field notes — vol. 017 — the give-back came, the crop got worse

arcanum analytica · a weekly dissection of the corn and soybean markets
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the week in corn + soy

new-crop december corn settled **$464.00** friday, **-23.5¢** on the week and **-4.8%** — the give-back vol. 016 said "never came" came, in one week, in full. seven days ago **zcz6** printed a fresh contract high at **$487.50** and i wrote that the run's entire thesis had been validated and priced at once: flat price, the term structure, and a building fund book all agreeing. this week the market un-agreed. the path was a straight bleed — **$474.00** monday, a dead-cat **$480.50** tuesday, then **$471.75** → **$468.50** → **$464.00** to close, the intraweek low **$461** friday, the high **$485** monday and never revisited. price is now back *below* the **20-day** (**$469.14**) it spent three weeks above, sitting on the **50-day** (**$459.95**) shelf. the golden cross that was "days away" is a coin-flip again.

here is the part that makes this week worth writing rather than just booking: **the crop got worse while the price fell.** the week-30 condition print monday put corn at **63% good/excellent** (**50** good + **13** excellent), **-4** on the week and the lowest rating of the entire season; poor-plus-very-poor widened to **12%** from **9%**. that is not the crop "fixing itself" — it is the opposite, and it is the exact non-price signal vol. 015 named as the bull's confirmation. the arcanum spine held flat at **-5.0 bpa**, banked in the western belt. so the fundamental leg *strengthened* this week — worse ratings, an unrepaired deficit — and the flat price fell **-23.5¢** into it. that divergence is the whole issue.

soy did the same, harder. **zsx6** settled **$1187.50**, **-66.0¢** and **-5.3%**, giving back the fresh high (**$1253.50**) it printed a week ago and breaking its own **20-day** (**$1206.40**). soy conditions slipped in parallel — **63% g/e**, **-3** on the week — so the pattern is identical: a crop rated worse, a price marked lower. the whole complex went with it. sep wheat **zwu6** dropped **-38.75¢** (**-5.7%**), sep corn **-23.5¢**, sep soy **-69.5¢**. crude broke too — **CLU6 $84.67**, **-5.2%**, with an intraweek dip under **$80** — and the **10-year** backed up to **4.74%**. this was not a grain story. it was a broad, cross-asset de-risking, and grains were in it.

markets price the future, so analytical work is about forecasting what gets repriced next — not describing what's priced now. and the thing that got repriced this week was not the crop, which got worse; it was the *risk of being long the crop* eleven days ahead of the **12 aug** objective-yield survey. the managed-money book was caught at its most crowded — the friday cot, dated tuesday **28 jul**, shows corn and soy funds *still adding* into the top, before the break. below, in order: the board, the tape, the forward risks with probabilities, and the trade decision. this week the decision is **no new trade** for the *fifteenth* consecutive issue — and this time the market handed the discipline a small vindication, because a chase of last week's **$487.50** high would be **-4.8%** underwater today.

zcz6 dec corn — the give-back, back below the 20-day

the board

contract	settle (31 jul)	since vol. 016 (24 jul)	structure
zcu6 (sep corn)	**$440.75**	**-23.5¢** (**-5.1%**)	front month; lost **$460**, back into the June range
zcz6 (dec corn)	**$464.00**	**-23.5¢** (**-4.8%**)	the trade contract — broke the **20-day**, sits on the **50-day** shelf
zsx6 (nov soy)	**$1187.50**	**-66.0¢** (**-5.3%**)	gave back the fresh high; below the **20-day**, above the **50-day**
zwu6 (sep wheat)	**$639.25**	**-38.75¢** (**-5.7%**)	the board's worst; the corridor premium kept bleeding

the complex de-risked as one. every contract i follow fell **-4.8% to -5.7%**, and the uniformity is the tell: when corn, soy and wheat all give back **~5%** in the same week with no single bearish release to hang it on, the seller is not trading a fundamental — it is trimming risk. crude confirms it: **CLU6** dropped **-5.2%** to **$84.67**, unwinding more of the hormuz premium, with an intraweek print **$79.26** below the **$80** line before a friday bounce. and the **10-year** rose to **4.74%** from the mid-**4.4s** — a firmer-rates, firmer-dollar backdrop that pulls money *out* of the reflation-and-commodities trade. the marginal seller this week sold the whole risk basket, and the grains were a line item in it, not the reason.

