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News this week...
2 — Soybean basis spikes due to a wet western Corn Belt.
3 — What surging wheat prices mean for winter plantings.
4 — The double whammy of surging diesel prices.

Markets stumble as trade optimism fades — *Grain futures kicked off the week on a positive note as optimism built ahead of the Trump-Xi summit meeting. Soybean meal remained a standout performer, buoying soybeans as western Corn Belt processors scrambled for supply amid wet weather and harvest delays. Wheat came under pressure on renewed hopes for Russia-Ukraine peace efforts while wetter weather in the Plains was seen kickstarting plantings. Harvest pressure began to weigh on corn, while a lack of fresh news out of the Trump-Xi meeting disappointed grain bulls as the week came to a close. Cattle futures saw sideways trade, with ICE raids slowing slaughter rates in the Plains. Hog futures saw modest short covering after hitting 15-month lows as traders prepared to react to USDA's latest Hogs & Pigs Report.*

Trump-Xi summit disappoints

Producers, farm groups and grain market bulls had this week's summit meeting between President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping circled on the calendar, hoping it would provide more detail on Beijing's commitments to buy U.S. agricultural goods as well as progress toward knocking down a 10% Chinese tariff on U.S. soybean imports and further efforts to hive off agricultural trade from more contentious issues such as semiconductor chips, artificial intelligence and rare-earth minerals. With Xi set to depart on Friday, those hopes remain unfulfilled.

The biggest development was seen on Xi's arrival Wednesday when Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the one-year U.S.-China trade truce agreed last fall in South Korea had been extended by two months to Jan. 10. That was a letdown in itself amid expectations for a lengthier extension. Bessent said the shorter extension was because China has been slow to meet earlier commitments on rare-earth minerals as well as what the administration has said is a pledge to buy $17 billion of ag good besides soybeans. Market participants have been expecting that purported commitment to result in Chinese purchases of corn and wheat which have largely failed to materialize.

Diesel export-ban debate continues

President Trump's economic advisers continue to analyze the effects of a potential short-term ban on U.S. diesel exports, Bloomberg reported Friday. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., said the study being conducted by National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer aims to inform the administration's decision-making process. Bloomberg said the study is expected to forecast a mix of potential consequences — including both lower and higher prices — that could be used either to justify or ward off a ban. People familiar with the effort told Bloomberg the study shouldn't be read as a sign the administration is leaning one way or the other.

Imports fail to lower beef prices

An American Farm Bureau Federation analysis found that the Trump administration's August decision to expand tariff-rate quotas on lean beef trimmings failed to lower retail ground beef prices for consumers while putting U.S. ranchers under strain. The analysis tracked daily prices of 80% lean ground beef at 41 grocery stores in 22 states starting Sept. 2, the day after the proclamation went into effect.

"Across our sample, the average price of ground beef barely moved, going from $7.29 a pound on Sept. 2 to $7.13 a pound on Sept. 23 – a reduction of 16 cents or approximately 2%," wrote AFBF economists Bernt Nelson and Faith Parum in the report. They said the findings show the proclamation expanding the quotas should be rolled back.

ICE raids beef facilities

Raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in southwest Kansas and elsewhere were blamed for packing plant harvest interruptions this week. In a joint statement, the Kansas Livestock Association, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association and Texas Cattle Feeders Association said they were closely monitoring ICE activity affecting agricultural communities in those states.

The groups said they respect the responsibility of federal agencies to enforce the law, but warned that sudden workforce disruptions can have far-reaching effects. "These ICE operations are having a massive chilling effect on the legal, documented, skilled workers that put beef on the table and keep the cattle supply chain moving," they wrote.

U.S. hog herd shrinks

USDA's quarterly Hogs & Pigs Report released Thursday put inventory at 74.3 million head, down 2% from a year ago. Breeding inventory was down 1%, while market-hog inventory was down 2%. Analysts surveyed by Reuters had expected 0.8% declines across the board. September through November farrowings are seen 2% less than a year ago, while December through February intentions were up 2%.

Harvest picks up despite rain

The corn crop was rated 57% good to excellent, steady with the previous week. The Pro Farmer Crop Condition Index (on a 0-to-500 scale, 500 equals perfect) saw a 1.69-point decline to 348.74. The corn crop is 13% harvested, above expectations and above last year at 10%. Harvest remains slow in the I-states amid persistent rainfall.

USDA pegged 58% of the soybean crop as good to excellent, steady with the prior week. The CCI rating dropped 2.86 points from last week to 357.55. USDA pegged the soy crop as 12% harvested, above average for this time of year.

Cordonnier leaves U.S. crop pegs steady

Pro Farmer crop consultant Dr. Michael Cordonnier made no changes to the U.S. corn and soybean yields. He left his corn yield estimate at 177.0 bu. per acre with a neutral to lower bias and his soy estimate at 51.5 bu. per acre with a neutral bias. Cordonnier notes the recent rainfall could have a negative impact on quality.

