



"Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavor." — **Truman Capote**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

Morning Summary: Traders are pumping the brakes in regard to technology driven investments. With self-driving cars being removed from the streets and Facebook getting hammered for capturing personal data, the entire tech sector remains under heavy pressure. Investors have clearly taken a more defensive approach towards machine learning, data mining, robotics and artificial intelligence. The verdict is still out in regards to this being a short-term blip on the radar screen or perhaps something more serious. There's definitely a more obvious defensive tone and rotation of funds, as some large traders and portfolio managers appear to be rethinking their overweight tech positions as trains start to run off the track. The recent self-driving Uber accident and Facebook's perceived highjacking of personal data, is making many in the industry rethink the pain that may be involved as the world transitions to more high-tech. Perhaps gaining marketshare and growing revenue in this space might not be as easy as the market had forecast just a few weeks back. I suspect thoughts of more strict government regulations and perhaps more blood on the hands of the tech giants leading the charge is reason for pause. Fears of rising inflation and the possibility of a major trade war are also causing reason for concern. Nobody seems certain if either economic headwind will occur, but it definitely creates enough headline noise to halt the buying by the algo's, quants and computer based trading models. Remember, the market doesn't have to turn fundamentally bearish to create a downdraft. Its only has to bring about enough doubt regarding "growth" that causes buying to temporarily halt or dry up. The +400 days of low or no volatility is clearly a thing of the past... buckle in, it feels like we could be in rougher waters for an extended period of time.

Arizona Governor Suspends Uber From Testing Its Self-Driving Cars: *Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey has suspended Uber's self-driving vehicle testing privileges in the wake of a pedestrian fatality in Tempe last week. The testing has been going on for months in the Phoenix area, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Toronto as automakers and technology companies compete to be the first with the technology. Uber's testing was halted after police in a Phoenix suburb said one of its self-driving vehicles struck and killed a pedestrian overnight Sunday. (Source: AssociatedPress)*

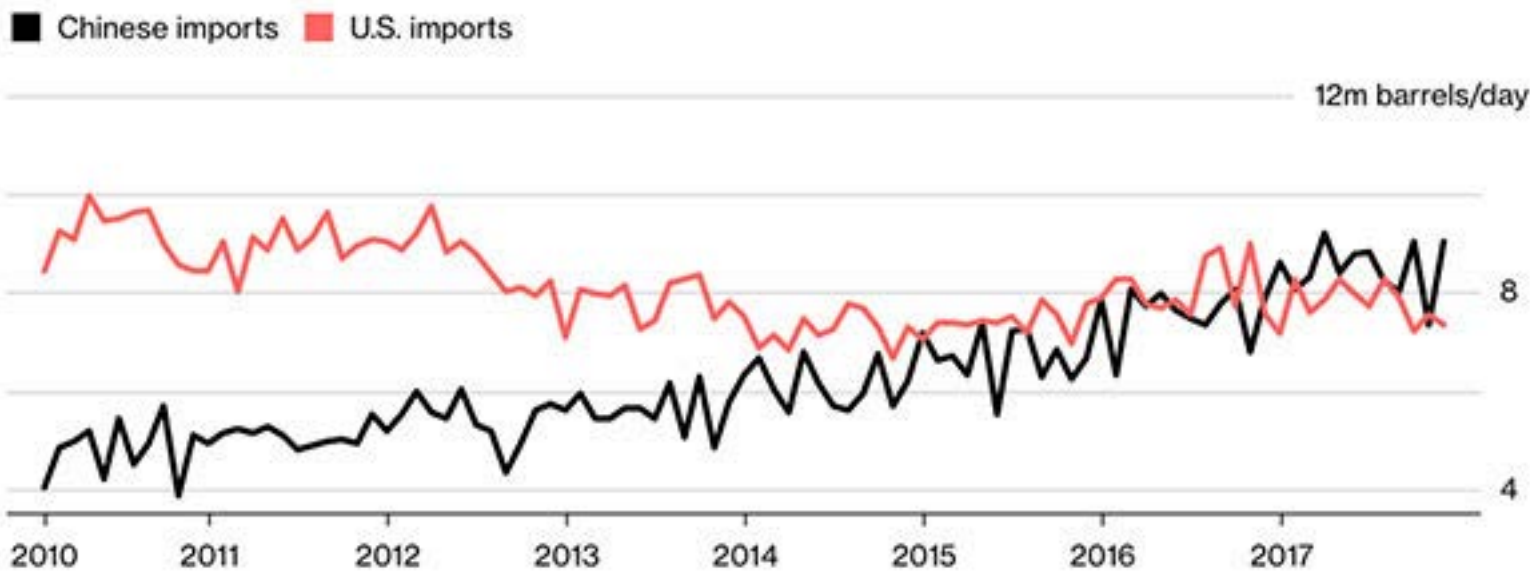
Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg To Testify In Washington: *The U.S. Federal Trade Commission took the unusual step this week of confirming it's investigating Facebook's privacy policies following the revelations about Cambridge Analytica's use of its data. The leaders of the House panel, which oversees internet issues, sent an invitation to Zuckerberg dated March 23, saying it wanted to hold a hearing to "examine the harvesting and sale of personal information from more than 50 million Facebook users. While the congressional official initially said Zuckerberg was planning to appear on April 12, we've heard no official announcement. (Source: Bloomberg)*