what the tape said

release	when	print	read
crop condition	wk ending **26 jul** (week 30, released **28 jul**)	corn **63% g/e** (**50** good + **13** excellent), **-4** w/w · soy **63% g/e** (**52**+**11**), **-3** · corn poor+vp **12%** (from **9%**)	**the crop got worse.** corn's **-4** to **63%** is the lowest rating of the year and the sharpest one-week slip of the run — the western-belt heat is showing up in the national number at last. this is the bull's non-price confirmation, and it printed the *same week* the flat price fell **-4.8%**.
cot (cftc)	**28 jul** data (released **31 jul**)	mm corn **+126,776** (z **+0.41σ**, w/w **+70,063**) · mm soy **+160,479** (z **+1.15σ**, w/w **+29,974**)	**the funds were long into the top.** corn added **+70,063** and soy **+29,974** — *through tuesday*, before the wed–fri break. the book was at its most crowded exactly as the market turned. but z is **+0.41σ** corn, **+1.15σ** soy: extended, not extreme.
export inspections	wk ending **23 jul** (released **27 jul**)	corn **1,488,028 mt** · soy **348,850 mt** · wheat **394,785 mt**	corn shipments holding a firm summer pace; the physical leg stays constructive even as futures fell. soy inspections seasonally light — the new-crop book is the story, not old-crop clearances.
crude / macro	**31 jul** (verified)	**CLU6 $84.67**, **-5.2%** w/w, intraweek **$79.26** · **10y 4.74%**	risk-off. the energy premium bled and rates rose — a firmer-dollar, firmer-rates backdrop that de-rates commodities broadly. the transmission to grains this week was the risk basket, not the biofuel margin.

balance sheet translation — each release mapped to its s&d impact line:

- *crop condition — corn 63% g/e, -4 into grain-fill* → the direction and the magnitude both matter. a **-4** slip to the year's low, with poor+vp widening to **12%**, is worth roughly **+60-100 mb** of production risk moving *onto the field's side* of usda's **183 bpa** — the widest the rating-vs-agency gap has been all season. it raises the odds the **12 aug** objective-yield survey books a cut rather than confirms **183**. still a forecast; the survey adjudicates.

- *crop condition — soy 63% g/e, -3 →* soy's yield leg is near-neutral (**-0.27 bpa** spine) so the **-3** matters less to the sheet than corn's **-4** does; soy stays a demand story on a tight **310 mb** carryout. a slipping rating is a mild support, not a driver.
- *cot — corn +126,776 (z +0.41σ), soy +160,479 (z +1.15σ) →* the positioning leg is now a **large nominal long that the 3-year z still reads as un-stretched** — corn neutral, soy extended but shy of the **+1.5σ** extreme. the book was adding into tuesday's high and then the market broke wed–fri, so the *rollover is in the price but not yet in the print*. next friday's cot is the one that shows whether the crowd started cutting.
- *export inspections — corn 1.49 mn mt →* a firm pace, mildly supportive of the **~2.7 bn bu** export line; the demand leg did not deteriorate this week, which makes the flat-price break a positioning move, not a demand one.
- *crude $84.67, -5.2%; 10y 4.74% →* the macro flipped from vol. 016's tailwind to a headwind — not through the biofuel margin (crude near **$85** is still workable) but through the risk basket: a firmer dollar and higher rates pulled money out of commodities as a bloc.

on deck and not yet on the tape: week-31 crop condition monday **04 aug** — whether corn keeps slipping from **63%** or stabilizes; weekly ethanol wednesday; export sales thursday, for whether china keeps building the new-crop soy book; corn + soy cot friday **07 aug**, the print that reveals whether the funds began unwinding the crowded long the tuesday data caught at the top; and the **aug wasde (12 aug)** with the first objective-yield survey — the scheduled binary that settles **183 bpa** against a field the ratings now say is deteriorating, **11 days** out.

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the data stack

balance sheet (state of play)

the july wasde is still the frame and nothing this week revised it: new-crop **2026/27** corn carryout **~1.79 bn bu**, stocks/use **~11%**, on **95.343 mn** planted acres at a held **183 bpa** and production near **16.0 bn**; soy **310 mn bu** on **53 bpa** and **85.365 mn** acres; wheat stocks **722 mn** on **1.536 bn** production. what moved this week was not the agency's sheet and not the arcanum side of it — the spine held at **-5.0 bpa** and the ratings *deepened* the case for it. what moved was the market's willingness to hold the position, and it moved *away* from the tightness even as the tightness got more real.

that is the inversion from vol. 016. last week the market closed the entire gap to the house view in flat price, the curve and positioning at once, and the honest finding was that there was no edge left because consensus had arrived. this week consensus *left* — flat price **-4.8%**, the **n7-z7** spread **-9.5¢**, the fund book poised to unwind — while the field data (**63% g/e**, **-5.0 bpa**) argued the exact opposite direction. so the gap between usda's **183 bpa** and the arcanum **178-181** range did not close on fundamentals; it *re-opened on price*. the analytical read is unchanged and if anything firmer; the market simply de-risked ahead of a binary rather than pricing the crop.

