

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update July 16, 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
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Beat the Heat



“In the MSU Extension article, “[Heat stress prevention among farmers heading into Michigan’s summer](#),” co-authors [Laurel Harduar Morano](#), Hailey TenHarmsel and [Samantha Wolfe](#) explain the most common factors that can increase the chance of heat-related illnesses in the workplace and on the farm including humidity, clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) use, workload and other personal factors that impact our ability to tolerate the heat.

With a focus on farmers, farm workers and other outdoor professions, the article also provides expert guidance and additional resources available in both English and Spanish on the best ways to stay safe, including:

- **Staying hydrated.**
- **Taking breaks in a shady or cool area.**
- **Changing any face coverings that become wet.**
- **Dressing appropriately for the heat.**
- **Taking time to acclimate to sudden changes in temperature and humidity.**

For employers, the co-authors also emphasize the importance of having written heat stress prevention and response plans, as well as taking steps to:

- **Acclimate workers when conditions change.**
- **Establish an appropriate work/rest schedule.**
- **Provide a shaded break area along with clean, cool water.**
- **Train supervisors and employees on how to recognize signs and symptoms.”**

Read the rest of the article at [When temperatures soar, MSU Extension has answers to help you keep cool.](#)

Applications Open for the Southwest Michigan MSU Extension District Director

As part of the MSU Extension Administrative Team, this leadership position is for the District 13 Director who will support the counties of Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren. The role of the district director is to develop, maintain, and coordinate relationships between MSU Extension and local community partners, provide oversight and mentoring to staff housed in the district, and to employ entrepreneurial efforts to secure resources with other partners. [Learn more here.](#)

FREE 2026 Summer Irrigation Workshop July 30 9 am to 2:30 pm

Join Michigan State University Extension at the Kellogg Biological Station in Hickory Corners for a hands-on irrigation field workshop focused on improving irrigation timing, efficiency, and decision-making in Michigan field crop systems. Please pre-register: <https://pears.io/events/msuext/7527/>



The poster is for the 2026 Summer Irrigation Workshop. It features a background image of a large center pivot irrigation system over a green field. At the top left is the Michigan State Irrigation Lab logo, and at the top right is the Michigan State University Extension logo. The title '2026 SUMMER IRRIGATION WORKSHOP' is in large, bold, yellow-green letters. Below the title, a white box contains the workshop description. To the right, a yellow box contains the registration link and a QR code. Below the QR code, it says 'Free - Lunch provided!'. Further down, a yellow box lists the topics and credits. To the right of this, a white box shows the date 'July 30th' and time '9:00 am - 2:30 pm'. Below that, another white box lists the location. At the bottom, a row of logos for sponsors and partners is displayed.

MICHIGAN STATE Irrigation Lab **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension**

2026 SUMMER IRRIGATION WORKSHOP

Join Michigan State University Extension for a hands-on irrigation field workshop focused on improving irrigation timing, efficiency, and decision-making in Michigan field crop systems.

Register:
<https://pears.io/events/msuext/7527/>



Free - Lunch provided!

Topics:

- Hands-on Texture Testing (Bring your soil sample!)
- How to Test Pressure, Flow Rate and Uniformity - Mobile Irrigation Lab Demo
- Trade Show and TAPS Tour
- Soil Moisture Sensors and Basic Irrigation Scheduling Concepts
- Variable Rate Irrigation and Fertigation
- Irrigation Safety
- Future of Michigan Irrigation Roundtable

Credits: 2 RUP, 2.5 CCA (SW)

July 30th
9:00 am - 2:30 pm

Location
KELLOGG BIOLOGICAL STATION
10461 N 40th, Hickory Corners, MI 49060

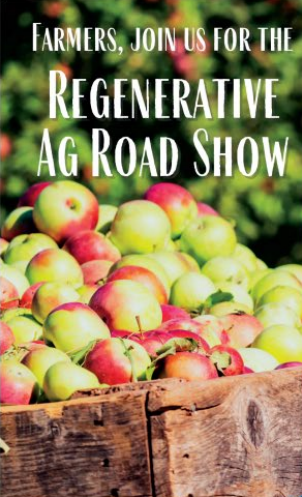
Sponsors and Partners: Project GREEN, Sentek, cropx, komet, MSUTAPS, MICHIGAN SOYBEAN COMMITTEE, Farm SERVICES, Michigan Valley.

