

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update September 17, 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.

Contents:

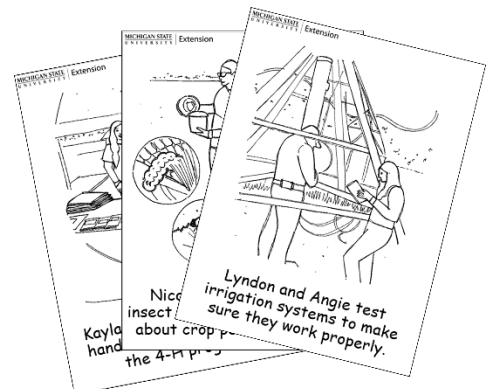
- Announcements
- Crop and Pest Update
- Irrigation and Water Use Update
- [Weather Update](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [MSU Extension Digest Briefs](#)

DATE CHANGED to 9/22 for Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day

The field day was postponed due to the rain forecast and is currently planned for Tuesday, Sept. 22. Online registration is extended through TODAY, Thursday, Sept. 17. Learn more and register [here](#).

Find us at the St. Joseph County Grange Fair Next Week

Stop by the Annex to learn more about what MSU Extension has to offer. Check out our table and coloring contest for the chance to win a prize. All ages are welcome to enter.



Tell us about your experience applying, enrolling, and managing CRP

This is a voluntary survey that will make a huge difference for conservation in Midwest agricultural landscapes. Responses will help Pollinator Partnership advise the USDA on how it can best support Midwest growers in creating habitat on farms and help influence future conservation program updates. All responses will be anonymous and aggregated.

You must currently own and/or manage farmland in one of the following states: Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, or Ohio. Please complete the survey in one sitting and only complete it once. It takes about 15 minutes to complete. [Take the survey](#).



Save the Date: Michigan Agritourism Convention November 3-4

The Michigan Agritourism Convention will be held in Frankenmuth on Nov. 3-4, 2026. We have a fun, inspiring and educational event planned for you at the Bavarian inn Lodge in downtown Frankenmuth. This event is appropriate for any farm that welcomes the public onto their property. The convention includes tours, educational sessions, and a keynote.

Details: <https://michiganfarmfun.com/convention26/>

Register: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/25th-anniversary-conference>

For more information, contact Janice at the Michigan Agritourism Association: 616-952-1151 or info@michiganfarmfun.com

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**

Michigan Farmland Lease Template

This summer, MSU Extension released the [Michigan Farmland Lease Template](#). This template can be used for annual crops, orchards and other perennial plantings, and pastureland rental agreements. Instructions for how to use the template are on the cover page. Also see our [video](#) for instruction on how to adjust the template. Jump to the relevant topics for your situation:

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- **Property description** – begins at 1 minute 35 seconds
- **Term of the lease, and termination** – at 4 minutes 5 seconds
- **Payment structure** – 9 minutes 19 seconds
 - Orchard / variable-flexible rent provisions – 13 minutes 10 seconds
- **Right to harvest** – 15 minutes 5 seconds
- **Why it is important to take out brackets!** /Landlord right to entry – 16 minutes 10 seconds
- **Perennial plantings, irrigation, and improvements** – 17 minutes 12 seconds
- **Insurance, special provisions, and addendums** – 27 minutes 42 seconds

Contact Chris Bardenhagen for any questions or for help getting started with the template at bardenh1@msu.edu or 231-256-9888.

Crop and Pest Update



Full-season **soybeans** are at late R6 (seed fill), R7 (beginning maturity) or R8 (full maturity). Soybean harvest is not too far off, although the rain predicted over the weekend may push it back.

Corn is mostly at late R5 (dent) or R6 (black layer). At R6, the corn is physiologically mature and drying down for harvest. A hardened black layer is visible on the narrow tip of the kernel. **Seed corn** harvest picked up over the past week as weather permitted.



Potato storage harvest began slowly, but fresh crop harvest continued. A few fields are still green but will be terminated shortly. Cover crops have gone in on many of the fields that have been harvested at this point.



Irrigation and Water Use

- At R5 (dent) stage, **corn** still uses approximately 1 inch of water per week. Once corn reaches the black layer (maturity), water use decreases to about 0.6 inches per week, and additional irrigation may no longer be beneficial. Start thinking about your [last irrigation event](#). Once corn reaches black layer, there is no benefit to adding more water.
- **Soybeans** at R6 remain at peak water use, at approximately 1 inch per week. Before making your last irrigation decision, check soil moisture to ensure there is enough water available to carry the crop through full maturity. When approximately 50% or more of the leaves have turned yellow, this can be a good endpoint for irrigation.
- **Rainfall** this week is expected to be variable, with lower temperatures and decreasing evapotranspiration and crop water demand.
- To improve irrigation management, consider using irrigation scheduling tools such as the free and updated MSU Irrigation Scheduling Mobile App, available for [Apple](#) and [Android](#) devices. The app provides field-specific irrigation recommendations based on crop growth, weather, and soil type.

