

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update October 5, 2026

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.

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Van Buren Conservation District Now Hiring

The Van Buren Conservation District is currently accepting applications for a new position - Conservation Associate - to join their team. Details about how to apply are available at [We're hiring – apply or share! – Van Buren Conservation District](#). Applicants invited to interview will interview November 2-4, 2026.

FREE Soybean Oil/Protein Test Kits

I have free test kits for soybean growers to receive an analysis of their oil and protein content. You can get the kit and send in your own sample, or I'm happy to meet you at harvest, take a sample, and send it in on your behalf. Reach out to me (Nicolle Ritchie: text or call 269-858-8739 or email ritchi67@msu.edu) to arrange.



FREE Upcoming Farm Business Management Webinars

To learn more about how to value Michigan farmland, join the [Acre by Acre: Michigan Farmland Rental Markets](#) webinar program on **Wednesday, November 4 at 7:00 PM**. The program will explore leasing basics, factors that drive rental rates and lease agreements, and starting points for calculating a reasonable rental rate. The webinar will also review results from USDA's Cash Rents Survey and take a closer look at the latest county-by-county rental rates for Michigan. The program will wrap up with an overview of the new Michigan Farmland Lease Template. Register at <https://pears.io/events/msuext/10453/>.

To aid farms in making their Farm Bill decision, [MSU Extension](#) will be hosting the *2026 Farm Bill Commodity Program Decisions: What Fits Your Farm* webinar to walk through decision options. Speakers will also provide Farm Bill related updates on topics such as insurance, commodity programs, and more. The webinar will be held on **Thursday, November 5 at 1:00 PM** and focuses on corn, soybeans, and wheat crops. Participants are encouraged to attend this session in order to better understand [Farm Bill commodity program](#) options. Register at <https://pears.io/events/msuext/10717/>.

Save the Date: Fumigation Webinar Dec 2 from 6-8 pm

A fumigation webinar will be offered December 2 from 6-8 pm with fumigation credits available. Watch for more information to come. **2 RUP**

Save the Date: Integrated Crop and Pest Management Update for Agribusiness Dec 17

The Integrated Crop and Pest Management Update for Agribusiness will be held December 17 at the MSUFCU Headquarters 2 building in Lansing. More details to come. **RUP**