VAN BUREN COUNTY: Regenerative Ag Roadshow

The Van Buren Conservation District is hosting their first ever multi-stop bus tour featuring regenerative farm practices. The Regenerative Ag Road Show will highlight four unique farms with different conservation practices. The VBCD invites farmers and agricultural professionals to come, listen, and learn as Van Buren County farmers share successes and challenges of their journey towards regenerative ag.

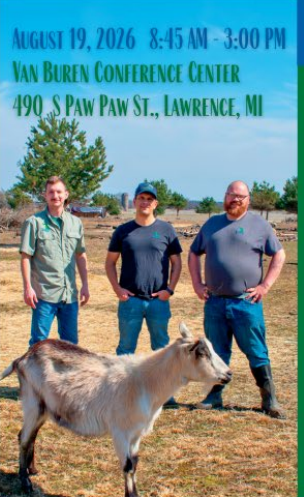
Featured practices include rotational pastures, grazing cover crops, no-till, pollinator strips, sustainable apples, and multispecies cover crops in vegetables. Every farmer will learn something to help in the transition to a more regenerative system. Attendance is free and lunch is included. RSVP is required for day-of details.

Sign up online (www.VanBurenCD.org/field-day-2026) or contact Conservation Specialist Colleen Forestieri with any questions at agconservation@vanburencd.org or 269-657-4030 x5.



FARMERS, JOIN US FOR THE
**REGENERATIVE
AG ROAD SHOW**





AUGUST 19, 2026 8:45 AM - 3:00 PM
VAN BUREN CONFERENCE CENTER
490 S PAW PAW ST., LAWRENCE, MI

FREE EVENT - LUNCH INCLUDED

**BUS TOUR OF FOUR FARMS
IN VAN BUREN COUNTY**

- Hear directly from farmers about successes and challenges of their journey towards regenerative ag.
- See practices like cover crops, no-till, rotational grazing, pollinator strips, and more!
- Space is limited; advance registration is required.



Scan to register

**LEARN MORE AND
REGISTER:**
269-657-4030 x5
VanBurenCD.org/field-day-2026



PRINCIPLES OF REGENERATIVE AG

- KEEP SOIL COVERED
- MINIMIZE SOIL DISTURBANCE
- INCREASE PLANT DIVERSITY
- MAINTAIN LIVING ROOTS
- INTEGRATE LIVESTOCK

Crop management and fuel use survey

The [AI4Ag climate resiliency research project](https://lees.geo.msu.edu/ai4agsys-survey.html) is looking for Michigan farmers to complete survey about their typical management and fuel use in a given year. Corn, soybean, wheat, or potato producers are welcome to participate. Each survey participant will receive \$50 for their time taking this survey. Access the survey at this link:

<https://lees.geo.msu.edu/ai4agsys-survey.html>

ATTN Covers Crops Interseeders (Custom or on-farm)

The purpose of this survey is to improve recommendations for interseeding cover crops.

Take this short survey (est. 20 minutes) by July 30 and get entered to win a \$75 gas card.

https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1zXmrQSqyRl4dpA

- You may take the survey for each unique type of equipment that you use to spread cover crop seed.
- To opt-in to the gift card drawing: upon survey completion, you will be automatically redirected to a second short survey collecting contact info. Two randomly selected card recipients will be contacted after the close of the survey.
- Reach out to Madelyn Celovsky (celovsk2@msu.edu) with any questions.

DO YOU OFFER COVER CROP INTERSEEDING SERVICES IN MICHIGAN?



We want to hear from you!

Fill out this survey to contribute to MSU research developing stronger recommendations for cover crop interseeding



<https://tinyurl.com/interseed>

Take the survey and
get entered to win a
\$75 gift card

Montcalm County Potato Field Day August 6 from 9:45 am to 1 pm

MSU Extension and the Michigan Potato Industry Commission would like to invite all producers, agribusinesses, and community members to join us for the Potato Field Day at the Montcalm Research Farm!