This year, [weekly crop water use updates](#) will continue to be shared through the SW MI Crop Updates. For added convenience, updates will also be sent through direct email and text messages. If you would like to see an additional location included in the report, please contact Angie Gradiz at gradizme@msu.edu or 531-249-4956.

The table below summarizes estimated crop water use (inches per week) for major irrigated field crops across Michigan's primary irrigated regions.

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Estimated Weekly Crop Water Use for Field Crops in Michigan (in/week)

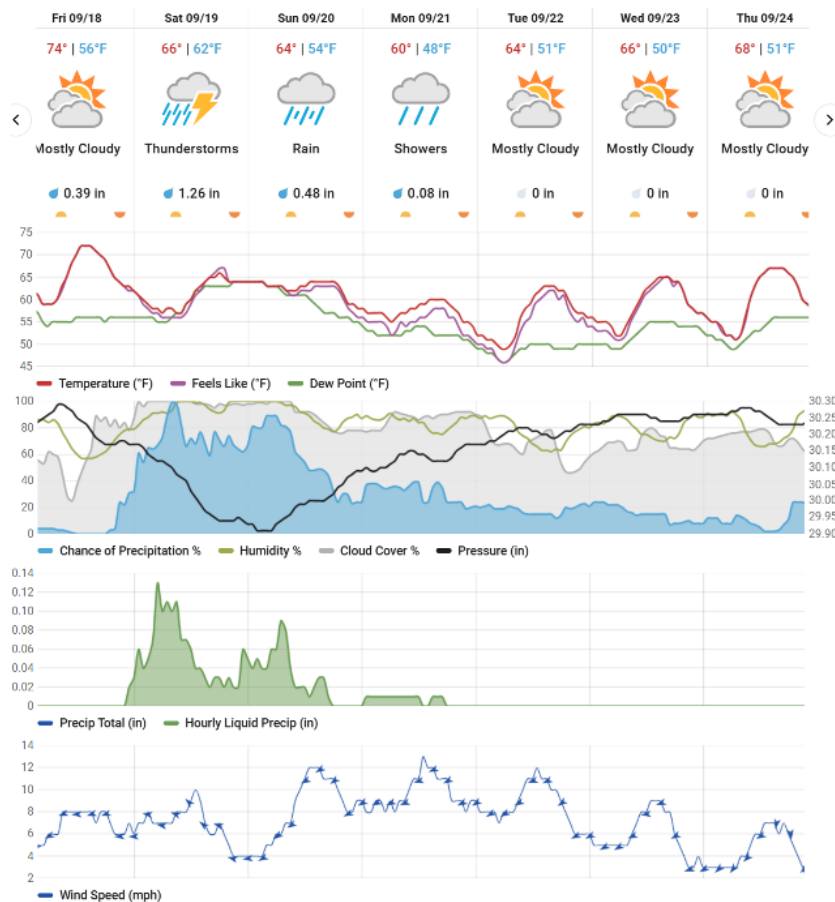
Week of September 14 - 20, 2026

Crop	Growth stage	Crop water use (in/week)			
		Constantine	Berrien Springs	Entrican	Hart
	Reference ET	0.68	0.65	0.62	0.69
Corn	VT, Silk, Blister, Dough, Begin Dent	0.75	0.72	0.68	0.76
	Full Dent	0.68	0.65	0.62	0.69
	Black Layer	0.45	0.43	0.41	0.46
Soybeans	R5 (Begin seed) - R6 (Full seed)	0.75	0.72	0.68	0.76
	Begin Mature (R7)	0.54	0.52	0.50	0.55
	Full Maturity (R8)	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.14
Potato	Bulk	0.41	0.39	0.37	0.41
	Pre-Senescence	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.21
	Maturity	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07