National Transportation Safety Board Investigating Fatal Tesla Crash: Tesla stock dropped more than -8% on the news that an investigation was being launched. The Tesla vehicle struck a highway barrier Friday near Mountain View and caught fire, closing freeway lanes for hours as firefighters tried to determine whether it was safe to move the vehicle and its damaged lithium-ion battery packs. (Source: Los Angeles Times)

China Now Has Oil Futures: It's taken a quarter of a century, but China finally has its own oil futures. At 9 a.m. local time on Monday, crude contracts began trading on the Shanghai International Energy Exchange. Futures for September settlement opened at 440 yuan a barrel, up from a reference price of 416 yuan. The world's biggest oil buyer is offering yuan-denominated futures that foreigners can buy and sell -- a first in Chinese commodities. Among the most intriguing questions is whether the traditional benchmarks of Brent crude in London and West Texas Intermediate in New York will face a serious challenger. Here are some of the other key questions. Read more [HERE](#).

Why is this important for China? Futures trading would wrest some control over pricing from the main international benchmarks, which are based on dollars. Denominating oil contracts in yuan would promote the use of China's currency in global trade, one of the country's key long-term goals. And China would benefit from having a benchmark that reflects the grades of oil that are mostly consumed by local refineries and differ from those underpinning Western contracts.

Why Now? The push for oil futures gained impetus in 2017 when China surpassed the U.S. as the world's biggest crude importer. The Asian nation's purchases reached a record high in January.



Sources: China's General Administration of Customs, U.S. EIA

neuro mining



As we age, it gets harder and harder to create new neural pathways in the brain. It's the reason kids find it so easy to learn new things, but as adults it often gets more difficult. Doing brain teasers and solving riddles can be an important part of keeping our brain healthy. The more connections we can form, the better our brain will be. I hope this helps provide a little daily fun and exercise. The answer to each riddle or puzzle will be located at the bottom of the report.

