MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update
September 3, 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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Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day Sept 15!

The 15th Annual Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day is a half-day event that allows 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**, but please pre-register for an accurate lunch count.

Don’t Miss the Midwest Mechanical Field Day Sept 16!

Join for a full day tradeshow, weeding tool discussions and in-field demonstrations for managing weeds in row crops, vegetables and tree fruit with steep registration discounts for organic and organic-curious growers from Michigan, Illinois and Indiana.

When: Wednesday, September 16, 2026
Where: Michigan State University’s Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, 1791 Hillandale Rd, Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Cost: $85 (includes lunch)
Registration: Register online by Sept. 8. Walk-ins are welcome but you will need to bring your own lunch.
For more information on the event or to register by phone, contact Crystal at crystal@thelandconnection.org or 217-840-2128.

Each year, the Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day moves to a different state in the Midwest. This year, the field day’s 9th year, they are partnering with Michigan State University (MSU) Extension and holding the field day at the MSU Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center in Benton Harbor, Michigan, on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026. This field day is the place to see weeding tools of all scales demonstrated in the field, where farmers can learn from company reps and farmers from around the region. Read more here.

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.

Farm Safety PSA from the Cass County FSA

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand — it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped. The mechanical operation of grain handling equipment also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children at a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when

backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

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**

VAN BUREN COUNTY FARMERS: Pesticide Container Recycling

After you treat crops with "-icides", remember to recycle your containers with the Van Buren Conservation District! Containers, jugs, and barrels must be empty, clean, and triple rinsed. This program is free and by appointment-only in Paw Paw. Reach out to schedule your drop-off: Materials Management Project Manager Kalli Marshall: ResourceRecovery@VanBurenCD.org; 269-633-9314.

Crop and Pest Update

Full-season **soybeans** are finishing R5 (seed fill) and entering R6 (full seed). Several fields have started to senesce. Once one pod on the stem reaches its mature color, the soybean is at R7. Continue to watch out for **red crown rot**, which is a potential disease not yet confirmed in Michigan. Symptoms look similar to **sudden death syndrome** and **brown stem rot**. If you suspect red crown rot, submit a sample to the Michigan State University Plant and Pest Diagnostics Lab. Michigan Soybean Committee and the United Soybean Board will cover the diagnostic fees. Soybean sampling kits can be requested here.

Most **corn** fields have entered R5 (dent), and some are at R6 (black layer). At R5, the milk line is visible. This is a change in color in the middle of the kernel that shows where solid starch accumulation (darker color) has occurred, starting from the outer edge and moving inward. At this point in the season, scout for ear molds and stalk rots, which can affect harvestability and seed quality. **Seed corn** harvest began this past week.

Potato harvest is picking up and will begin in earnest in a couple weeks. Many fields have already been terminated to prepare for harvest, and the rest will follow within a week or so. There have not been any further **late blight** detections since early August when it was found in St. Joseph County.

Irrigation and Water Use

- At R5 stage, **corn** still uses approximately 0.7–1 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 R5–R6 remain at peak water use, at approximately 1.16 inches per week in southwest Michigan. 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. When irrigating soybeans, using higher application rates can reduce the frequency of leaf-wetting events, which may help reduce conditions favorable for white mold development.

- **Rainfall** this week is expected to be variable, with lower temperatures and decreasing evapotranspiration and crop water demand, particularly in west-central Michigan.

- 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.