corn (nmy 2026/27, the primary frame): **~1.79 bn** ending stocks, s/u **~11%**. the field spine at **-5.0 bpa** across **~87.7 mn** harvested acres is **~-440 mb** of production usda has not booked, concentrated in nebraska, minnesota, the dakotas and iowa — and the week-30 rating slipping to **63%** is the first national-survey corroboration of that western-belt damage. a tighter sheet, now with a deteriorating rating underneath it, is a *firmer* fundamental than vol. 016 described, priced **-23.5¢** cheaper.

soy (nmy 2026/27): **310 mb** ending stocks, **53 bpa**, **85.365 mn** acres. the yield leg is near-neutral (**-0.27 bpa** spine, **63% g/e**) and the story is demand — china's new-crop book against a carryout with no slack. crude near **$85** keeps a modest soy-oil crush bid but lost the **$90** tailwind that firmed it a week ago.

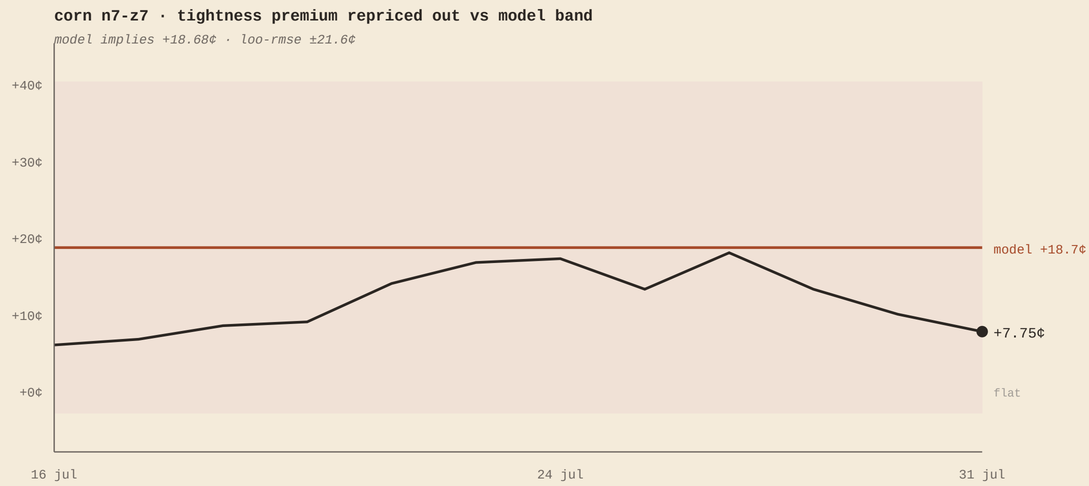
line	usda (jul)	arcanum	∆	conviction
corn yield (bpa)	**183.0**	**178-181**	**-2 to -5**	**firmed** — spine **-5.0** held, rating slipped to **63%**
corn nmy ending stocks	**~1,790**	**~1,560-1,760**	**-30 to -230**	held; the field case strengthened
corn ethanol use	**~5,600**	**~5,600**	**~0**	grind on-line; crude no longer a squeeze
soy yield (bpa)	**53.0**	**52-53**	**-0 to -1**	weather risk near-neutral
soy nmy ending stocks	**310**	**280-310**	**-30 to 0**	export-led, china the swing

time spreads

the crop-year-aligned read is **zcn7/zcz7** — the **2026/27** → **2027/28** pair that maps to the marketing year the balance sheet describes. it settled **+7.75¢** friday (**zcn7 $493.25**, **zcz7 $485.50**), down from **+17.25¢** a week ago — **-9.5¢** of *cheapening* in a week, a near-mirror of the **+10.5¢** it firmed the week before. the curve gave back almost exactly what it gained.

that is the tell of the week, and it matters more than the flat-price number. last week the spread pushed to **+17.25¢**, essentially *on* the reciprocal-model fair value of **+18.68¢** (over **15** marketing years, **y = -146.91 + 1821.48/x**, r^2 **0.823**), and i wrote that the term structure had "ratified" the tightness. this week it un-ratified it — **+7.75¢** is now **~10.9¢** *cheap* to the **+18.68¢** model. the physical market took the deferred-tightness premium back out at the same moment the flat price and the fund book de-risked. read the three together — flat price **-4.8%**, curve **-9.5¢**, funds poised to unwind — and it is one coherent move: a crowded position coming off ahead of an event, not three independent signals.