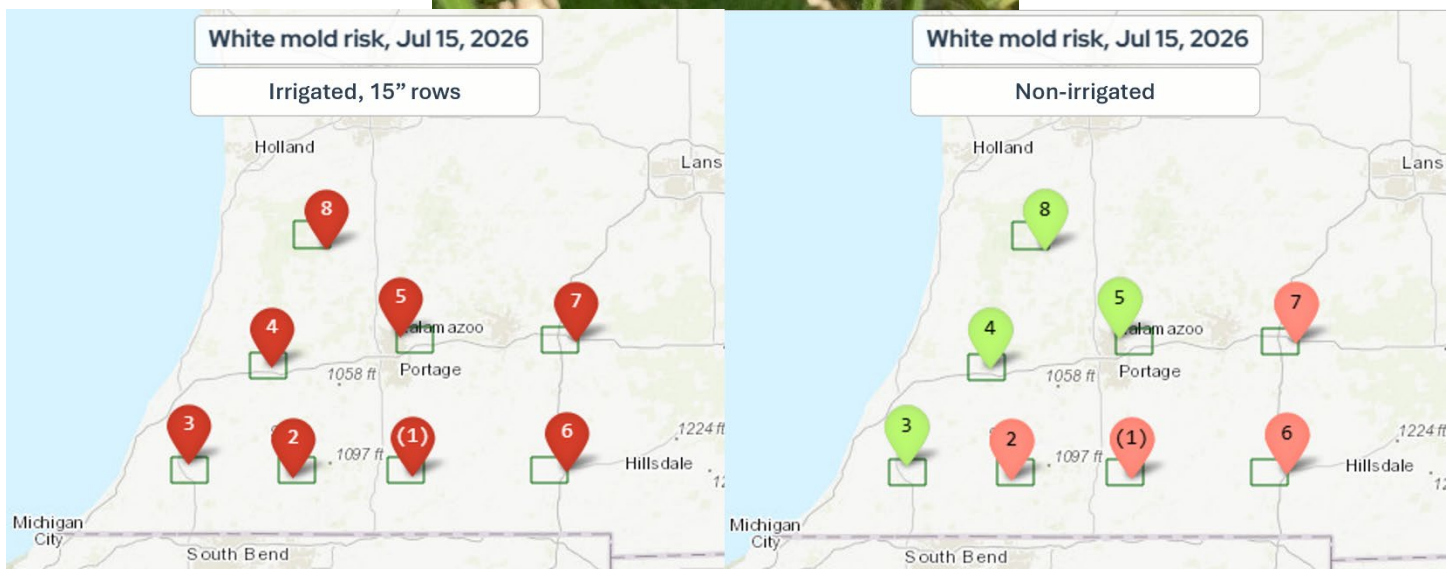


Michigan adopts the new National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual

The [Michigan Pesticide Safety Education Program \(PSEP\)](#) at Michigan State University has adopted the English version of the newly released National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual Third Edition (2025), developed by the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC). The new manual became available for purchase through [Michigan State University Extension](#)'s online [Pesticide Safety Study Manual Site](#) on May 1, 2026. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) will begin administering certification examinations based on the new manual effective Aug. 1, 2026. Read more [here](#).

Crop and Pest Update

Most **soybeans** are in reproductive stages, ranging from R1 (one open flower anywhere on the stem) to R4 (a pod 3/4 inches long at the fourth node down). Fungicide applications to prevent white mold should be applied between R1 and R3. The [Crop Protection Network](#)'s [Crop Risk Tool](#) showed high risk of white mold development on irrigated soybeans and low to moderate on non-irrigated soybeans in southwest Michigan for the past week.



Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – July 16, 2026 - 7

More **corn** put out tassels this week. Detasseling of **seed corn** fields began in earnest. As corn enters reproductive stages, scout for **tar spot** by looking for small dark lesions on leaves. Make sure to add water and try to rub the lesion off. If it can be rubbed off, it is not tar spot, but insect droppings. Tar spot fungicides are most profitable when applied between R1 (silking) and R3 (milky kernel) in corn. According to the [Tar Spot Map](#), tar spot has now been confirmed in Calhoun and Jackson Counties.



Watch for **western bean cutworm** in fields that are close to tasseling or freshly tasseled. Put the sun behind the leaves to watch for egg masses, which will appear as dark shadows on the backlit leaves. The threshold for western bean cutworm treatment is 5% of plants affected (cumulative week after week).