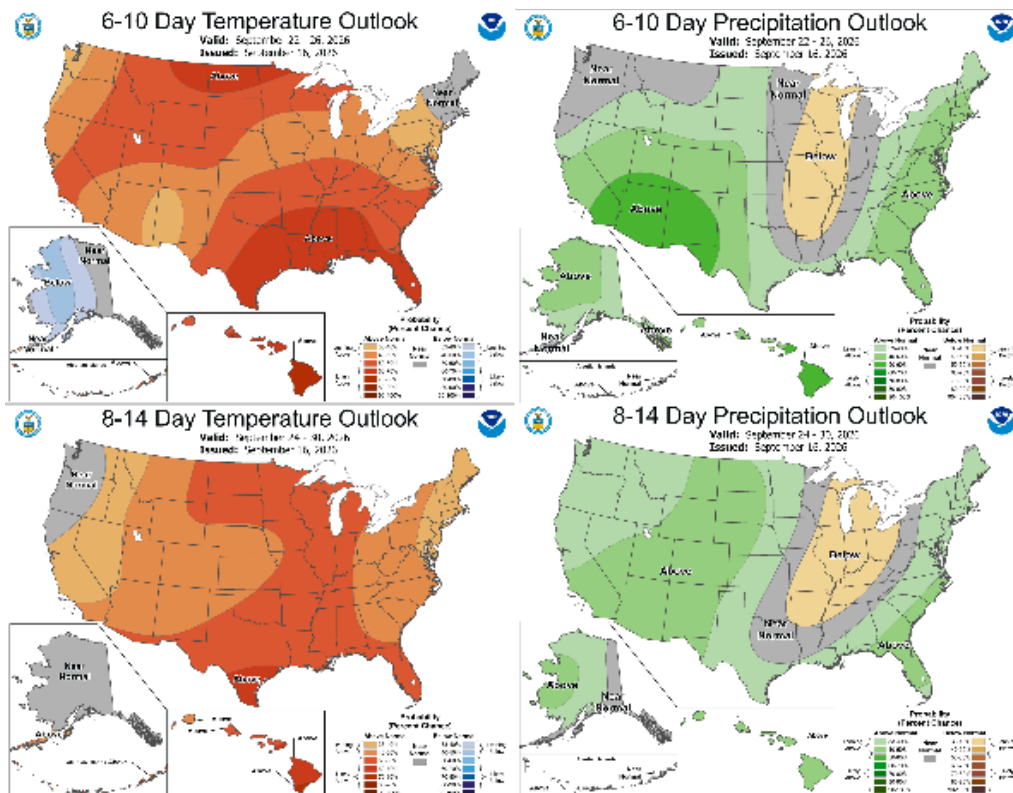
Weather Update

The past week was mainly cool, with showers following the relatively sunny weekend. About half an inch of precipitation was recorded at the Enviroweather Constantine station. This week, significant rainfall is forecast for the weekend, with a total of about two inches currently predicted. Temperatures will remain cool.

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



The 6-10 day (September 22-26, top) and 8-14 day (Sep 24-30, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

- Sept 22** **Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day 2026**. 10am-3pm. Parr Farms, Charlotte. This half-day event will allow attendees to learn how to get their combines and monitor equipment ready for harvest season, how to maintain them, and how to minimize header losses through educational sessions and combine harvest demonstrations. Free, registration required.
- Sept 23** **Stuckman Lecture Series**. 5:30-7 pm. 219 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing, MI. The Stuckman Lecture Series at Michigan State University features influential voices in conversations on the economic and policy forces shaping our food system. Free, registration required.
- 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
- 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**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Late-season soybean decisions: Maximizing harvest efficiency and planning for 2027

Published on September 16, 2026

Decisions made this fall can influence profitability beyond yield, from minimizing harvest losses and managing grain moisture to selecting soybean varieties that better fit 2027 production goals.

Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day postponed due to weather

Published on September 15, 2026

The field day was postponed due to the rain forecast and is currently planned for Tuesday, Sept. 22. Online registration is extended through Thursday, Sept. 17.

What's an acre worth? The answer can change acre by acre

Published on September 15, 2026

Learn more at MSU Extension's Acre by Acre: Michigan Farmland Rental Markets webinar program.

Thinking about managing white mold with biologicals?

Published on September 15, 2026

Reducing the number of overwintering structures is key to managing white mold, and one biological product has been shown to be effective in this strategy.

When a cover crop becomes a cash crop: Lessons from a cereal rye seed production field

Published on September 15, 2026

A West Michigan grain farmer's goal of growing cereal rye for grain seed leads to some important lessons on cover crop usage in Michigan.

2027 Wheat Projected Cost of Production

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Published on September 10, 2026

The MSU Extension 2026 Projected Cost of Production for Wheat tool is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions on both expected income and expenses for individual farms.

New to Agriculture? We've got a guide for you!

Published on September 10, 2026

The Beginning Farmer Resource and Decision-Making Guide is now available from Michigan State University Extension and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mycotoxins in feed Part 3: Mitigation from field to feeder

Published on September 10, 2026

Inspired by a very wet Michigan spring, this series provides a refresher on mycotoxins, their effects and mitigation in pig production.

Cracked solar panel raises questions, but what does the science say?

Published on September 10, 2026

Fact sheet examines how modern solar panels are built and why studies show damaged panels pose little risk to soil and groundwater.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – September 10, 2026

Published on September 10, 2026

Seed corn harvest continues and potato storage harvest will start this week, temperatures permitting.



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