The Brazilian soybean crop is 1.2% planted according to AgRural. Cordonnier expects production to total 180 MMT for the new-crop. He pegs corn production at 138.0 MMT, an increase of 3 MMT from his previous estimate. The rise in corn prices is expected to draw more plantings than originally thought. AgRural pegs first-crop corn as 27% planted, but expected cooler weather could limit sowing in the next few weeks. Most of Brazil's corn production comes from second-crop (safrinha) corn, which is planted following first-crop soybeans in a few months.

Argentina sees record crop potential

The Buenos Aires Grain Exchange expects record production for both corn and soybeans during the 2026-27 marketing year. Soybean production is forecast to hit 53.6 MMT, up from 50.1 MMT in 2025-26. Corn production is seen as increasing to 66 MMT, up from 64 MMT. Ramiro Costa, the exchange's general manager, said the forecast is dependent upon weather and production decisions.

Soy basis bump short-lived

Some processors in Iowa and nearby areas have lifted spot soybean bids 70¢ to $1.00 above nearby futures in an effort to secure supplies. Elevated bids are expected to be short-lived. Crushers were short-bought on supplies for the month of September, expecting new-crop supplies to be available, but heavy precipitation has kept combines out of fields, leading to short supplies for processors.

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Rumors swirl on U.S. beef imports

A small group of White House officials is exploring whether to cut back President Trump's decision to increase foreign beef imports, according to a Politico report. "The proposal to reduce the amount of imports is being discussed within the Domestic Policy Council headed by Vince Haley, a longtime Trump speechwriter and former campaign official, and a few other officials at the White House, according to two people with direct knowledge of the conversations, who were granted anonymity to share private details. Trump officials are unsure if anything will come of the talks. The two people said the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative disagrees with cutting back the imports, since it aims to lower high consumer beef prices in the short term and since USTR helped implement the move," Politico reported. The White House and USTR, in statements after the Politico story was published, denied there was any official action on the table. "There's no pending policy change to 'disagree' with," a USTR official said.

Treasury yields working higher

The 30-year Treasury yield is trading at the highest mark since 2004 amid concerns around fiscal policy and inflation. Yields across the Treasury curve are fetching the most since 2007, showcasing investor demand for a higher rate of return. The war in Iran continues to lift expectations for higher inflation for longer, one underlying force prompting the Federal Reserve to increase interest rates last week. Higher costs of debt lead companies to pay down debt rather than invest in growth, exacerbating concerns of stagflation — an economy where costs increase but GDP stalls, leading to lower purchasing power and a worse economy overall.

Surge expected in biofuel production

Global biofuel output is set to surge nearly 70% by 2030 from 2025 levels, according to a Chatham House and Forest Stewardship Council study reported by Reuters. The jump follows a wave of higher blending mandates in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, the United States and the European Union after the Iran war drove fossil-fuel prices higher. Most of that extra fuel would still come from food and feed crops such as corn and sugarcane. If the proposed mandates are fully implemented, land used for biofuel feedstocks could more than double from 2023 levels, adding about 36 million hectares — an area the size of Germany. The authors warn that demand may rise faster than certification, land-use planning and enforcement. That raises risks of food-price spikes, deforestation and water stress. Crude oil has risen nearly 40% since the war began in late February; sugar and corn are up about 20%. Waste-based "advanced" biofuels would ease the land pressure, but first-generation crop fuels are what policy is scaling now.

Here's what the surge in wheat prices could mean for winter seedings

Planted wheat acres continued a multi-decade decline for the 2025-26 marketing year, falling to the lowest mark since records began in 1919. That is after a brief bump in acres due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which led to a surge in prices and jump in acres in 2023-24 to the highest mark since 2016-17.

Price is the number one driver of winter wheat acres. Futures have surged 46% year-over-year, hitting the highest level since 2023. Our analysis comparing changes in prices year-over-year indicates winter wheat seedings are expected to jump 6.6% from USDA's estimate last winter to 35.1 million acres, which would be the most since 2023.

The slide in wheat prices over the past several weeks serves as a stark reminder to producers to forward contract expected production. Acres and supply look to increase, which can quickly offset the gains seen over the past several months. Demand destruction can lead to price risk as well, if the Black Sea were to re-open or if U.S. exports don't live up to expectations.

Expectations for higher U.S. exports due to a plunge in shipments from Russia and Ukraine have not been realized. Shipments over the past several weeks are running well below year-ago. If planning to increase wheat seedings, keep in mind advancing forward sales to lock in margin, taking advantage of the jump in price.

China's Sinograin auctions more beans

China's state-owned Sinograin will auction another 514,000 MT of soybeans purchased between 2022 and 2024, the country's National Grain and Trade Center said in a notice. That would mark the second such auction in September. Sinograin sold 62.4% of its auction of 543,000 MT this week as they make room for fresh stockpiles.

China crushers buy Australian canola

A private Chinese crusher bought 68,000 MT of Australian canola after a similar cargo was delivered to another crusher earlier this month, says a Reuters report. This marks the first shipments of Australian canola to China since 2020. Shipments were previously blocked due to phytosanitary restrictions. Given the Chinese tariffs on U.S. soybeans and rising costs of South American supplies, Chinese crushers are bargain hunting on the world market to find feedstocks for its crush plants.