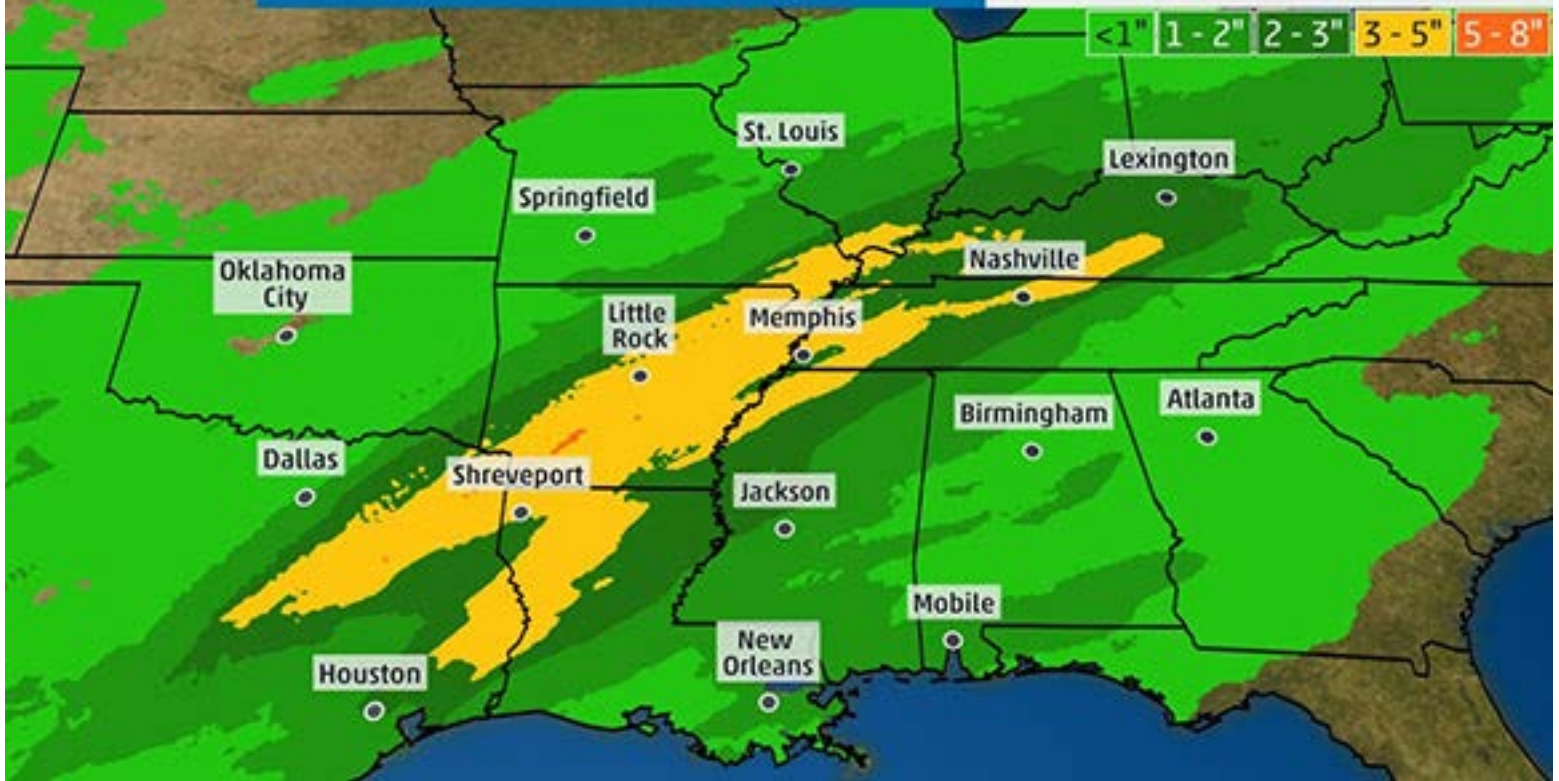
TODAY'S RIDDLE: They have not flesh, nor feathers, nor scales, nor bones. Yet they have fingers and thumbs of their own. What are they?

Weather in the Corn Belt has seen locally heavy rain stretching from the middle Mississippi Valley into the lower Great Lakes. Flooding remains a threat in the lower Midwest, especially in areas where soils remain saturated from late-February rains. On the Plains, more than 2 inches of rain has fallen recently in many locations from central Texas to northeastern Oklahoma, halting fieldwork and sparking some flash flooding. However, significant rainfall bypassed the driest areas of the southern Plains. Meanwhile, cool, dry weather covers the northern Plains, where winter wheat remains dormant. In the South, mostly dry weather in advance of an approaching storm system favors planting activities and other early-spring fieldwork. Chilly conditions linger in the Atlantic Coast States, but warm weather prevails from the western Gulf Coast region to the Mississippi Delta. The protracted rainfall event underway across the southeastern Plains, mid-South and lower Midwest will continue for much of the week. In addition to what has already fallen, 5-day rainfall totals from 2 to 4 inches or more in the aforementioned regions could lead to extensive lowland flooding and spring fieldwork delays. Dry weather will also prevail for the remainder of the week across southern Florida. Toward week's end, a strong surge of unusually cold air will begin to invade the Plains and Midwest. The 6 to 10 day outlook for April 1 - 5 calls for the likelihood of below-normal temperatures in most areas east of the Rockies, while warmer than normal weather will be confined to California the Great Basin and the Southwest as well as areas near the Gulf Coast.