Western bean cutworm adult moth counts spiked in St. Joseph and Van Buren counties last week, most likely brought in on recent storms, and dropped this past week. Bucket traps in Berrien (Eau Claire), Branch (Union City), St. Joseph (Centreville and Sturgis) and Van Buren (Lawrence) counties have caught the following:

Date	Branch 1	Branch 2	Centreville	Eau Claire	Lawrence	Sturgis
6/29	--	--	15	13	11	--
7/6	--	--	106	35	117	61
7/13	85	76	33	50	45	41

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – July 16, 2026 - 8

Winter wheat harvest and straw baling were in full swing the past week.



Most **potatoes** have finished blooming and are in tuber bulking stages. Early crop Russets are about a month away from harvest. Scout for **aphids** in potatoes by checking the undersides of lower leaves.



Alfalfa and **forage** cutting and baling continued over the past week.

Irrigation and Water Use

Corn has reached the VT (tasseling) stage and is now at peak crop water use, requiring approximately **1.7 inches of water per week** (0.24 inches per day). The most critical period for corn extends from one week before tassel emergence through three weeks after tasseling, and water stress during tasseling and silking can significantly reduce yield potential.

Soybeans are also at peak water use (**1.5–1.7 inches per week**), with the greatest yield sensitivity to water stress occurring during the R3–R4 (pod development and elongation) and R5–R6 (seed fill) growth stages.

Potatoes in the tuber bulking stage continue to have high water demand, requiring approximately **1.3 inches of water per week**.

Irrigation demand is expected to remain high over the next days as hot weather persists across the region. Watch for visible signs of water stress, such as leaf rolling in corn and flipped leaves in soybeans during the early morning or evening, as these may indicate inadequate soil moisture.

Stay ahead of crop water needs by monitoring soil moisture, crop growth stage, weather forecasts, and rainfall when scheduling irrigation.

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.

Weekly crop water use updates will continue to be shared through the Southwest Michigan Crop Updates. For added convenience, updates will also be sent through direct email and text messages. Sign up here. 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 following table summarizes estimated crop water use (inches per week) for major irrigated field crops across Michigan's primary irrigated regions.

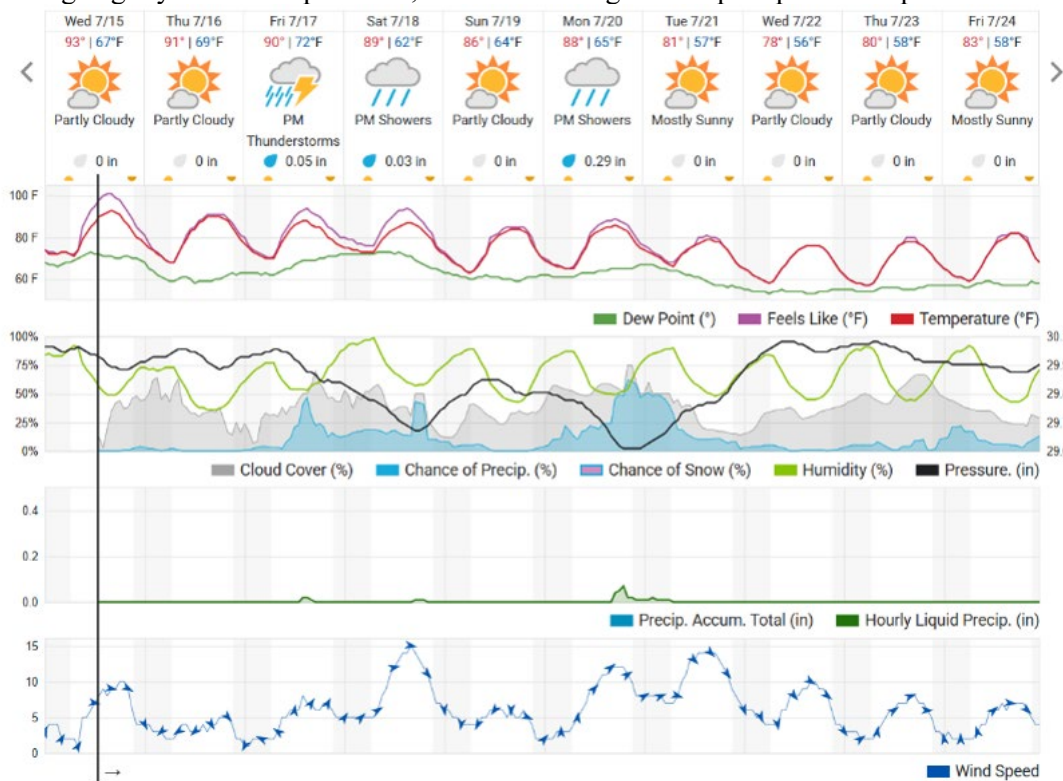
Estimated Weekly Crop Water Use for Field Crops in Michigan (in/week)