World wheat buyers brace for high costs

Top wheat importers in Asia, the Middle East and Africa have held off on buying wheat amid soaring costs, waiting for a resolution around the Black Sea to allow grain shipments to resume. Buyers have allowed stocks to dwindle waiting for lower prices, but the time is coming that necessary purchases will have to be made. A Reuters report noted, "Some Middle Eastern and African buyers are already seeking alternatives, some importers say they have supplies that could last until November or year-end, before they need to seek larger volumes."

Buyers have stepped down volume, with Indonesia importing around a tenth of last year's volume, a Southeast Asia milling company buying single cargoes rather than bulk quantities while Egypt has begun buying cargoes from outside the Black Sea. U.S. wheat prices have risen in tandem with world prices, but demand has not picked up at the same time, leaving the rally vulnerable to corrective selling.

Ukraine eyes Baltic Sea export option

Ukraine's agriculture ministry said it's exploring the use of Baltic Sea ports for grain exports, Reuters reported, following a similar move by Russia as both sides seek alternatives to Black Sea routes disrupted by the war. The report said Russian companies are repurposing fertilizer, coal and other cargo terminals at the country's Baltic and Arctic ports to handle grain exports after Ukrainian drone attacks disrupted shipments through the Black Sea. Reuters noted that most Ukrainian cargo, including grain, has been rerouted through the country's three Danube river ports after Russian attacks effectively blocked its Black Sea ports, which previously handled 90% of exports. However, that adds around $50 a metric tone in logistics costs, making Ukrainian grain uncompetitive and creating bottlenecks. Transport via the Baltic, however, would add about $100 per ton to export expenses, the ministry said, requiring around $2 billion in international support to offset the higher cost.

Global inflation expected to be sticky

Inflation around the world will rise faster than forecast in 2027, an outlook that necessitates more monetary policy tightening from the U.S. to Australia, the OECD said. In a report, the Paris-based club of rich countries raised projections compared with June for consumer-price growth in every Group-of-20 economy apart from China and Saudi Arabia. Monetary policy across the globe may have to respond, its officials added. "Faced with renewed energy price shocks and stronger-than-expected demand pressures, and at a time when inflation is already above target in many economies, central banks need to ensure that underlying inflation pressures are durably contained," the OECD said in its report.

Global bond yields have reflected expectations for inflation to stay higher than desired and world central banks are working to get ahead of inflation by raising interest rates.

Diesel Dynamics — The input that hits the bottom line twice

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By Hillari Mason, Market Analyst

Diesel prices are at a record because the world's refineries cannot produce enough of it. Crude is part of the story, but the larger part is missing product. And it's putting a squeeze on farmers in more ways than one.

Prices at a glance

EIA's weekly on-highway diesel was $6.53/gallon for the week of Sept. 21, up 24¢ from the week before and $2.78 from $3.75 a year earlier. To compare. regular gasoline rose about 41%.

That climb did not start last week. February 2026, the last full month before the Iran war, averaged about $3.72 diesel. EIA's last pre-war weekly number was $3.71. From there to $6.53 is nearly $2.80 a gallon.

Two wars, one fuel – why the U.S. was sheltered

The shortage itself is the result of two wars.

The U.S.–Israel conflict with Iran began in late February and has restricted tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz for more than six months. Some analyses put lost crude and product shipments as high as a fifth of global supply. Gulf refineries that had been covering Europe after Russia faded saw diesel and gasoil exports fall to about a quarter of pre-war levels. Attacks on facilities, including Saudi infrastructure, cut even more.

Ukrainian drone strikes took a large share of Russian refining offline. As a result, once a top diesel exporter, Moscow banned diesel shipments in July and has kept the ban in place.

Those shocks hit a system that already had almost no spare capacity. U.S. refineries have been running at 97–98% utilization. Distillate stocks remain well below the five-year seasonal average. Demand does not give way quickly with several industries heavily reliant on diesel.

The United States still produces more diesel than it burns. Refiners have sent the surplus abroad—recently 1.5 to 1.8 million barrels a day, about a fifth of seaborne trade—to Mexico, Brazil and Europe. Those cargoes filled holes overseas and kept tanks tight at home. That is how a global product shortage became a U.S. inventory problem, and it helps explain why rising fuel prices don't move in lockstep with crude.

The crack, not just the barrel

A crack spread, or refinery margin, is wholesale diesel minus the crude used to make it. U.S. Gulf Coast diesel cracks crossed $100 a barrel in recent weeks, about five times the pre-war level. Kansas State agricultural economist Greg Ibendahl splits the pump price into three pieces: crude (Brent divided by 42 gallons), the refining margin (Gulf Coast wholesale ultralow sulfur diesel minus that crude cost), with taxes, distribution and retail including about 60 cents of fuel tax. A $1 move in crude adds only about 2.38¢/gallon of feedstock cost. Of a $2.25 rise from February to early September, Ibendahl put about 68¢ on crude and $1.71 on the margin.

