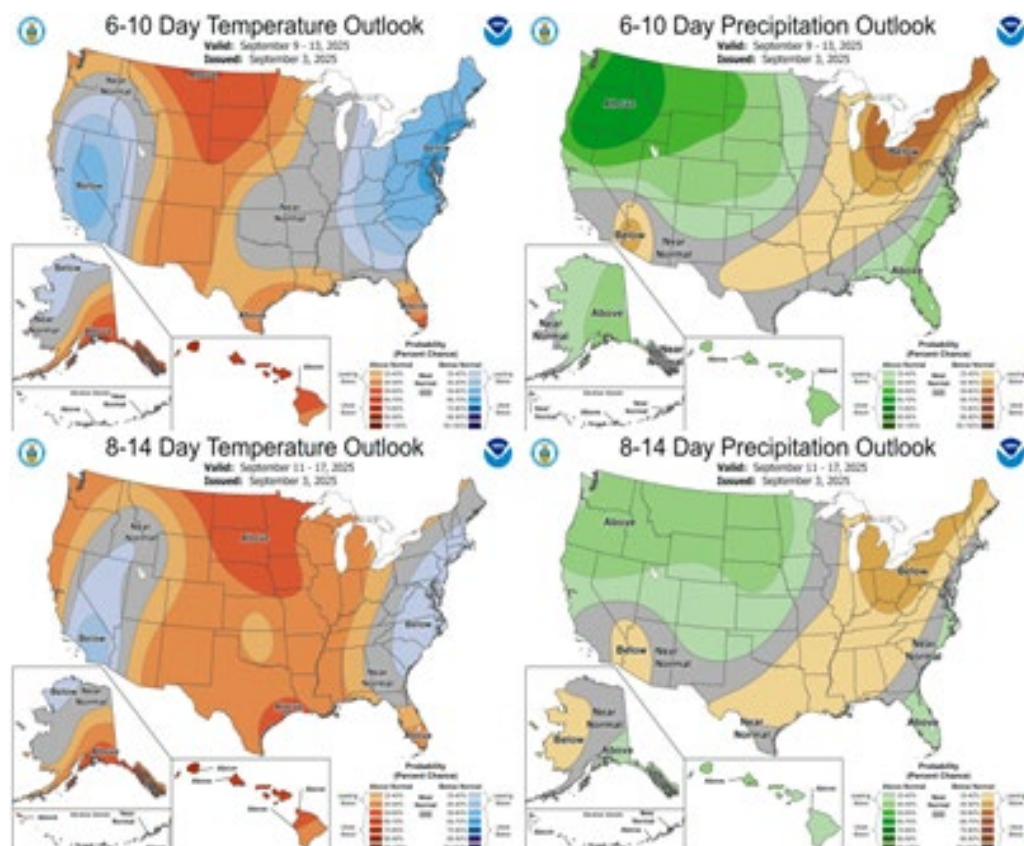
Weather Update

Conditions remained cool and mostly dry throughout the past week. Scattered showers resulted in small amounts of precipitation throughout southwest Michigan. The next week will be even cooler and drier but will heat up again in time for next weekend.



Ten-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to wunderground.com.

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – September 4, 2025 - 6



The 6-10 day (Sept 9-13, top) and 8-10 day (Sept 11-17, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

[Note: Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined.]

- Sept 10** **Soil Health Field Day.** 9 am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **1 RUP**
- Sept 11** **Virtual Breakfast: Grain Marketing.** 7 am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **CCA only**
- Sept 11** **Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers Webinar - Session 1: ICE Insight.** 10 am. Learn proactive strategies to reduce the risk of immigration audits or raids and how to respond if officials arrive.
- Sept 16** **CANCELED: Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day.** 10am-3pm. Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center. This field day will provide participants with new information and educational materials about reducing soybean harvest losses.
- Sept 18** **Virtual Breakfast: Late Season Weed Control.** 7 am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **RUP/CCA**
- Sept 18** **Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers Webinar - Session 2: I-9 Compliance.** 10 am. Learn practical tools to conduct internal I-9 audits, correct common errors, and build a documentation system to remain in compliance and protect your operation.

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – September 4, 2025 - 7

- Sept 25** [Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers Webinar - Session 3: Immigration Policy](#). 10 am. Learn about current immigration enforcement trends and future reform proposals that could impact agricultural employers and their workforce.
- Oct 9** [Farm Policy and Risk Management Series-Pasture, Rangeland and Forage Insurance](#). 12 pm. Farm Policy and Risk Management Series will be hosting a FREE series of educational webinars online on USDA insurance programs.
- Oct 21** [2025 Michigan Agricultural Credit Conference](#). 8 am. Molecular Plant Sciences Building, MSU Campus. The conference provides agricultural lenders, agribusinesses, policymakers, and other interested parties with updates on the economy and agricultural industries in Michigan. Hear from experts about agricultural policy, commodity outlooks, and much more.
- Nov 5** [Farm Labor and Michigan Agriculture Conference](#). 9 am. MSU University Club. The conference seeks to investigate labor challenges that domestic agricultural employers and employees are facing, discuss potential solutions, and provide agricultural stakeholders with information and resources to help address these challenges. While there is no charge for attending, pre-registration is required.
- Dec 4** [Beyond the Bin Grain Marketing Workshop](#). 9 am-2 pm. Van Buren County MSU Extension Office. This in-person workshop will provide hands-on education on grain marketing. More details to come. **RUP/CCA**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

[Cover crops after wheat harvest – five reliable options](#)

Published on September 2, 2025

Post-wheat harvest leaves an excellent opportunity to incorporate fall cover crops into your production system. Here's five reliable options for cover cropping after wheat to get you started.