the trading consequence is a spread that is *cheap on the model but trending the wrong way*. at **+7.75¢** against **+18.68¢** there is a **~10.9¢** lean to be long the spread — but that is only **~0.5** of the leave-one-out error (**±21.6¢**), inside the noise, and it is a lean *against* a **-9.5¢** one-week move with a survey binary **11 days** out. a mean-reversion bet on a spread that just fell **9.5¢**, sized on a **0.5**σ model gap, into a binary, is not a trade — it is a hope. i note it because the *re-cheapening itself corroborates the de-risking theme*, not because it is actionable. the near-term intra-crop carry **zcu6/zcz6** sits at **-23.0¢**, ordinary, no signal.



corn n7-z7 spread — the tightness premium repriced out

positioning

cot dated **28 jul 2026**, released on time friday — and it is the single most important number on the page, because of *when* it was taken.

product	mm net	w/w	260wk z-score	signal
corn	**+126,776**	**+70,063**	**+0.41σ**	large nominal long, statistically neutral
soybeans	**+160,479**	**+29,974**	**+1.15σ**	extended, still shy of the **+1.5σ** extreme

the corn book added **+70,063** contracts in a week to **+126,776** — the biggest one-week build of the run, on top of the prior week's **+45,352**. that is **+201,595** contracts of corn buying in five weeks off the **23 jun -74,819** trough. but the print is dated **tuesday 28 jul**, and the market broke **wed–fri**. so this cot captures the fund long at its most crowded *immediately before the give-back* — the book was still adding into the high. at z **+0.41σ**, though, the 3-year range still reads corn as *neutral*: a large nominal long that is not statistically stretched, because the 2020-22 era ran far longer. that is why it is not a short trigger — the z, not the headline number, is what the framework reads, and **+0.41σ** is a country mile from the ≥**+1.5σ** the two-pillar exception requires.

soy is the one to watch, and it is closer. at **+160,479** and z **+1.15σ**, adding **+29,974**, the soy book is the most extended on the board — but it is *still* shy of the **+1.5σ** extreme, and, critically, tuesday's print made a **higher** high (from **+0.84σ**), not a rollover. the setup vol. 016 flagged — a push toward **+1.5σ** into **12 aug** arming a contrarian liquidation short — did not arm this week: the z climbed toward it but the price broke first. the tension for next friday's cot is precise: if soy funds start *cutting* from **+1.15σ** (likely, given the **-5.3%** break), the z falls and the book becomes a *spent-ish* long rather than a *loaded* short — the contrarian fuel burns before it reaches the extreme, exactly as corn's did in june. a positioning-extreme short needs the crowd to get *more* crowded before it breaks; this week the crowd started leaving before it got there.

technicals

the read on the verified daily series through **31 jul** is a confirmed uptrend that took its first real body-blow — both lead contracts back below their **20-days**, momentum flushed from overbought to neutral, neither yet broken.

zcz6 — the trade contract. settle **$464.00**. the week ran **$474** → **$480.50** → **$471.75** → **$468.50** → **$464.00**, intraweek high **$485** monday, low **$461** friday. price has broken back below the **20-day** (**$469.14**) and now sits **$4.1¢** above the **50-day** (**$459.95**) — the two averages **$9¢** apart, the golden cross stalled. rsi-14 flushed to **~50** (**49.9**) from **~70** a week ago; atr-14 **~10.3¢**. support: the **$460-462** moving-average shelf, then the **$441-444** july breakout zone, then the **$430** cycle-low settle. resistance: the **20-day** at **$469**, then the **$475** shelf, then last week's **$485-487.50**. the structure is now a *pullback within an uptrend* — the **50-day** and the **$460** shelf are the line that decides whether this is a buyable dip or the start of a round-trip; a daily close below **$460** opens **$441-444** and turns the character bearish.

zsx6 — new-crop soy. settle **$1187.50**, **-66.0¢**, having given back the fresh high in a single week. price is **$18.9¢** below the **20-day** (**$1206.40**) and **$11.3¢** above the **50-day** (**$1176.22**); rsi-14 flushed to **~49** from **~75**. this is the sharper break of the two — soy ran furthest above its 20-day and fell furthest back through it. support **$1176** (the 50-day), then the **$1150-1160** shelf; resistance **$1206** (the 20-day), then **$1220**. the chart that was the most overbought on the board a week ago is now the one that unwound hardest, and it did it with the fund long still near its peak — the technical and positioning setup for a *continued* soy unwind is the cleanest on the page, held back only by the missing extreme and the binary.

zwu6 — wheat. settle **$639.25**, **-5.7%**, the board's worst — the corridor premium that spiked two weeks ago is fully bled and then some. outside the franchise; the signal it carries is the same one it carried last week, now confirmed: a geopolitical premium round-trips fast, and the whole complex just demonstrated how fast an overbought grain gives back when its catalyst fades.