The EIA expects U.S. diesel cracks to stay above $2 a gallon through November and then ease through mid-2027—if tanker traffic through Hormuz returns and Saudi and Kuwaiti distillate exports recover. If the strait and Russian plants stay impaired, the cracks stay wide. The missing barrels are the refined product. That is also why Washington's first political instinct, keeping those barrels home, does not fix the constraint that created the margin.

What an export ban would do

The White House has prepared a possible 90-day diesel export ban. President Trump has backed the idea, while Energy Secretary Chris Wright has said a blunt ban "definitely doesn't work." A ban would not add capacity. It would close the outlet that lets Gulf plants run full tilt. Inland prices could dip for a few weeks, but Europe and Latin America would tighten further and once tanks fill, refiners cut crude runs—and therefore gasoline and jet fuel.

There are three things that could bring relief: Russian runs recover, Hormuz product flows recover or demand is destroyed. U.S. plants cannot add capacity in 90 days and if both disruptions persist, retail diesel stays high into 2027.

Basis: the second hit for farmers

At the day's end, high diesel prices hit the farm twice. Combines and grain trucks cost more to run, and elevators often bid a weaker basis because outbound truck, rail and barge fuel is higher. When freight costs rise and the destination price does not, the origin bid falls. Harvest already weakens basis as grain arrives faster than it can leave. Record fuel costs add more pressure.

The double hit adds up fast. On a 1,000-bushel load, a 10-cent weaker basis is $100 off the check; $2 more diesel on the tractor and the grain truck is another bill on top of that. Until product supply recovers, diesel is a harvest-cost and grain-freight problem. Crude is only the first line on the invoice.

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CATTLE

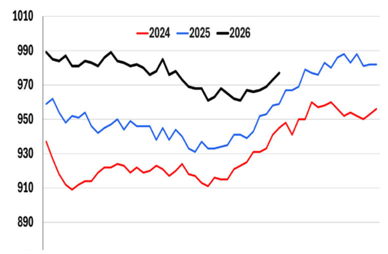
Live cattle and feeder futures gapped notably higher after USDA's Cattle on Feed report pegged August placements and marketings at record lows. Sept. 1 inventories were still up 1%, a sign yards are feeding cattle longer even as replacement supplies tighten. Under the report sits a long cycle: a small beef cow herd, eight years of drought-forced liquidation, and a tight calf crop. Feeders are scarce, so feeder futures often lead when placements collapse. Demand aided the bounce, with firmer wholesale trade a sign packers can still sell higher-grading product.

Position Monitor

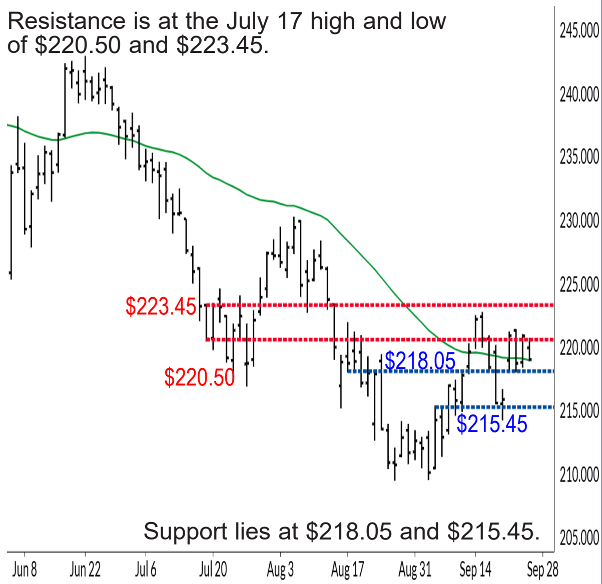
Game Plan: Live cattle have faced a notable pullback in recent weeks. Consider using LRP to establish price floors.

	Feds	Feeders
III'26	0%	0%
IV'26	0%	0%
I'27	0%	0%
II'27	0%	0%

WEEKLY DRESSED WEIGHTS (LB.)



DAILY OCTOBER LIVE CATTLE



HOGS

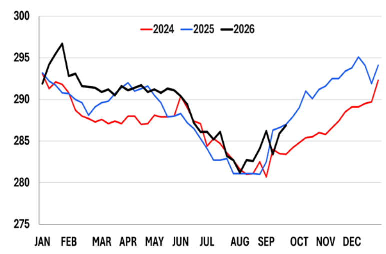
Short-covering lifted lean hog futures after the market reached a more-than-one-year low. Traders bought back shorts as prices looked oversold, producing a rebound from deeply discounted levels. Even so, technical resistance continues to curb near-term momentum. Overhead chart levels have attracted selling on rallies, keeping the recovery limited and uneven. Traders remain cautious until futures can close above nearby resistance and confirm a change in trend. Until then, follow-through buying may stay hard to sustain if cash hog trade remains soft and pork demand does not turn more supportive.