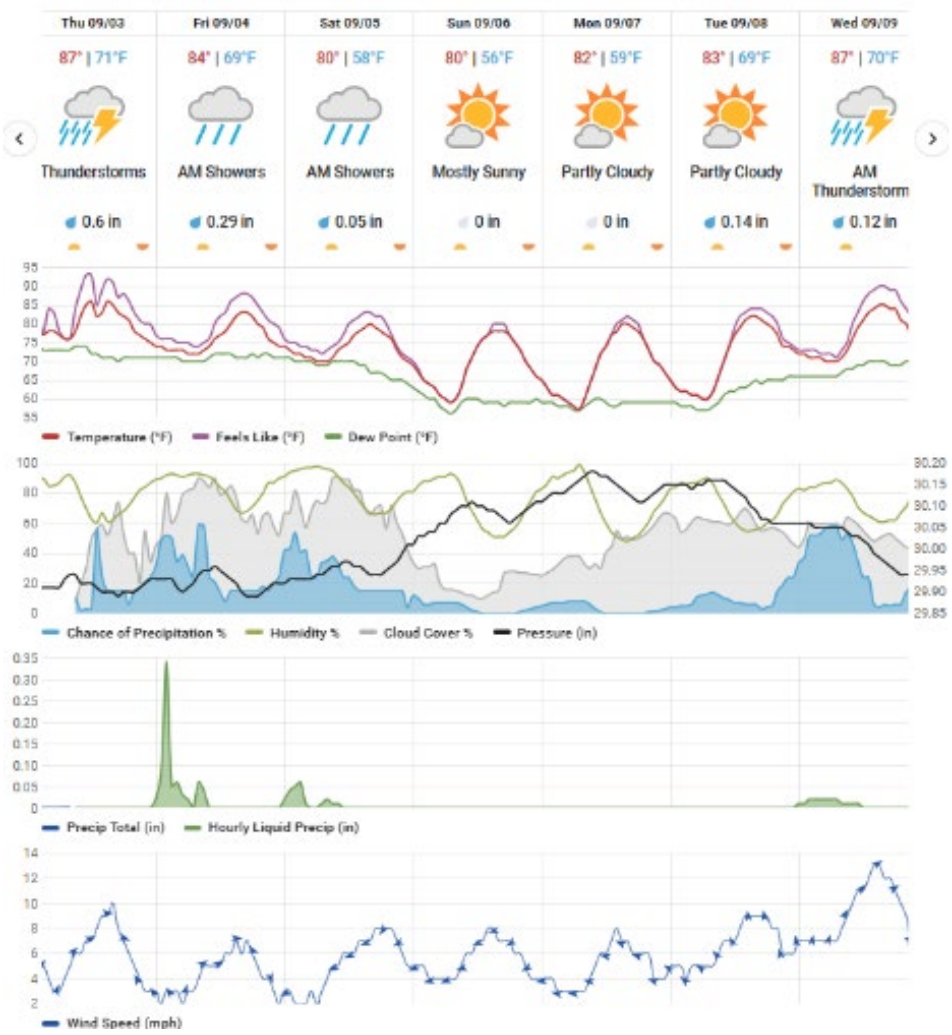
This year, weekly crop water use updates will continue to be shared through the SW MI Crop Updates. For added convenience, updates will also be sent through direct email and text messages. If you would like to see an additional location included in the report, please contact Angie Gradiz at gradizme@msu.edu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