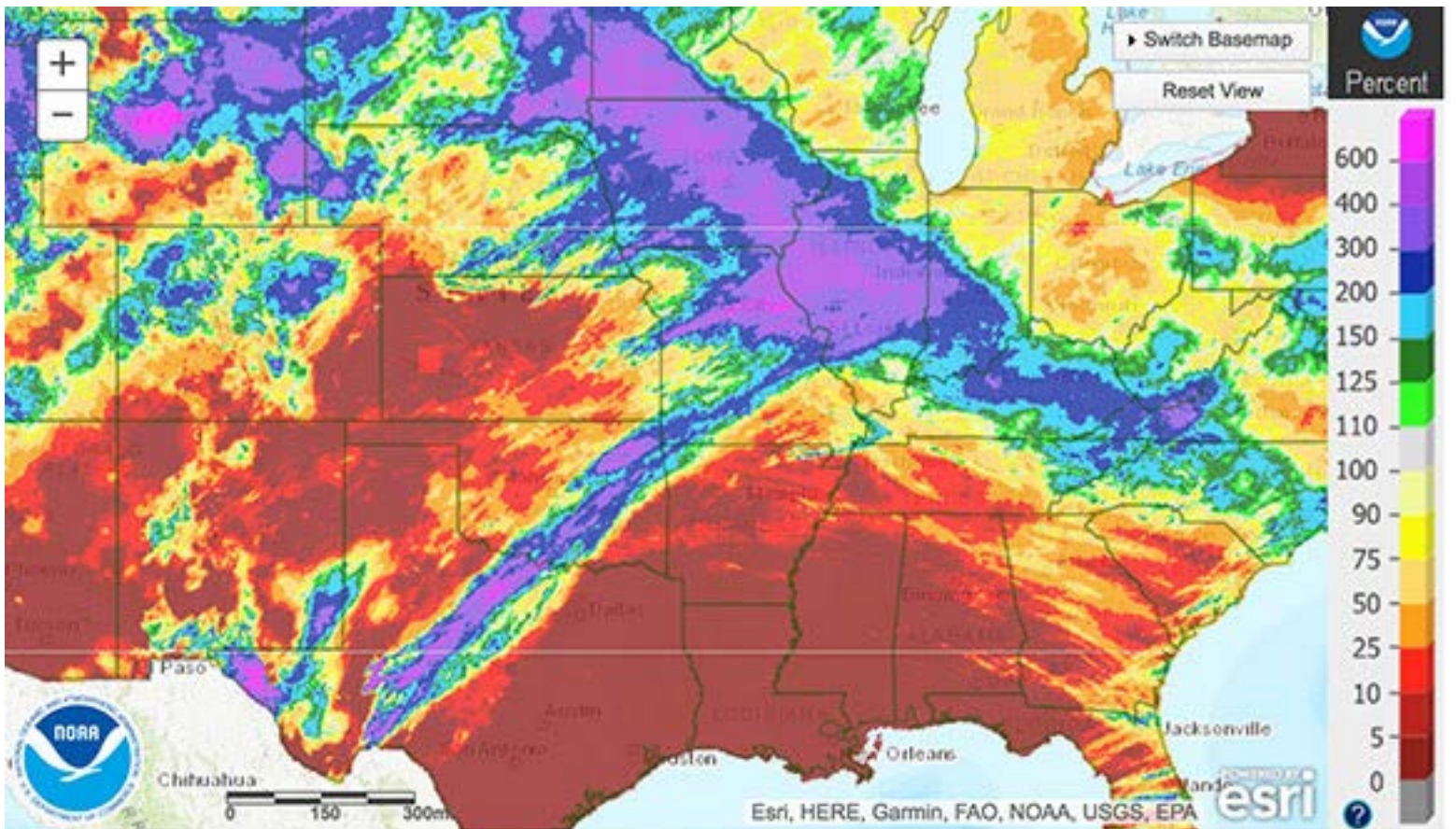
How Much Rainfall? *An additional 2 to 5 inches of rain is anticipated from east Texas and eastern Oklahoma into Missouri, southern Illinois, southern Indiana, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, northern Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. Some areas could potentially see higher amounts where bands of heavy rain stall.*