Position Monitor

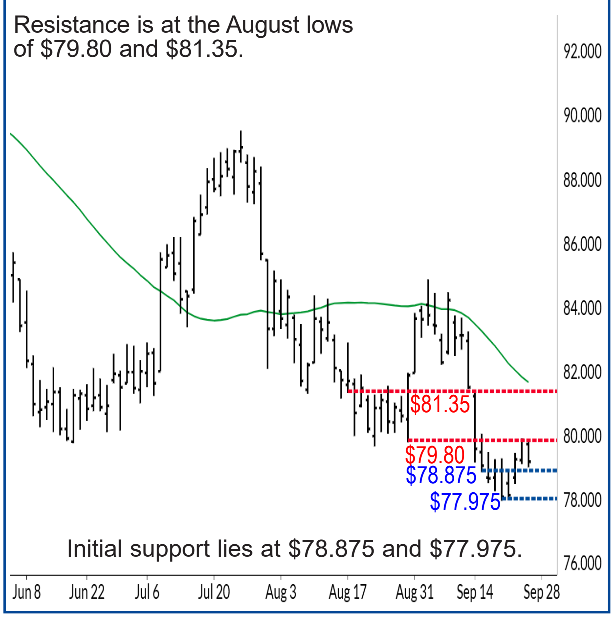
Game Plan: Lean hogs have rebounded in recent trade. Stay patient for now, but be ready to establish hedges in the event of an extended move.

	Lean Hogs
III'26	0%
IV'26	0%
I'27	0%
II'27	0%

WEEKLY LIVE HOG WEIGHTS (LB.)



DAILY OCTOBER LEAN HOGS



FEED

Feed Monitor

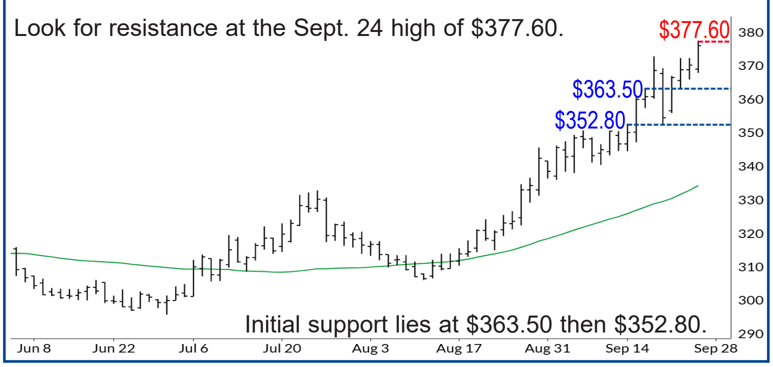
Corn	
III'26	100%
IV'26	0%
I'27	0%
II'27	0%

Meal	
III'26	100%
IV'26	0%
I'27	0%
II'27	0%

Corn Game Plan: You should have corn-for-feed needs covered through the end of September. Be prepared to establish additional coverage given a corrective pullback.

Meal Game Plan: You should have meal needs covered through the end of September. Be prepared to establish additional coverage.

DAILY OCTOBER SOYBEAN MEAL

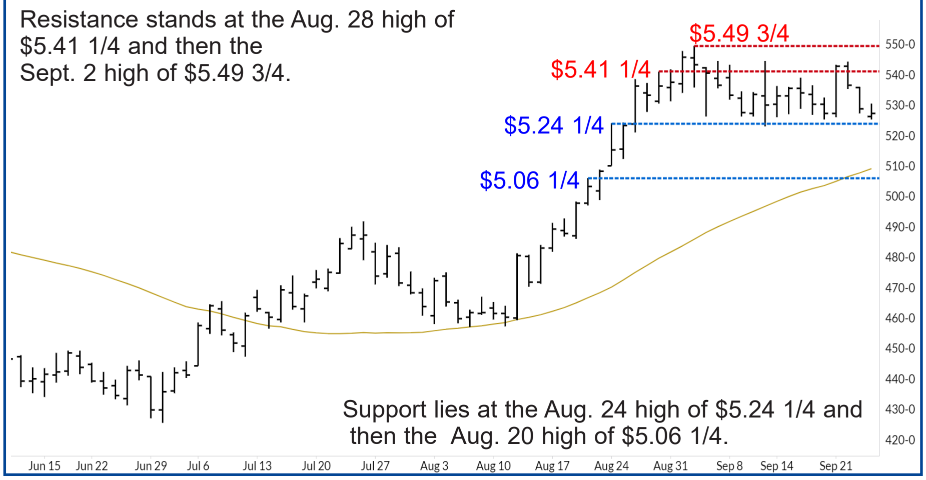


Position Monitor

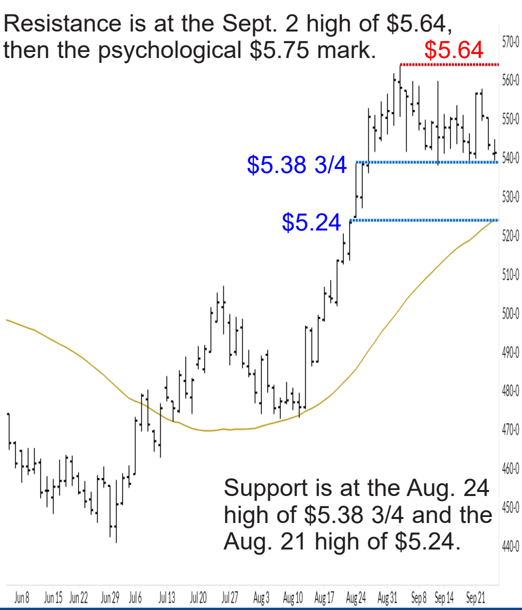
	'26 crop	'27 crop
Cash-only:	70%	10%
Hedgers (cash sales):	60%	10%
Futures/Options	0%	0%

Game Plan: Harvest pressure has begun to weigh on markets, putting a pause on the contra-seasonal strength that pushed prices higher through most of August. Concerns around inflation and uncertainty regarding production remain and leave the possibility for marketing opportunities further down the line. Remain patient on further sales for now.

