

The Minnesota Star Tribune

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2026

2026 PULITZER PRIZE



FOR BREAKING NEWS

H: 83° L: 61° | PASSING THUNDERSTORM

Angst at Farmfest as Senate farm bill stalls in committee



Cora Cowan, 3, competes in the DeVos Pedal Pulls competition at the Farmfest in Morgan, Minn., on Tuesday.

Photos by CARLOS GONZALEZ • The Minnesota Star Tribune

Klobuchar, Booker say SNAP cuts are still a roadblock

By CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK
The Minnesota Star Tribune

REDWOOD FALLS, MINN. - At the annual farm-country chautauqua and tractor sale known as Farmfest, angst-filled conversations among Minnesota's ag community center on costs, weather and politics.

The Senate gave farmers a ray of hope this week, adding some cautious optimism to the mix. But on Thursday in Washington, D.C., the Senate Agriculture Committee - which includes both of Minnesota's U.S. senators, Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith - failed to pass the bill through to the full Senate, with both Klobuchar and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker saying no movement on SNAP cuts was a roadblock.

The last time it was passed through a full Congress was 2018 during President Donald Trump's first term.

The \$390 billion farm bill is the main federal funding road map that covers everything from crop insurance and research grants to rural housing initiatives and food assistance programs.

"We're inching close now," said a frustrated Miles Kuschel, who raises cow-calf calves outside Nimrod in Cass County, in the Minnesota Farm Bureau tent. "But we've been here before."

Last summer's federal budget package included roughly \$65 billion toward commodity programs and insurance, and cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. But it left several policies that affect funding untouched.

SEE FARMFEST ON A5 »



Attendees listen to the conversation during the U.S. Senate forum at the Farmfest on Wednesday in Morgan, Minn.

Senate hopefuls stick to familiar scripts, and take a few detours

By CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK
The Minnesota Star Tribune

MORGAN, MINN. - Two divergent reads of the Trump administration's first 20 months back in office dominated Wednesday afternoon's U.S. Senate forum at Farmfest in southwestern Minnesota where agland staple topics, such as a controversial California hog law and biofuel investments, were punctuated with discussions of the Deep State,

business regulations and abortion.

For over an hour the leading Democratic and Republican Senate candidates hoping to advance to November's ballot drew questions on tariffs, immigration and farm bill progress. But candidates often steered the conversation to friendlier talking points.

The Democrats, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and Rep. Angie Craig, made their final pitches to voters ahead of Tuesday's primary election, while Republi-

cans Michele Tafoya and Royce White got their chance to shore up support among a largely conservative crowd.

Former Navy SEAL Adam Schwarze, the state Republican Party-endorsed Senate candidate, was not invited to the forum after failing to reach 15% support in recent polling.

The discussion was dotted with partisan barbs but remained largely focused on policy - save for White's trademark

SEE FORUM ON A5 »

Special session not likely for fires

Northern Minnesota businesses still waiting on aid from the blazes.

By GRETA KAUL
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Tourism-dependent outfitters, resorts and shops in northern Minnesota - hit hard by wildfire closures at the height of their busy season - had hoped the state Legislature would convene this month and pass economic aid measures to help them out.

That doesn't look likely at this point. On Wednesday, state officials announced they did not see a need to bring legislators to St. Paul this month for a special session that would extend the peacetime emergency and open the door to aid discussions.

"We have determined a peacetime emergency extension is not needed," Department of Public Safety Commissioner Bob Jacobson said at a news conference. "Conditions have improved, and we are confident the response can continue under existing authorities."

Previously, Gov. Tim Walz had floated the possibility of an Aug. 12 special session to extend the emergency, which would keep the National Guard available to help with fire suppression and emergency response.

With the prospect of a special session on the horizon, two northern Minnesota legislators, Sen. Grant Hauschild, a DFLer, and Rep. Roger Skraba, a Republican, had hoped to pitch their colleagues on an economic aid package to help businesses affected by the fires. The two held events to promote the idea.

Reached by phone Wednesday afternoon, SEE SESSION ON A5 »

Fauci held in contempt of Congress by panel

He pleaded the Fifth 100 times during hearing last week.

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG
The New York Times

The Senate Homeland Security Committee on Thursday approved a resolution holding Dr. Anthony Fauci in contempt of Congress for his refusal last week to answer questions from the panel, whose chair, Sen. Rand Paul, has said repeatedly that he wants to see Fauci in prison.

The vote, along party lines, clears the way for the committee to recommend that the Justice Department prosecute Fauci for failing to comply with a congressional subpoena, a misdemeanor under federal law. But that does not mean the department will take up the case.

For a contempt resolution to carry the force of Congress, the full Senate must adopt it; in that case, it would be sent to the U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., who could then present a case to a grand jury. But contempt resolutions require a 60-vote majority, and with 53 Republicans in the Senate, adoption is highly unlikely.

"The chair directed Anthony Fauci to answer. He refused," Paul, R-Ky., said at the outset of Thursday's session. "That is what we are voting on today - not his opinions, not his policies, not anything he said from

SEE FAUCI ON A8 »

Ukraine's requests for air defenses are falling flat

Allies hesitant to give up interceptor missiles.

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT
The New York Times

KYIV, UKRAINE - For much of the war, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's appeals to Western allies for air defenses have paid off. His lobbying helped persuade Washington to give Ukraine its first U.S.-made Patriot air defense system in 2023, followed by several more sent by Western nations over the years.

Now, as Ukraine confronts

Drones: Kyiv continues strikes on Russian oil refineries. A3

the most intense Russian missile campaign of the war, Zelenskyy's renewed pleas are falling flat.

After yet another deadly assault on Kyiv early Wednesday, in which the capital was left completely undefended against Russian ballistic and hypersonic missiles, Zelenskyy offered an accounting. In a statement, he said the number of air defense missiles supplied by Western partners so far this year had "dropped threefold compared

SEE UKRAINE ON A8 »



DAN BASHAKOV • The Associated Press

Responders put out a fire after Russian missiles hit a warehouse in Kyiv, Ukraine, Wednesday.