the message across the complex: every chart is in a pullback, two of the three flushed from overbought to neutral in a week, and the direction problem (there was none — all were up) has flipped to a *does-this-hold* problem. the **20-days** broke; the **50-days** held. the survey decides which one the next leg respects.

options

the read carries from the resource page, and the direction of the skew matters more than the level. december corn iv should be firming into the survey tail with the flat price down and the crop rating slipping — watch whether the **25-delta** call-over-put skew *steepens* (the market paying up for the **12 aug** survey to deliver the yield cut the **63%** rating implies) even as spot falls. a steepening call skew into a falling price would be the earliest sign the options market expects the survey to validate the **-5.0 bpa** spine — the leading tell ahead of the binary, and the one most consistent with this week's price-down/crop-worse divergence. soy skew is the mirror on positioning: if soy puts bid while the fund long is still **+1.15σ**, that is the crowd beginning to hedge the very unwind the cot has not yet printed.

seasonality

the base-rate read is thin and i will label it thin. the window a fresh dec-corn position would occupy — early august to the **20 aug** post-wasde mark — resolves across the two contract years i can verify cleanly: **2025** ran **$421.00** → **$404.00** (**-4.0%**) and **2024** ran **$404.75** → **$398.00** (**-1.7%**). **0-for-2** for a long, both years down, mean **-2.9%**. with **n=2** this carries no gate weight — far below the **n≥10** the rules require. directionally it agrees with the mechanism: the july weather premium tends to bleed out of dec corn through august as the crop makes it — *unless the survey finds damage the market discounted*, which is precisely the fork this year sets up. a base rate of **n=2** does not resolve it. it does say the calendar is not, on its own, a reason to step in front of the break as a buyer.

forward risks

everything above is where the market sits. this section is what it prices next — the probability-weighted catalysts likely to force a repricing in the next one-to-four weeks.

weather — us corn belt, by region + crop stage

region	states	stage (corn)	forward precip	forward heat	yield dev
western belt	NE, SD, ND, MN	pollination → dough	banked deficit; NE season **6.3"** vs **19.4"** normal	heat-stressed through fill	**-8.0** NE/MN/SD/ND
central belt	IA, IL	dough	IA **-25 to -15%** on the 14-day	near normal	**-5.5** IA, **-3.0** IL
eastern belt	IN, OH, MO, KS	dough	near normal	benign	**-3.0** each
upper midwest	WI	dough	recovering	moderate	**-1.0** WI
—	—	—	—	—	national: **corn -5.0 bpa**, soy **-0.27 bpa**

arcanum agronomic spine — national production-weighted yield deviation: corn **-5.0 bpa** (held flat from vol. 016), soy **-0.27 bpa**. the composition is the point and it is unchanged: the deficit is **banked in the western belt** — nebraska, minnesota and both dakotas each at **-8.0 bpa**, on nebraska's **6.3"** of season rain against **19.4"** normal — accumulated damage already in the plant that no august rain repairs. the spine held flat because the western banked deficit did not un-bank and the eastern belt stayed benign. what changed this week is that the *national rating finally moved toward the spine*: **63% g/e**, **-4**, is the survey catching up to what the state-level bpa estimates have said for a month. a **-5.0 bpa** spine with a rating that is now falling toward it, into a survey **11 days** out, is a fundamental that has done its work and waits on the **12 aug** print for confirmation or denial. the fight is unchanged and now sharper: whether the objective-yield survey finds the western belt at **-8 bpa** while the national number sits at **63%**.

weather — brazil centers of production

center-west (safrinha, harvest). the second corn crop is into harvest; size is a fact and the residual is pace and fob premium — a competitiveness read for u.s. export share into the **275.3 mmt** world-stock frame, not a live weather risk. **south** near normal, soy-focused. no material change; brazil is context, not a driver, this week.

demand trajectory — china, ethanol, feed

- **export inspections · corn** — **1,488,028 mt** for the week ending **23 jul**, a firm summer pace that held even as futures fell **-4.8%**. the physical leg stays constructive; the demand side did not cause this break, which is the evidence it was positioning.