Week of July 13 - 19, 2026

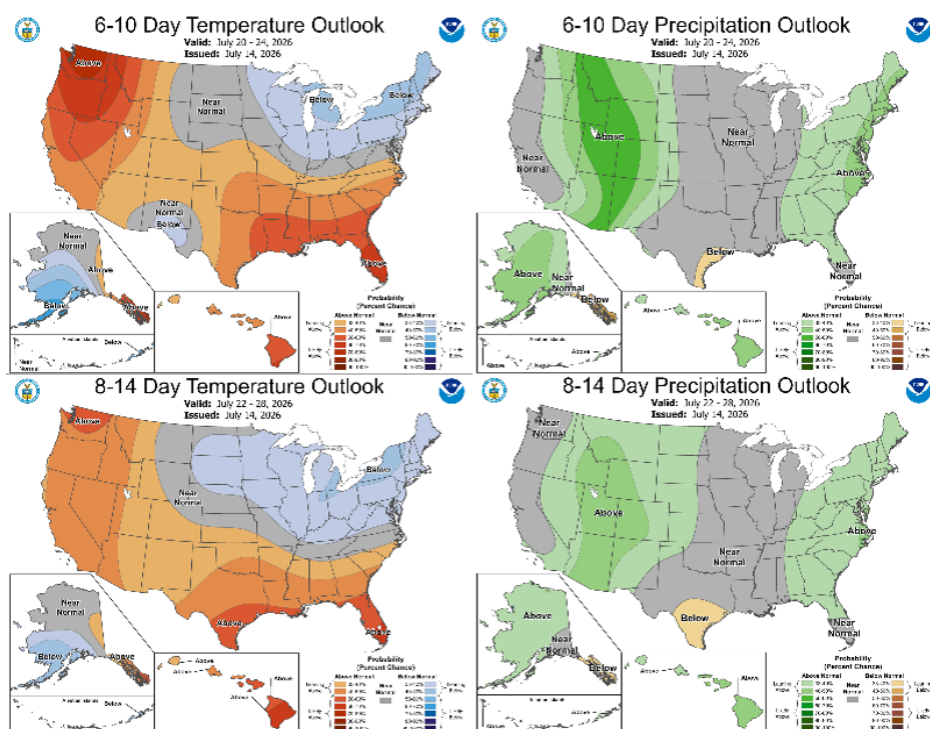
Crop	Growth stage	Crop water use (in/week)			
		Constantine	Berrien Springs	Entrican	Hart
	Reference ET	1.50	1.58	1.16	1.54
Corn	V12	1.50	1.58	1.16	1.54
	V14	1.65	1.74	1.28	1.69
	VT and Silk	1.65	1.74	1.28	1.69
Soybeans	V4-V5	1.17	1.23	0.90	1.20
	R1	1.50	1.58	1.16	1.54
	R2 and R3	1.65	1.74	1.28	1.69
Potato	Tuberization	1.50	1.58	1.16	1.54
	Blossom	1.50	1.58	1.16	1.54
	Tuber bulk	1.37	1.44	1.06	1.40

Weather Update

High temperatures and no precipitation made for a hot week with high water demand. Scattered showers forecast for the weekend will bring slightly cooler temperatures, with the next significant precipitation expected on Monday, July 20.



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



The 6-10 day (July 20-24, top) and 8-14 day (July 22-28, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

