MIDWEST CROP REPORT | OCT 21, 2026

LASALLE / DEKALB COUNTIES



HARVEST & FIELD CONDITIONS

This is the week many farmers in the area have been waiting for. After several significant rain events that only allowed harvest crews into the fields intermittently, the weather pattern has finally shifted. Clear skies and temperatures in the 60s and 70s have provided an excellent window for catching up on harvest.

Based on my observations, soybean harvest is approximately 60–70% complete and moving quickly, while corn harvest remains less than 50% complete in most areas. Crews are working diligently to make progress while conditions allow. Dry fertilizer and lime applications are also underway, along with fall tillage and fall soil testing.

One reminder as harvest activity ramps up: there have been too many reports of combine fires this season. Keep fire extinguishers accessible and ready to use and take the time to keep equipment clean and maintained. A few extra precautions can go a long way during a busy stretch of harvest.

COVER CROPS

I walked several harvested soybean fields that were aerially seeded with oats and radishes around September 10th. Overall, cover crop growth looks good, but establishment has not been uniform everywhere. The heavy rains that followed seeding affected germination and establishment in some areas, particularly where beating rain and standing water created difficult conditions.

For producers evaluating their cover crops this fall: don't judge the success of the practice by how uniform the stand looks from the road. Get out and look at what's actually growing. Check plant density, look for bare areas, and consider whether poor establishment is limited to low spots or is more widespread across the field. If growth is uneven, that doesn't automatically mean the practice failed. Even a partial stand can provide living roots, nutrient scavenging, and some soil protection. Use what you see this fall to evaluate your seeding method and timing and make adjustments for next year.

We've also experienced a few overnight frosts, right around the typical timing for this area. Some minor damage to radish leaves is visible, but frost doesn't necessarily mean actively growing radishes are finished for the season. It will likely take several consecutive nights with temperatures well below freezing to finish them off. Until then, the radishes can continue growing, scavenging nutrients, and contributing to soil improvement. Oats will also continue growing as conditions allow before winter temperatures eventually terminate them.

OUTLOOK

With harvest finally moving ahead, the priority is making the most of this stretch of favorable weather while keeping equipment and people safe. Cover crops are continuing to establish where conditions have allowed, and even fields with some gaps can still provide benefits. Hopefully, the current weather pattern gives producers enough time to keep harvest moving and finish the season strong.

Keep scouting and let the field make the decisions.

