



MIDWEST CROP REPORT | AUG 17, 2026

LASALLE / DEKALB COUNTIES



Ears are filling out well. This field is in a late dough to early dent stage.

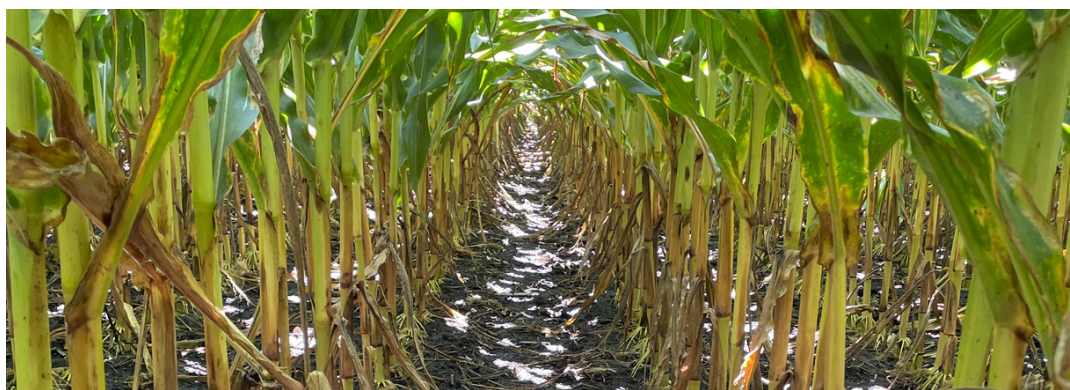
SOYBEANS

Most soybeans are currently at R5, or beginning seed, with some fields just entering the stage and others further along with seeds becoming more apparent in the upper pods. Fresh stem lodging from the recent rain and wind events is present in many fields. As is often the case, plant height and variety are playing a significant role in how much lodging is occurring.

Insect pressure and defoliation were surprisingly low in my observations this week. Even Japanese beetle activity and associated leaf feeding are lighter than I would typically expect at this point in the season. Disease pressure has increased somewhat since July, but I have not found anything locally that is causing significant concern. Sudden death syndrome has been identified, but so far impacts have been limited to individual plants. Other diseases observed include downy mildew, Septoria brown spot, Phytophthora, and bacterial blight.

I have not identified either red crown rot or white mold in the area to this point, which is encouraging. If that trend continues, there is potential for a very good soybean crop.

Leaves below the ear are cannibalizing (known as firing) in some fields to fill out the maturing ear. This can be an indication of potentially running short on the nitrogen program or having lost nitrogen through other pathways during the season.



WEATHER & FIELD CONDITIONS

The area has finally broken out of a wet period that lasted roughly 7–10 days, with most of the area receiving 2–5 inches of rain depending on location. Soil moisture has been replenished, and creeks and streams are running high. We were fortunate compared to portions of central Illinois that received 5–10 inches of rain, with some areas seeing as much as 15 inches in just a few days. Heavy rainfall, combined with several strong derecho-type events producing winds of 80+ mph, has caused significant crop damage in parts of central Illinois.

Weather damage is present locally but has generally been limited in the fields I walked. Minor stalk and stem lodging can be found in some fields, making soybean scouting more difficult than desired, and occasional green snap is showing up in corn. Despite the recent weather, both crops have remained in remarkably good condition overall.

CORN

Corn is currently ranging from late R4 (dough) into early R5 (dent). Kernels are still reasonably soft but no longer rupture when pressed with a thumb, and approximately 30–40% of the kernel set on the ears I observed has begun to show some denting. Initial ear measurements from several fields included 18x32, 20x31, 14x40, 18x36, and 16x38.

Insect pressure has been minimal in my observations, although adult corn rootworm beetles are still present and actively mating in corn fields. Corn aphids can be found in occasional hotspots, but I have not observed the significant pressure that has been reported farther south in the state.

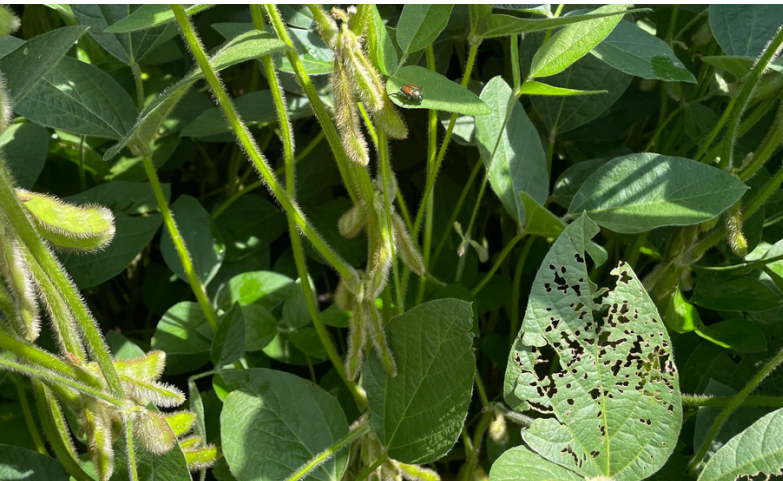
Disease pressure also remains relatively low. There is an observable difference in foliar disease between fields that received fungicide applications and those that did not, but overall disease levels remain fairly low across the area. Gray leaf spot, northern corn leaf blight, and southern rust have all been observed. While fungicide-treated fields may have an advantage in maintaining a healthy canopy, it is still too early to know how much that difference will translate into additional yield.

One caution heading into the next few weeks: producers should not become complacent about southern rust. Disease pressure can increase quickly when conditions are favorable, so continued scouting will be important as the crop moves through grain fill.



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This soybean field is into the R5 stage now with fully formed pods and seed cavities filling out well. The insect damage and disease pressure are minimal.



Southern rust can be a devastating disease in corn if not caught and addressed early enough. With corn in the are moving into the dent stage the yield impact may not be tremendous now but the season still is not over.

COVER CROPS & FIELD MANAGEMENT

Seed corn production is winding down, with most field operations nearing completion. Male rows have been or are being destroyed in most fields, creating an excellent window for aerially seeding oat and radish cover crops into seed corn acres.

One local producer with significant experience in this system is taking advantage of that window. With adequate soil moisture, the oats and radishes should establish well and produce meaningful growth before and after seed corn harvest. Both species will winterkill but can provide valuable living roots and biomass while also helping address some of the inevitable soil compaction associated with seed corn production.

With soil moisture now in good shape across much of the state, I am optimistic about the upcoming aerial cover crop season. In north-central Illinois, the window for flying cover crops into standing soybeans typically opens in late August to early September as soybean fields begin to naturally senesce. The current moisture conditions should provide a good foundation for establishment when that window arrives.

This oat and radish cover crop is growing in the destroyed border male (pollen parent) rows of seed corn production field. Seed corn production allows for a unique opportunity for early establishment of effective cover crops.

OUTLOOK

Overall, crops in the area remain in good condition heading into the final stages of the growing season. Recent rainfall has replenished soil moisture, and while some localized lodging and wind damage are present, the overall impact locally has been relatively minor. Corn disease pressure bears watching, particularly southern rust, while soybean disease levels remain manageable. The combination of adequate moisture and the approaching aerial seeding window also sets up well for establishing cover crops in the coming weeks.

Keep scouting and let the field make the decisions.



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