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

- Jul 16** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Insect Management.** 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. **1 RUP**
- Jul 23** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Field Drainage and Water Management.** 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.
- Jul 23** **Verona Green Pasture Walk.** 6:00-8:00 pm. Bad Axe, MI. Join us for a pasture walk!
- Jul 30** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Late Summer and Fall Cover Crops.** 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.
- Jul 30** **2026 Summer Irrigation Workshop.** 9 am-2:30 pm. Kellogg Biological Station. This irrigation-focused workshop is designed to bring producers, stakeholders, industry professionals, and researchers together for a day of hands-on learning and collaboration. **2 RUP, 2.5 CCA**
- Aug 6** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Hot Topics!.** 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. **1 RUP**
- Aug 6** **Montcalm County Potato Field Day.** 8:45 am-1pm. Montcalm Research Center. Hands-on education on irrigation and storage handling. Then enjoy a cold drink, dig through potato varieties, and learn one-on-one from peers and researchers during Dig'n'Drinks (new!). **RUP**
- Aug 11** **Michigan Agricultural Irrigation Water Use Efficiency Program.** 10:00-1:00 pm. MSU Dairy Cattle Teaching Center. Join the Michigan Agricultural Irrigation Water Use Efficiency Program for an in-field demonstration on August 11, 2026.
- Aug 13** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Nematode Management.** 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. **1 RUP**
- Aug 20** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Establishing New Hayfields.** 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.
- Aug 25** **Seed Treatment Webinar.** 12-2pm. Online through Zoom. More details to come. **2 RUP**
- Aug 27** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Irrigation Investment Economics.** 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.

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- Sept 1** **Seed Treatment Webinar.** 6-8pm. Online through Zoom. More details to come. **2 RUP**
- Sept 3** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series – Farmland Valuations.** 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.
- Sept 3** **In-Person Seed Treatment Workshop.** 10-2pm. Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center. More details to come. **4 RUP**
- 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 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.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Sugarbeet production in Strip Tillage Systems Field Day

Published on July 15, 2026

Join MSU Extension, Michigan Sugar Company and the Nature Conservancy for live equipment demonstrations and a free lunch on Wednesday, July 22.

While MSU greenhouse updates spark innovative research, needs remain

Published on July 14, 2026

After the most recent phase of the project, 60% of the MSU Plant Science Research Greenhouse Complex has been renovated. Funding is needed to address the remaining 40% and provide all greenhouse users access to the latest tools and environmental controls.

When temperatures soar, MSU Extension has answers to help you keep cool

Published on July 14, 2026

MSU Extension's expert guidance and resources can help Michiganders navigate the impacts of extreme heat at home, on the farm, and outdoors.

Registration is open for Soybeans Down the Stretch free webinar

Published on July 13, 2026

The 2026 Science for Success national free webinar on July 23 will feature several soybean specialists, including MSU's Christy Sprague, discussing late-season management topics.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – July 9, 2026

Published on July 9, 2026

Most soybeans have entered reproductive stages, and corn is approaching tasseling. Watch for western bean cutworm and tar spot in corn.

Precision Agriculture: Using the tools in common digital software platforms

Published on July 9, 2026

Informatics and data science are powerful tools being used everywhere we look. In precision agriculture, software platforms for computer and mobile devices offer plenty of options.

The 2026 Montcalm County Potato Field Day will feature a balance of education, fun and industry camaraderie

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update – July 16, 2026 - 13

Published on July 8, 2026

MSU Extension and Michigan Potato Industry Commission will host the potato field day on August 6 at the Montcalm Research Center. Two RUP credits are available.

PFAS in Biosolids

Published on July 7, 2026

Understanding the benefits, drawbacks and management considerations of biosolid land application.

Agrivoltaic opportunities: Grow crops in solar energy systems

Published on July 6, 2026

Michigan farmers grow crops well suited for solar projects.

Planting for profit and diversity: Can growing native plant seed be a new cropping option?

Published on July 6, 2026

While regenerative practices aim to improve soil, water, nutrient cycling and biodiversity—and strengthen farmer and community well-being—they also come with challenges. Learn key insights on how to navigate and implement these different principles.

Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report available now

Published on July 6, 2026

To raise awareness of pesticides currently impacted by the new EPA Bulletins Live! Two pesticide label directive, Michigan State University Extension will be generating a Bulletins Live! Two Tracker Report twice a month.

MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast to feature irrigation management on July 9

Published on July 2, 2026

The 2026 Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series continues July 9 with guest speaker Younsuk Dong, irrigation specialist for Michigan State University.

Southwest Michigan field crops update – July 2, 2026

Published on July 2, 2026

Soybeans have reached flowering, corn growth progressed significantly in this week's high heat and humidity, and wheat nears in harvest.

Wheat Watchers: Harvest has begun!

Published on July 2, 2026

See how the wheat crop is progressing across the state this week.



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