DAILY DECEMBER CORN



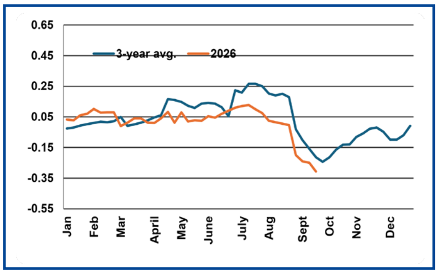
DAILY MARCH CORN



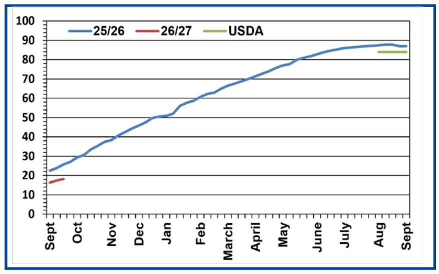
CORN

Corn futures mostly paused this week, opening with a firm tone before giving up those gains in the following days. The U.S. dollar index trading near three-month highs worked to limit momentum from strong export inspections, with a disappointing export sales figure late in the week also weighing on price action. Next week's quarterly Grain Stocks report will provide the official ending stocks of the 2025-26 crop year. With most of the balance sheet settled, feed and residual will be the key category to watch for potential changes in the Oct. 9 WASDE report. Harvest continues mostly unimpeded in the southern U.S., while many Midwestern farmers are sidelined by rain.

AVERAGE CORN BASIS (DECEMBER)



CORN EXPORT BOOKINGS (MMT)



Position Monitor

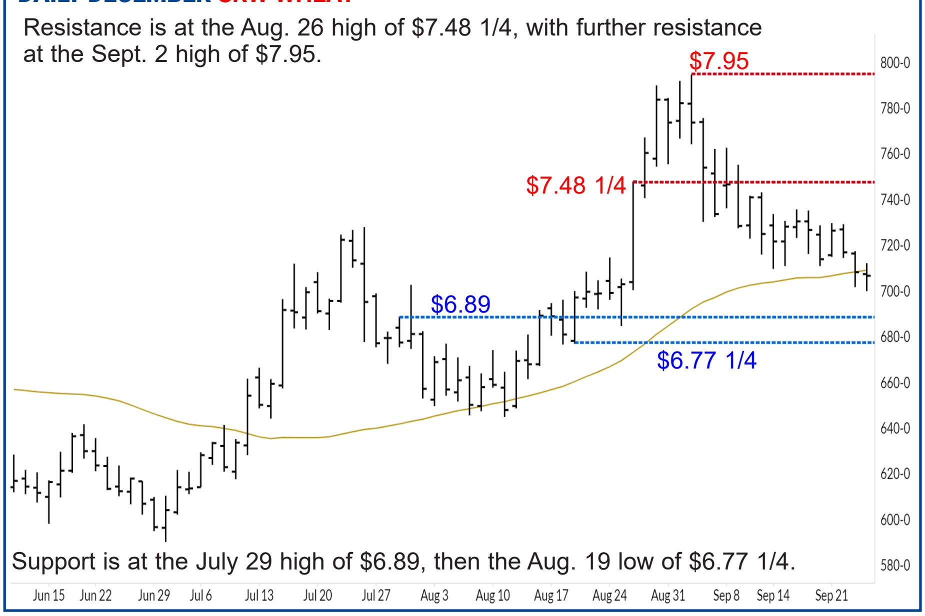
	'26 crop	'27 crop
Cash-only:	60%	10%
Hedgers (cash sales):	60%	10%
Futures/Options	0%	0%

Game Plan: Winter wheat markets continue to trade in a sideways to lower range with conflicting headlines originating around the war in the Black Sea. Remain patient on further sales for now.

WHEAT

SRW — The price downtrend showed no signs of slowing, despite the extensive mid-week attacks between Ukraine and Russia showing negotiations for peace have not been fruitful. The firming U.S. dollar and spillover pressure from corn were ultimately too much to overcome.