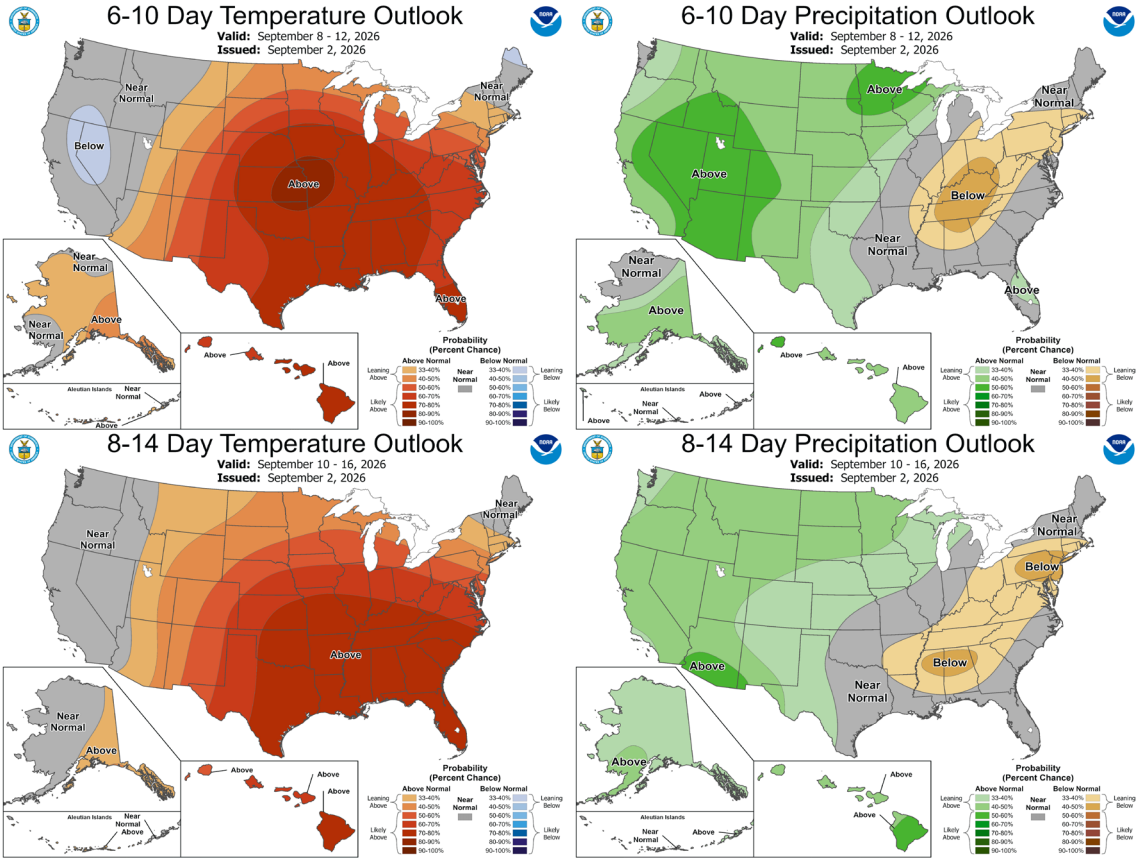
Estimated weekly crop water use for field crops in Michigan (in/week) **Week of August 31 - September 6**					
Crop	**Growth stage**	**Constantine**	**Berrien Springs**	**Entrican**	**Hart**
	Reference ET	1.05	1.08	0.78	0.81
Corn	VT, Silk, Blister, Dough, Begin Dent	1.16	1.19	0.86	0.89
	Full Dent	1.05	1.08	0.78	0.81
	Black Layer	0.69	0.71	0.51	0.53
Soybeans	R3 (Begin pod) - R4 (Full pod)	1.16	1.19	0.86	0.89
	R5 (Begin seed) - R6 (Full seed)	1.16	1.19	0.86	0.89
	Begin Mature	1.05	1.08	0.78	0.81
Potatoes	Bulk	0.63	0.65	0.47	0.49
	Pre-Senescence	0.32	0.32	0.23	0.24
	Maturity	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.08

Weather Update

The past week was mostly warm and dry, with some showers over the weekend. High heat and humidity early this week were a big contrast to the fall-like weather from the previous week. Thunderstorms today (September 3) leading into showers tomorrow are expected to bring about a third of an inch of precipitation. The weekend is forecast to be dry and warm, with the next rainfall expected early next week.



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



The 6-10 day (September 8-12, top) and 8-14 day (Sep 10-16, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

Sep 10 — **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Precision Agriculture**. 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season.

Sep 11 — **Grazing Chat**. 9-11 am. Online through Zoom. Connecting Michigan producers through practical discussions on grazing management, livestock production, and forage systems. Free.

Sep 15 — **Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day**. 10am-3pm. 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.

Sep 16 — **Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day**. 8am-4pm. Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center. This event is perfect for farmers and ag advisors who want to see a particular weeding tool before buying it, learn how to adjust cultivators, see what is new in cultivation, and learn from other farmers.

Sep 17 — **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Late Season Weed Control**. 7-8 am. Online through Zoom. The Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series is a weekly webinar for farmers, agribusiness professionals and anyone interested in agriculture to prepare for potential issues and navigate any concerns during the growing season.

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**

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Registration closes soon for the Soybean Harvest Equipment Field Day on September 15 in Eaton County
Published on September 3, 2026
Online registration closes Sept. 8 to reserve a free lunch. Additional topic to be addressed will include desiccating soybeans as a harvest aid.