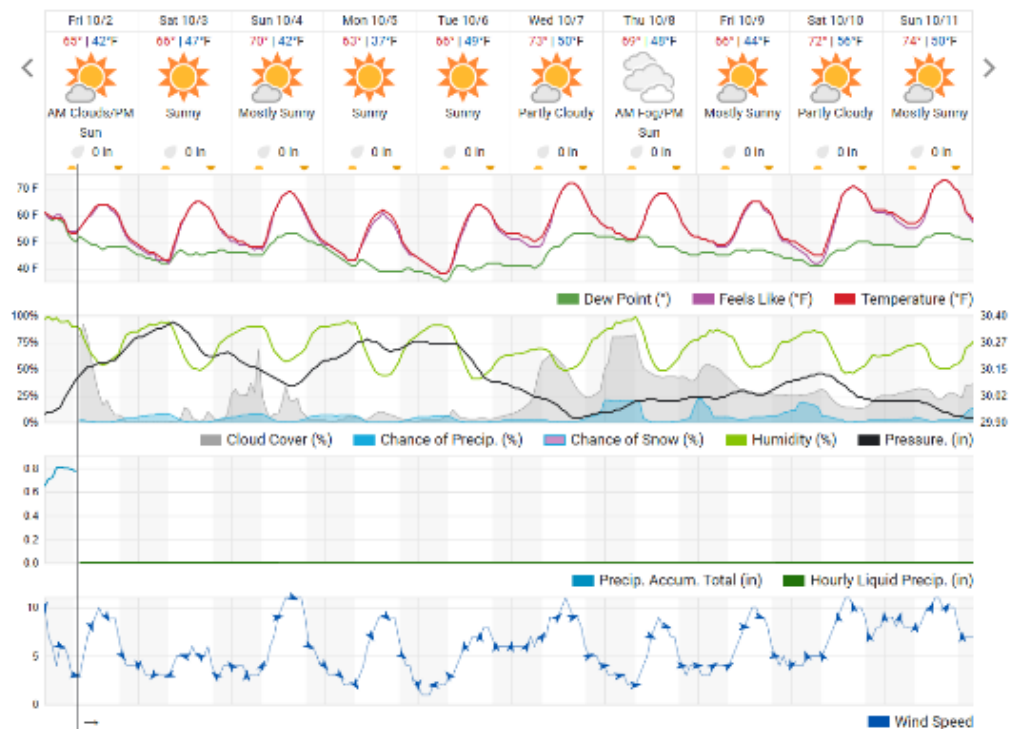
Harvest Update

A long stretch of cool, dry weather at the end of September resulted in significant harvest progress for **seed corn** and **potatoes**. **Soybean** harvest has started on some fields, while other soybeans and most **commercial corn** continue to dry down. Some **hay** fields were cut and baled in late September. **Winter wheat** and **cover crop** planting is in progress. To learn more about planting dates for winter wheat, read the article [Timely planting is critical for maximizing winter wheat yield in Michigan](#).

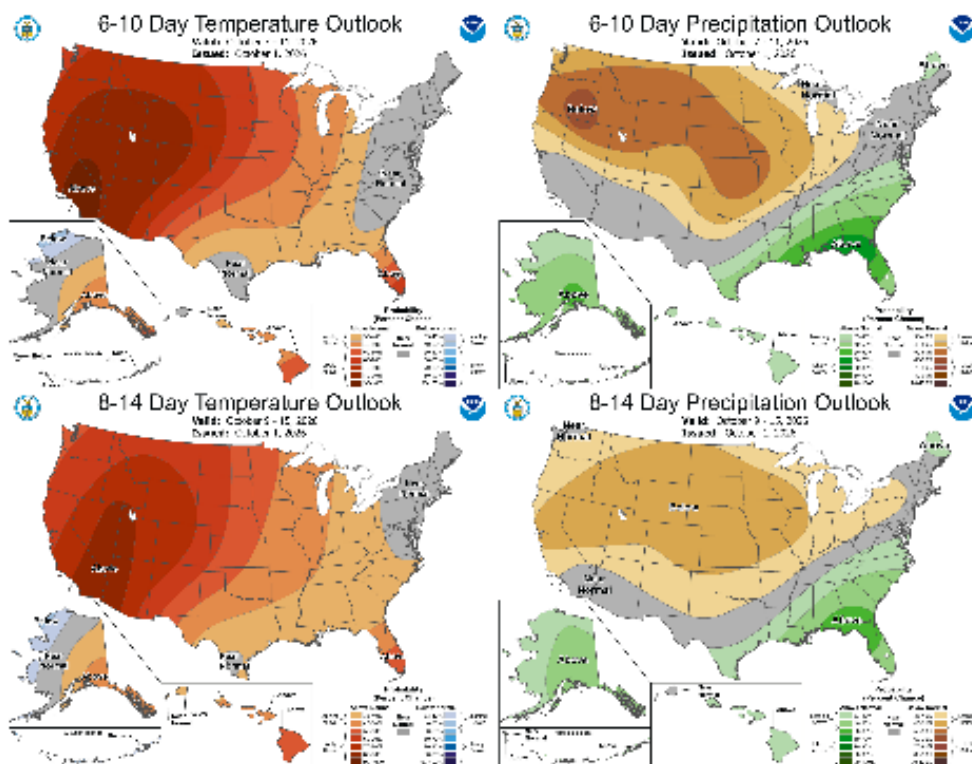


Weather Update

Heavy rainfall occurred in September, starting on the 15th and continuing for about 5 days. The Enviroweather Constantine station received about 3" of precipitation during that time, with other areas of southwest Michigan receiving more and some receiving less. In addition to providing substantial moisture, the weather system ushered in much cooler temperatures, which have remained fairly steady since then. A nine to ten day stretch of cool, dry weather followed before sporadic rainfall began again. The forecast shows cool and dry weather for the next week.



Ten day Weather Underground forecast for Kalamazoo as of October 2, 2026.