DAILY DECEMBER SRW WHEAT

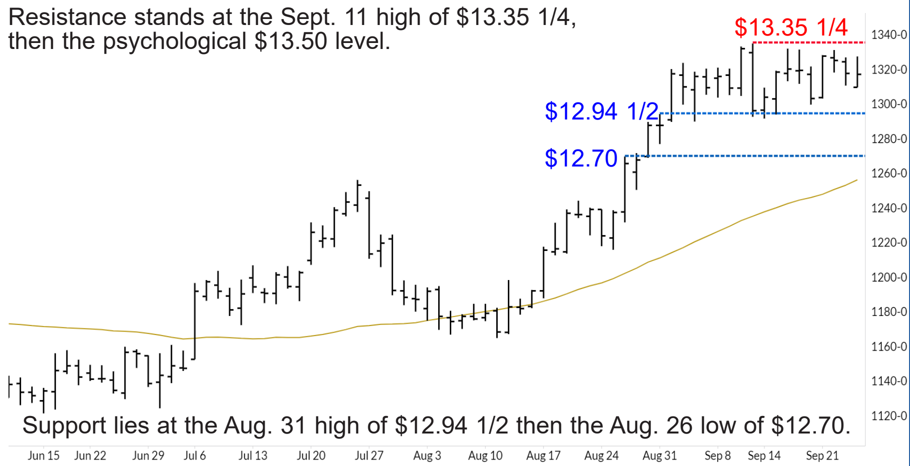


Position Monitor

	'26 crop	'27 crop
Cash-only:	75%	10%
Hedgers (cash sales):	65%	0%
Futures/Options	0%	0%

Game Plan: Price action has turned sideways to lower recently as the harvest window ramps up. Concerns around yield potential after a less than ideal finishing window and firm domestic crush use are two factors that are offering longer-term price support to soybeans. Cash-only marketers should be 75% sold on 2026-crop, with hedgers 65% sold. Remain patient on further sales for now.

DAILY NOVEMBER SOYBEANS

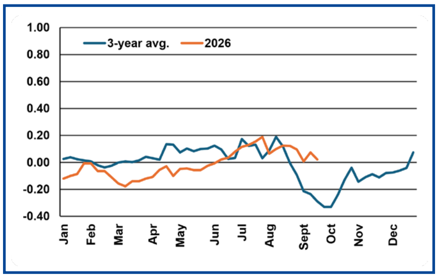


DAILY JANUARY SOYBEANS

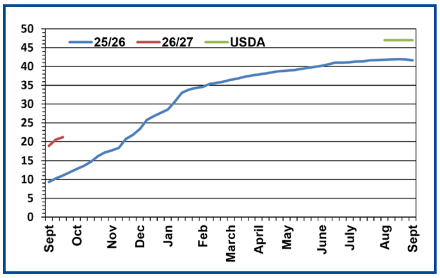
SOYBEANS

Following weeks of preparation, the long-awaited Trump-Xi meeting took place on Thursday. A key two-month extension of the trade truce with the U.S. was announced, which pushed the deadline to January 10, past the traditional primary soybean export window. Soy oil faced pressure from crude oil prices dropping as negotiations on conflicts in the Black Sea and Strait of Hormuz looked promising early in the week. Farmers that were able to harvest in parts of the Midwest found a surprising bump in basis (see News, p.2) arising from the lack of fresh supplies processors are used to at this time of year.

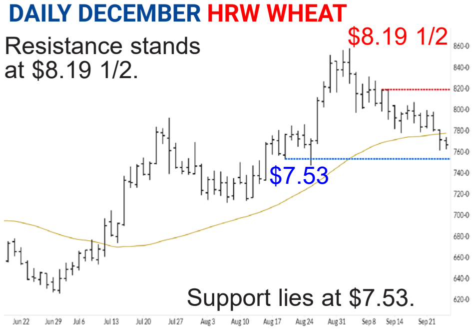
AVERAGE SOYBEAN BASIS (NOVEMBER)



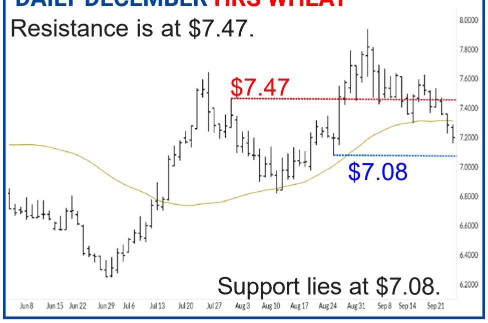
SOYBEAN EXPORT BOOKINGS (MMT)



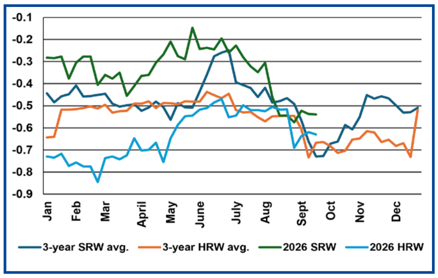
DAILY DECEMBER HRW WHEAT



DAILY DECEMBER HRS WHEAT



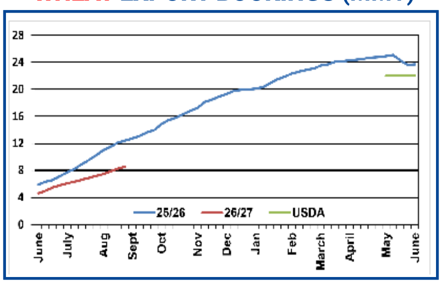
AVERAGE WHEAT BASIS (DECEMBER)



HRW — Planting for the U.S. is at 17% complete, nearer the five-year average compared to recent weeks. Rains across HRW country restored soil moisture enough to encourage planting. Despite recent pressure, prices still remain well above their year-ago marks and help improve the crops profitability.