Mark your calendars for the 2027 Breakfast on the Farm event
Published on September 2, 2026
MSU Extension's Breakfast on the Farm event returns on July 10, 2027, in Clayton, Michigan.

Agricultural producers can share their input in the Midwest Farm Conservation Survey
Published on September 2, 2026
Help improve the value of conservation programs for Midwestern farmers by taking a survey.

Without M-AAA, Michigan ag industries would be 'more desperate' searching for research and education
Published on September 2, 2026
For more than a decade, M-AAA has helped MSU researchers and educators generate over $960 million in economic impacts for Michigan.

Buy now or wait? Best practices for securing next year's farm inputs
Published on September 2, 2026
What recent fertilizer and crop prices can teach us about buying farm inputs.

High Oleic Soybeans Bulletin 3541
Published on September 2, 2026
This bulletin explores the impact of high-oleic oil on ration costs and animal performance while also addressing key management factors such as roasting, particle size, and storage.

Looking beyond appearance: Measuring cover crop biomass in Michigan
Published on September 1, 2026
Lessons learned from a cover crop workshop demonstration field day.

Extension Agriculture & Agribusiness in Michigan
Published on August 28, 2026
Michigan State University Extension educators work with farms of all sizes to positively impact individual farming operations. When individual operations do well, their success helps to fuel state and local economies.

Education that delivers: Measurable gains in conservation practice adoption and farm planning
Published on August 28, 2026
MSU Extension's efforts strengthen farm profitability, promote soil health and support conservation practices that protect water quality.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – August 27, 2026
Published on August 27, 2026
Watch for red crown rot in soybeans. Tar spot was confirmed in St. Joseph and Van Buren counties. No further late blight has been detected in southwest Michigan.

USDA releases farmland cash rental values for Michigan counties
Published on August 27, 2026
Michigan State University Extension updates their annual report with the latest data.

MSU Extension and Monroe Conservation District to host Tillage and Soil Health Field Day on September 9
Published on August 26, 2026
This field day will feature a tillage equipment demonstration to see strip tillage, vertical tillage and a high-speed disc in action.

USDA Farmland Cash Rental Rates
Published on August 25, 2026
Rental rates per county taken from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Services

MSU scientists developing tools that help farmers improve irrigation, energy efficiency
Published on August 24, 2026
Research is showing how Michigan growers can save money, improve crops and protect valuable water resources.

Announcing the Michigan First-Generation Farm Mentorship Program
Published on August 21, 2026
Learn from experienced farm mentors through this new opportunity.

Exploring irrigation investments: Feasibility and economics with MSU Extension's Virtual Breakfast
Published on August 21, 2026
The 2026 Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series continues August 27 with Lyndon Kelley discussing the economics of irrigation investments and key considerations for producers evaluating irrigation expansion.

Fast Fonz Facts: Dectes discovery, earworms increasing
Published on August 20, 2026
Fast Fonz Facts outlining a new insect discovery and earworm trapping.

Soil Health Advancement for Agricultural Resilience Enhancement (SHARE) project aims to assess resilience of Michigan's regenerative agriculture
Published on August 20, 2026
Learn more about regenerative agriculture and the ways it has emerged as a key solution to navigating climatic extremes.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – August 20, 2026
Published on August 20, 2026
Seed corn approaches harvest. Potato growers met to discuss late blight identification and management in response to last week's confirmation of late blight in St. Joseph County.

Current status of potato late blight in Michigan – August 18, 2026
Published on August 19, 2026
Elevated risk in Michigan this week supports continued vigilant scouting efforts after last week's late blight detection in St. Joseph County on Aug. 12, 2026.

Register for the Pesticide Core Review Training at GLEXPO 2026
Published on August 19, 2026
Registration is open for the Pesticide Core Review Training and MDARD RUP test, offered in English and Spanish, at the Great Lakes Expo on December 10. Participants can also earn RUP credits. Don't miss this opportunity!

The Michigan Forever Green Field Crops farmer group is growing

Published on August 19, 2026

Farmers interested in or currently growing wheat or canola can find resources and support through a new grower network.

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