- **export sales · soy** — china's new-crop book is the run's cleanest demand variable on either crop; thursday's print is the one to watch for whether it extends or stalls. into a **310 mb** carryout, each incremental cargo is export-revision risk to the tight side — and a stall is the fastest way soy gives back further.
- **ethanol grind** — the grind held its **~115 mn bu/wk** neighborhood; usda's **~5.6 bn** line stands. crude near **$85** is neutral to the blend economics — neither the **$90** tailwind of a week ago nor the **$82** squeeze of a month ago.
- **soy crush + oil** — renewable-diesel pull steady; the oil side lost some of its bid with crude off **-5.2%** but stays the firmer half of the soy crush.
- **feed** — cattle on feed near the 5-yr average, placements steady; the corn stocks picture still argues feed use runs at or above the line.

policy + trade watch

- **us-iran / strait of hormuz.** the energy premium *bled* this week — crude **-5.2%** to **$84.67**, intraweek **$79.26** — reversing the escalation spike. transmits to corn and soy now as a mild loss of the biofuel tailwind, not a new headwind; above **$95** it would become cost-push, but the move this week was the other way.
- **EPA biofuels (RFS, E15, SRE).** 2026 RVOs locked; SRE window open, no announcement. an SRE above **500 mn gal** still pulls **~200 mn bu** of corn ethanol demand and would land on a grind holding its five-year line.
- **china phase-1.** live — the new-crop soy purchases are the tangible step-up; thursday's sales are the continuation check.
- **mexico gmo corn.** usmca panel ruling expected **q3 26** — no developments.
- **russia / ukraine + red sea corridor.** the wheat catalyst that reversed and kept bleeding; watch for corn spillover only if black-sea or red-sea logistics re-tighten.

macro overlay

- **crude wti $84.67** (CLU6, verified **31 jul**) — **-5.2%** on the week, intraweek **$79.26**. the sign of its grain transmission softened from vol. 016's tailwind: near **$85** it is neutral to ethanol and renewable-diesel margins — no longer the **$90** firming of a week ago, not yet the **$82** squeeze of a month ago. the mechanism this week was risk-basket, not margin.
- **10-year yield ~4.74%** (verified **31 jul**) — up from the mid-**4.4s**, a firmer-rates backdrop that de-rates commodities as a bloc; the clearest macro headwind on the grains this week and the one most consistent with a uniform **-5%** complex break on no bearish grain release.
- **dxy ~97-100** (last-verified, carried) — holding the band; a rates-driven dollar bid is the live risk that would firm it into the export book at the wrong time. neutral to grains absent a break, but the rate move tilts it firmer.

what i'd worry about

probability-weighted failure-mode list, ordered by P × impact:

1. **the 12 aug objective-yield survey validates the spine and the dip reverses without me. 45%** likely. impact: **+25-45¢** on zcz6 off **$464.00**. the rating fell to **63%**, the spine held at **-5.0 bpa** — if the first field survey books even half the **-440 mb** the spine implies, **183 bpa** comes down and this week's **-4.8%** give-back was the buyable dip the run has waited eleven issues for. being flat costs the most here, and the crop deteriorating *raises* this probability from where it sat a week ago. 2. **the survey holds 183 and the de-risking was right. 35%** likely. impact: **-25-40¢** on zcz6. if the objective-yield survey finds the crop nearer **183 bpa** than the **63%** rating fears — surveys measure ears and weights, not the rating — the weather premium keeps bleeding the way it started this week, and **$460** breaks

toward **$441-444**. the symmetry with item 1 across a scheduled binary **11 days** out is exactly why there is no trade. 3. **the soy fund long unwinds hard from +1.15σ. 40%** likely. impact: **-30-55¢** on zsx6. the book is the most crowded on the board and it broke **-5.3%** with the long still near its peak; a continuation as the cot rolls over is the highest-probability *directional* move on the page — but it publishes as a short only if it either reaches the **+1.5σ** extreme (arming the exception) or gives a clean technical break with the binary out of the window, and neither condition holds today. 4. **the 10-year keeps rising and the dollar bids. 30%** likely. impact: **-15-30¢** across the complex. this week's real driver; a further rates back-up firms the dollar into the export book and de-rates commodities as a bloc regardless of the crop. 5. **china's soy return stalls. 30%** likely. impact: **-20-35¢** on zsx6. the new-crop book opened on china; if thursday's sales show it stalling, the tight **310 mb** sheet loses its only fresh demand leg into a falling tape. 6. **crop conditions keep sliding and force usda's hand early. 25%** likely. impact: **+15-30¢** on zcz6. a second week of corn slipping from **63%** toward **60%** would pre-load the survey toward a cut and is the fundamental counter to items 2 and 4 — the crop, not the macro, reasserting.

the asymmetry has shifted since last week: items **1** and **6** (bullish, crop-driven) now carry more weight than they did, because the ratings moved toward the spine — but items **2** and **4** (bearish, event/macro-driven) are live and the **12 aug** binary sits between me and either resolution. every entry i can construct is a **50/50** into that print. i do not have an edge in a coin-flip. the trade section says so.