The 6-10 day (Oct 7-11, top) and 8-14 day (Oct 9-15, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

- Nov 3-4** **Michigan Agritourism Convention**. Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth. Join us as we celebrate Michigan Agritourism's 20th anniversary and the many farmers behind this important and exciting industry in our state! \$169-\$249
- Nov 4** **Acre by Acre Michigan Farmland Rental Markets Webinar**. 7-8 pm. MSU Extension hosts webinar about Michigan farmland rental basics. Free.
- Nov 5** **2026 Farm Bill Commodity Program Decisions: What Fits Your Farm?** 1-2 pm. MSU Extension hosts webinar to help you choose which Farm Bill commodity program best fits your farm. Free.
- Dec 2** **Fumigation Webinar**. 6-8 pm. Online via Zoom. More information to come. **2 RUP**
- Dec 17** **Integrated Crop and Pest Management Update for Agribusiness**. MSUFCU Headquarters 2, Lansing. More information to come. **RUP**
- Jan 11** **SW MI Crop and Pest Update**. St. Joseph County ISD, Centreville. More information to come. **RUP**
- Jan 13** **RUP Core Review and Testing, English and Spanish**. Kalamazoo. \$25. More information to come. **4 RUP with an unexpired license**
- Jan 20** **Soybean On-Farm Research Update**. Greenmark, Three Rivers. Free. More information to come. **RUP**
- Feb 15** **Branch County Farmers Day**. Branch Area Careers Center, Coldwater. Free. More information to come. **RUP**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Understanding the water use needs of Michigan growers

Published on October 1, 2026

A statewide agricultural water use needs assessment provides insight into irrigation practices, water management challenges and the resources needed to make informed water-use decisions.

Corn kernel dry down outlook for October and November in Michigan

Published on October 1, 2026

Accurate kernel dry down estimation can facilitate timely corn harvest.

Planning for drought stressed corn silage

Published on September 29, 2026

Hot, dry weather conditions can damage corn and potentially cause toxic nitrate levels in corn silage.

Navigating fall seed orders and free farm hats

Published on September 29, 2026

Securing the seed purchases you want at the lowest possible cost.

Agricultural Water Use Needs Assessment Report

Published on September 29, 2026

This publication summarizes a water use efficiency needs assessment survey, highlighting the needs and perspectives of water users to help guide educational efforts in Michigan and surrounding regions.

Enrollment now open: Popular MSU Extension Introduction to Lakes Online course returns in January 2027

Published on September 28, 2026

The course equips participants with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions and become effective stewards of Michigan's inland lakes.

2027 Cost of Production projection tools now available

Published on September 25, 2026

The updated cost of production Excel-based tool for corn, soybeans, and wheat is now available from MSU Extension.

2027 Soybean Projected Cost of Production

Published on September 24, 2026

The MSU Extension 2027 Projected Cost of Production for Soybeans tool is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions on both expected income and expenses for individual farms.

2027 Corn Projected Cost of Production

Published on September 24, 2026

The MSU Extension 2027 Projected Cost of Production for corn tool is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions on both expected income and expenses for individual farms.

Nutrient removal rates in harvested grain: corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, dry beans and canola

Published on September 24, 2026

Nutrient removal by harvested portions of grain crops is an important consideration in deciding fertilizer rates.

Cover Crop Recipes: Post Winter Canola, Going to Corn or Soybean: Use Oats

Published on September 24, 2026

This recipe provides an introductory approach for integrating a cereal grain cover crop into winter canola cropping systems before going into corn or soybeans.

Cover Crop Recipes: Post Winter Canola, Going to Corn or Soybean: Use Clovers and Winter Cereal Grains

Published on September 24, 2026

This recipe provides an introductory approach for integrating cover crops into winter canola cropping systems.

The Michigan Forever Green Field Crops farmer group is growing

Published on September 23, 2026

Overwintering crops and cover crops are one of the most significant drivers of increased soil health. This new grower group aims to make that work with peer learning and agronomy experts.

Emerging leaf spot disease of corn under investigation in Michigan

Published on September 23, 2026

A leaf spot resembling *Phaeosphaeria* leaf spot or maize white spot has been observed in multiple Michigan counties, and researchers are seeking samples to identify the causal organism.

Timely planting is critical for maximizing winter wheat yield in Michigan

Published on September 23, 2026

Recent Michigan research shows that timely planting remains the single most important management factor for maximizing winter wheat yield, while higher seeding rates can only partially offset yield losses from late planting.

Quick response critical to reducing impacts of manure spills

Published on September 22, 2026

Manure spills can happen despite the best prevention efforts. Understanding response procedures and reporting requirements can help safeguard water quality and reduce liability.

2026 Farm Bill Commodity Program Decisions: What Fits Your Farm?

Published on September 21, 2026

MSU Extension hosts a webinar to help you choose which Farm Bill commodity program best fits your farm.

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Southwest Michigan field crops update – September 17, 2026

Published on September 17, 2026

Soybeans and corn are finishing up kernel fill and drying down. Seed corn and potato harvesters ran as weather permitted.



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