HRS — Harvest is now wrapped up as USDA estimates the U.S. at 96% complete. Pressure from harvest should wane with grain now in the bins, but outside markets remained unfriendly to wheat. Prices have violated technical support at the 10- and 40-day moving averages, with the next major test at the 100-day.

WHEAT EXPORT BOOKINGS (MMT)



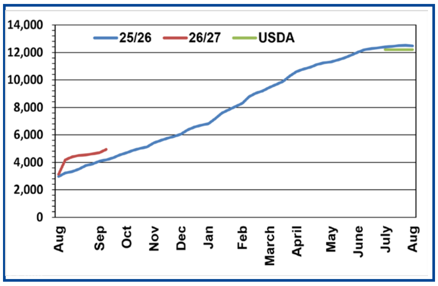
Position Monitor

	'26crop	'27 crop
Cash-only:	70%	0%
Hedgers (cash sales):	70%	0%
Futures/Options	0%	0%

Game Plan: You should be sold out of old-crop production. With more than half of new-crop covered, be prepared to sell strength in futures and/or basis.

AVERAGE COTTON BASIS (OCTOBER)

COTTON EXPORT BOOKINGS ('000 BALES)



DAILY DECEMBER COTTON

COTTON

Cotton futures are being driven by weak export demand and rising harvest pressure as new-crop supplies arrive. Soft mill buying and cheaper competing origins are capping rallies, while poor U.S. crop ratings keep some weather premium in the market.

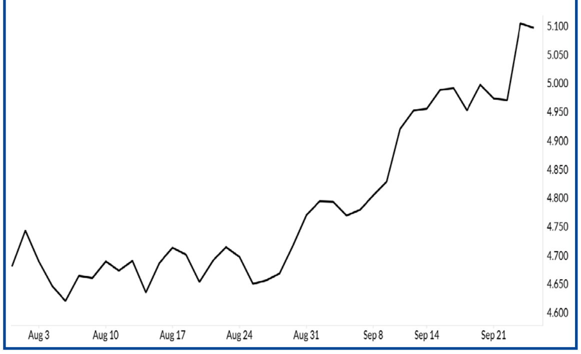
GENERAL OUTLOOK

Economic activity: The strongest expansion in U.S. private-sector economic activity since July of 2021 pushed the U.S. dollar index to a nearly three-month high and sent the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note yield above 5%, its highest in nearly 20 years.

The S&P Global U.S. Flash Composite PMI rose to 58.4 in September from 56 in August, the fourth consecutive month of accelerating growth. A reading above 50.0 suggests expansion in the sector.

Traders are now pricing in a nearly 60% chance of another 25-basis-point Fed rate hike next month, following the mid-September increase, while the odds of another hike in December stand at around 48%. U.S. inflation is not abating and may get worse, with the OECD forecasting global inflation will accelerate in 2027.

DAILY SEPTEMBER 10-YR T-YIELD FUTURES



FROM THE BULLPEN By Economist Spencer Langford

Feedlot inventories have continued to defy the odds, remaining relatively stable compared to year-ago levels so far in 2026. But USDA's most recent Cattle on Feed report shows the trend of increasing the number of days on feed to offset lower placements may be nearing its limits in helping hold inventory steady.

Placements set record lows in the months of July and August, which have led to 2026 seeing the lowest amount through this time of year since the report began in 1996. At the same time, the most recent monthly slaughter data shows live weights averaged a whopping 1,438 pounds- up 28 pounds from last year, and up 89 pounds from five years ago. Coupled with the rise in the cost of feed grains over recent months, feedlots may not be as eager to extend the days on feed further, especially with the already heavier (and thus hungrier) cattle exacerbating the feed expenses.

While the U.S. has re-opened some ports of entry for Mexican feeder cattle, the flow is unlikely to change inventories in a meaningful way this year. As of September 18, only 11,000 feeder cattle had entered the U.S. An optimistic outlook could see north of 150,000 head ultimately enter the U.S. before year's end, but even that is a fraction of the usual 1.2 million seen in pre-screwworm years.

WATCH LIST

1	**Crop Progress** Conditions, harvest progress.	**MON 9/28** 3:00 p.m. CT
2	**Livestock, Meat Domestic Data** A look at meat supplies.	**TUE 9/29** 1:00 p.m. CT
3	**USDA Quarterly Grain Stocks** Final 2025-26 corn, bean carryover.	**WED 9/30** 11:00 a.m. CT
4	**Small Grains Summary** Final U.S. wheat crop estimates.	**WED 9/30** 11:00 a.m. CT
5	**USDA Grain, Soy Crush Rpts.** August crush, ethanol use.	**THU 10/1** 2:00 p.m. CT

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