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the scorecard

open positions

no open positions. the book has been flat since the ***8 may*** *closes of the two pre-framework carries; under the* ***16 jun*** *track-record reset those carries are archived and the framework book opens flat. the vol. 015 resting bid at* ***$458.00*** *was retired unfilled at vol. 016; no bid was placed this week.*

rolling stats (framework, lifetime): n=0. no gated trade has been initiated. the record opens with the first.

window	n	hits	hit rate	avg R
lifetime	**0**	0	—	—
last 25	**0**	0	—	—
last 10	**0**	0	—	—

closed-trade review. nothing closed — the book is flat. the ledger refetch confirms **0 rows**; journal and xlsx agree.

missed-move check. ran the **>10% in ≤6 weeks** screen across zc, zs, zw and the calendar spreads. this week logs **no new entry**: the complex fell **-4.8% to -5.7%**, under the threshold. the standing corn up-leg (**zcz6 +13.4%** on settles, **$430 → $487.50**, logged at vol. 015-016) is now *giving back* — **$487.50 → $464.00**, **-4.8%** off the settle high (**-6.3%** peak-to-trough, the **$492** intraday high to the **$461** friday low) — turning the logged move into a forming round-trip rather than a fresh miss. i note it because it closes the pattern the log has tracked all quarter: the book was flat through the **-14%** liquidation, flat through the **+13.4%** rally, and is now flat through the give-back of that rally, on an instrument called directionally correct at every turn. three legs, no risk carried on any.

no active circuit breaker. the no-trade is by construction, not a discipline pause.

what i'm watching

- **mon 04 aug** — week-31 crop condition. whether corn slides further from **63% g/e** (toward **60%** pre-loads the survey toward a cut and hardens item 1/6) or stabilizes, and whether soy holds **63%**.
- **daily** — the cpc 6-10 / 8-14 outlooks and the nws thirty-day. whether the western-belt ridge holds over nebraska/minnesota into dough (spine holds) or breaks (spine eases at the margin — the eastern belt is already benign).
- **weekly, wed** — doe ethanol; whether the grind holds **~115**.
- **weekly, thu** — export sales; whether china extends the new-crop soy book or it stalls into the falling tape.
- **fri 07 aug** — corn + soy cot. the print that reveals whether the funds began unwinding the crowded long the **28 jul** data caught at the top; specifically whether soy rolls over from **+1.15σ** (spent-ish long) or pushes toward the **+1.5σ** extreme that would arm a contrarian short.
- **12 aug** — aug wasde + the first objective-yield survey. the scheduled binary that settles **183 bpa** against a field the ratings now say is deteriorating, **11 days** out. every setup on this page is downstream of it.
- **ongoing** — the **10-year** through **4.75%** and the dollar: the macro headwind that actually drove this week; and crude — a slide under **$80** that sticks would pull the last biofuel support out of soy-oil.

the trade

no new trade this week. the *fifteenth* consecutive issue under the publication gate. and this week the discipline earned a small, concrete vindication: vol. 016 refused to chase the **$487.50** high because the edge was gone, and a chase would be **-4.8%** underwater today. the run's thesis — tight new-crop corn on a **-5.0 bpa** spine usda has not booked — is not only intact but *stronger*, because the week-30 rating fell to **63%** and moved toward the spine. and yet there is still no trade, for a reason that is now familiar and one that is new: the constructive setups sit on the far side of a binary **11 days** out, and the one *contrarian* setup that is developing has not cleared its extreme.

why no new trade

1. **fresh corn long (zcz6 outright) — the tracked setup.** it fails on the *technical* pillar and the binary. price **$464.00** just broke back below the **20-day** (**$469.14**) on a **-4.8%** week with rsi flushed to **~50** — a pullback with no reversal tell yet (no failed low, no reclaim, no divergence). buying here is catching a knife mid-fall, and the **12 aug** survey sits inside any hold window, so the binary-event rule says do not open into it. the thesis is right and firming; the *entry* is a falling chart into a coin-flip. **gate fails on the technical pillar and on the binary.** the buyable version is a *reversal off support* (a hold of **$460** and a reclaim of **$469**) or the first pullback *after* the survey — not a knife-catch before it. 2. **fresh corn short (zcz6/zcu6).** the tape tempts it — a **-4.8%** break below the 20-day — and it fails hardest on the fundamentals. the spine held at **-5.0 bpa**, the rating *fell* to **63%** (the crop is deteriorating, not fixing), and inspections held a firm pace — a