[Grain marketing considerations for 2025 and beyond](#)

Published on September 2, 2025

The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series on September 11 will focus on grain marketing updates.

[Leasing land when profits are scarce](#)

Published on September 2, 2025

Farmland rental strategies when margins are thin.

[Seed selection goes beyond yield and disease resistance](#)

Published on September 2, 2025

New resources from MSU Extension can help you choose the right seed for your farm.

[Cost of Production spotlighted in new season of risk management series from MSU Extension](#)

Published on September 2, 2025

Cost of Production is the main emphasis of this year's Farm Policy and Risk Management Series.

[Have you experienced barriers or challenges to accessing farmland? We want to know!](#)

Published on September 1, 2025

Take part in a survey from a joint MIFarmLink-MSU Extension research project funded through a SARE grant.

[Controlled Drainage Beyond Flat Fields](#)

Published on August 28, 2025

Controlled drainage has long been recommended for flat fields but new research from Michigan State University is

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – September 4, 2025 - 8

challenging that recommendation. This bulletin shares results from a paired-field study that evaluated controlled drainage on a Michigan field.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – August 28, 2025

Published on August 28, 2025

White mold and sudden death syndrome are starting to become visible in soybeans. Corn is approaching black layer.

Controlled drainage isn't just for flat fields anymore

Published on August 28, 2025

New research from Michigan State University shows controlled drainage can reduce nitrate loss even on sloped fields, challenging long-standing recommendations.

Register for the Michigan Agricultural Credit Conference Scheduled for October 21, 2025

Published on August 28, 2025

The Michigan Agricultural Credit Conference will be held October 21, 2025 on Michigan State University's campus in East Lansing.

Thinking about desiccating soybeans?

Published on August 28, 2025

Certain soybean harvest challenges may be addressed with the practice of applying a desiccant prior to harvest, but is this practice beneficial for farmers in Michigan?

Ask Extension and the Lawn and Garden Hotline highlights - 2024

Published on August 28, 2025

Michigan State University Extension educators and volunteers respond to thousands of inquiries from Michigan residents each year.

MSU AgBioResearch helps propel potato industry

Published on August 27, 2025

The Michigan potato industry is seeing significant returns from investment in Michigan State University research.

New EPA tool helps growers comply with pesticide runoff and drift mitigation requirements related to the Endangered Species Act

Published on August 27, 2025

Growers and pesticide applicators working to comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Endangered Species Act requirements now have a new tool at their disposal.

USDA releases farmland cash rental values for Michigan counties

Published on August 26, 2025

Michigan State University Extension updates their annual report with the latest data.

Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day is canceled

Published on August 25, 2025

The Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day, scheduled for Sept. 16, 2025, at the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center, has been canceled.

USDA Farmland Cash Rental Rates

Published on August 22, 2025

Rental rates per county taken from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Services

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – September 4, 2025 - 9

Wheat watchers 2025 harvest report

Published on August 21, 2025

Wrap up of the 2025 wheat growing season in Michigan.

Multi-Year Land Rent Value Calculator

Published on August 19, 2025

A decision tool that provides different approaches to determining land rent by crop and rotation over multiple years.

Will an improved ARC-CO program pay more often?

Published on August 19, 2025

ARC-CO will eventually consider extreme market conditions, but support may not arrive until several years later.

MSU offers free webinar series on Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers

Published on August 19, 2025

MSU offers free webinar series on Immigration Essentials for Farm Employers.

Southern rust an occasional threat to Michigan corn

Published on August 14, 2025

Southern rust, common in southern states, thrives in warm, humid weather and spreads via spores from the south. Hybrid susceptibility matters, but Michigan hybrids are not frequently screened for resistance. Learn more about identification and management.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – August 14, 2025

Published on August 14, 2025

Soybean pod fill is underway. Some corn has started to dent. Harvest began on tablestock potatoes.



Nicolle Ritchie
Michigan State University Extension
Field Crops Educator - St. Joseph County
612 E. Main St., Centreville, MI 49032
(269) 858-8739 (Cell)
(269) 467-5510 (Extension Office)
ritchi67@msu.edu



Angie Gradiz
Michigan State University Extension
Agriculture Water Use Efficiency Educator
570 Marshall Road #C, Coldwater, MI 49036
Office: (517) 279 - 4311
Cell: (531) 249 - 4956
gradizme@msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quentin Tyler, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. The 4-H Name and Emblem have special protections from Congress, protected by code 18 USC 707.