short fights a *strengthening* fundamental into a survey that a slipping rating tilts toward a bullish cut. positioning is **+0.41σ**, neutral, with no crowded-long extreme to fade and no rollover printed. **gate fails on the fundamental pillar, on the missing positioning extreme, and on a bull-skewed binary.** 3. **fresh soy short (zsx6 outright) — the developing contrarian.** the closest thing to a trade on the page, and it does not yet clear. the technical broke (**-5.3%**, below the 20-day) and the positioning is the most extended on the board — but z **+1.15σ** is *short of* the **+1.5σ** the two-pillar exception requires, and the **28 jul** cot made a *higher* high, not the rollover the rule keys on. the exception's other door — seasonality **≤35% / ≥65%** at **n≥10** — is not open either (my clean soy-window base rate is **n<10**). and the **12 aug** binary caps any short to **~8 sessions**. a technical break plus an *extended-but-not-extreme* long is a **watch**, not a publish — exactly the state vol. 016 forecast. **gate fails on the positioning threshold and the binary.** 4. **fresh soy long (zsx6 outright).** the crop is a demand story and the chart just broke **-5.3%** below its 20-day with no reversal tell; a long fights the week's tape into the binary with no defined support-reclaim yet. **gate fails on the technical pillar and the binary.** 5. **corn n7-z7 spread.** re-cheapened to **+7.75¢** against **+18.68¢** fair value — a **~10.9¢** model gap, but only **~0.5** of the **±21.6¢** leave-one-out error, and a mean-reversion lean *against* a fresh **-9.5¢** move into the binary. single-pillar, inside the noise, wrong-way momentum. **not a gated trade** — noted only because the re-cheapening corroborates the de-risking read.

wheat is outside the franchise and now technically broken (**-5.7%**); not a gated trade.

the setup-in-waiting — the survey, or the extreme that didn't arrive

the direction is unchanged and the two doors are both downstream of data, not a pre-placed bid:

- **the survey. 12 aug** adjudicates the fork. if it validates the spine, the first pullback — and **$464.00** is already a **-4.8%** pullback — is a lower-risk long than **$487.50** ever was, entered *after* the binary with a stop under **$460** and a target justified by the confirmed cut. if it refutes, the premium-bleed opens a short from a defined level below **$460**. either way the entry is downstream of the print, not a guess ahead of it.
- **the soy extreme.** if soy funds push from **+1.15σ** toward **+1.5σ** *before* they cut — and the **-5.3%** break makes a cut the more likely path — that arms the contrarian liquidation short under the positioning-extreme exception, reduced size, structural stop. **watch the 07 aug cot.** the risk is that the fuel burns before it reaches the extreme, the way corn's did in june: a long that unwinds from **+1.15σ** is a spent long, not a loaded short, and the contrarian edge goes with it.

below **$469** in corn i am a watcher, not a buyer; above **$460** i am not yet a seller. the honest close is the one the divergence forces: the crop got worse and the price fell, which means the *fundamental* case strengthened while the *tradeable* case did not — the strengthening lives on the far side of a survey i will not front-run, and the one setup i could act on early (the soy short) needs a crowd that got more crowded, not one that started leaving. the fifteenth no-trade is the correct call on the data. and this week, unlike most of the run, the tape paid the discipline a small dividend: the give-back came, and we were not in the thing that gave back.

journal note

vol. 017 ships with **0 new trades initiated** and **0 prior positions closed**. framework rolling stats stand at **n=0**, by-setup aggregates empty, no active circuit breaker. no resting bid was placed. the missed-move screen logged **no new entry** — the complex fell **-4.8% to -5.7%**, under the **10%** threshold — and noted the standing corn up-leg now *giving back* (**zcz6 -4.8%** off the settle high), turning the logged rally into a forming round-trip.

the rejection chain, updated: positioning-staleness (vols 003-006) → positioning-direction (vol 007) → demand + price-anchor (vol 008) → tape, positioning spent (vol 009) → tape alone, positioning loaded (vol 010) → r:r + the binary (vol 011) → the binary one session out (vol 012) → a single unconfirmed technical close (vol 013) → a spent third pillar + a chase r:r (vol 014) → the fundamental pillar turned (vol 015) → every pillar aligned and the thesis fully priced, no gap left (vol 016) → **the thesis re-cheapened but the constructive entry sits behind a binary and the contrarian short's positioning extreme did not arrive (vol 017)**. the through-line of the quarter is now explicit: the book has been flat through a **-14%** liquidation, a **+13.4%** rally, and the give-back of that rally, correct in direction at every turn and in a position at none. this week the gate was *right to be flat* — the chase would have lost — but the open question stands, because a filter that is repeatedly correct and repeatedly empty is either a rigorous edge-preserver or a system calibrated to a market that keeps offering it the trade one condition short of the gate. vol. 018's pipeline: the **04 aug** rating, the **07 aug** cot for a soy rollover-or-extreme, and the **12 aug** survey that resolves the whole fork.

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