ADDITIONAL RAIN FORECAST

THROUGH THURSDAY

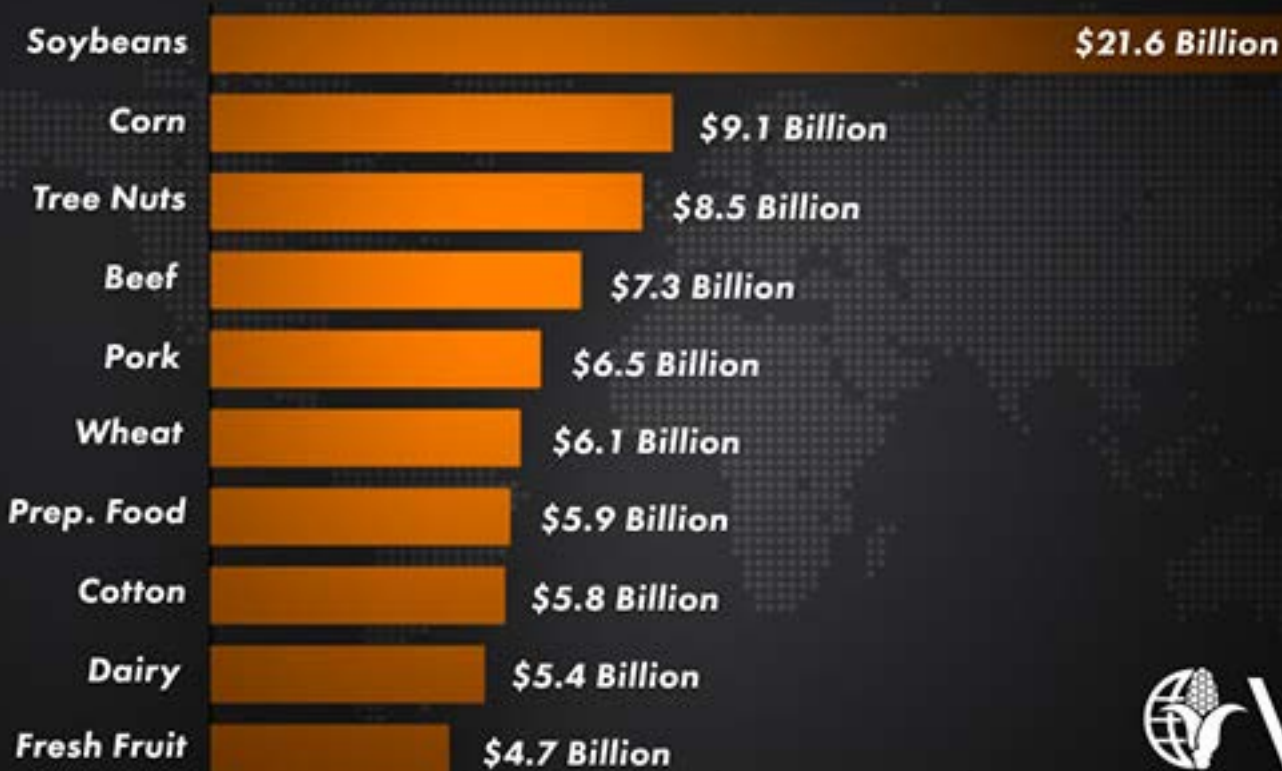


Sadly, areas that really need rainfall in the southern Plains, are not expected to pick up much from this next system. This includes western Oklahoma, which remains in extreme or exceptional drought according to the March 20 update of the U.S. drought monitor. Below is a map showing percent of normal rainfall over the past 7 days. The map was made March 27. As you can see, southwest Kansas, western Oklahoma and northern Texas continue to be so far below normal rainfall amounts.



Corn continues to trade in a very tight range ahead of tomorrow's USDA data. Most in the trade are looking for acres to be slightly lower than last year, while quarterly stocks are probably just a hair higher. Bulls in the market continue to point to strong U.S. demand and fewer available bushels out of South America. Bulls are also more closely watching U.S. weather, keeping a keen eye out for what could be overly wet and or cool soil moisture, both of which can easily complicate production. A couple of longer-term U.S. summer weather forecasts have been released this week, none of which are calling for abnormally hot and or dry conditions. From what I can gather, they seem to be fairly "normal" in regard to their forward outlook. I could argue heat and dryness might become a bit more pronounced in the southern regions, but at the moment the market isn't willing to give it much consideration. The market seems comfortable trading in its current range, at least until more is known about the South American crop, and upcoming U.S. planting conditions. I continue to keep a longer-term bullish tilt!

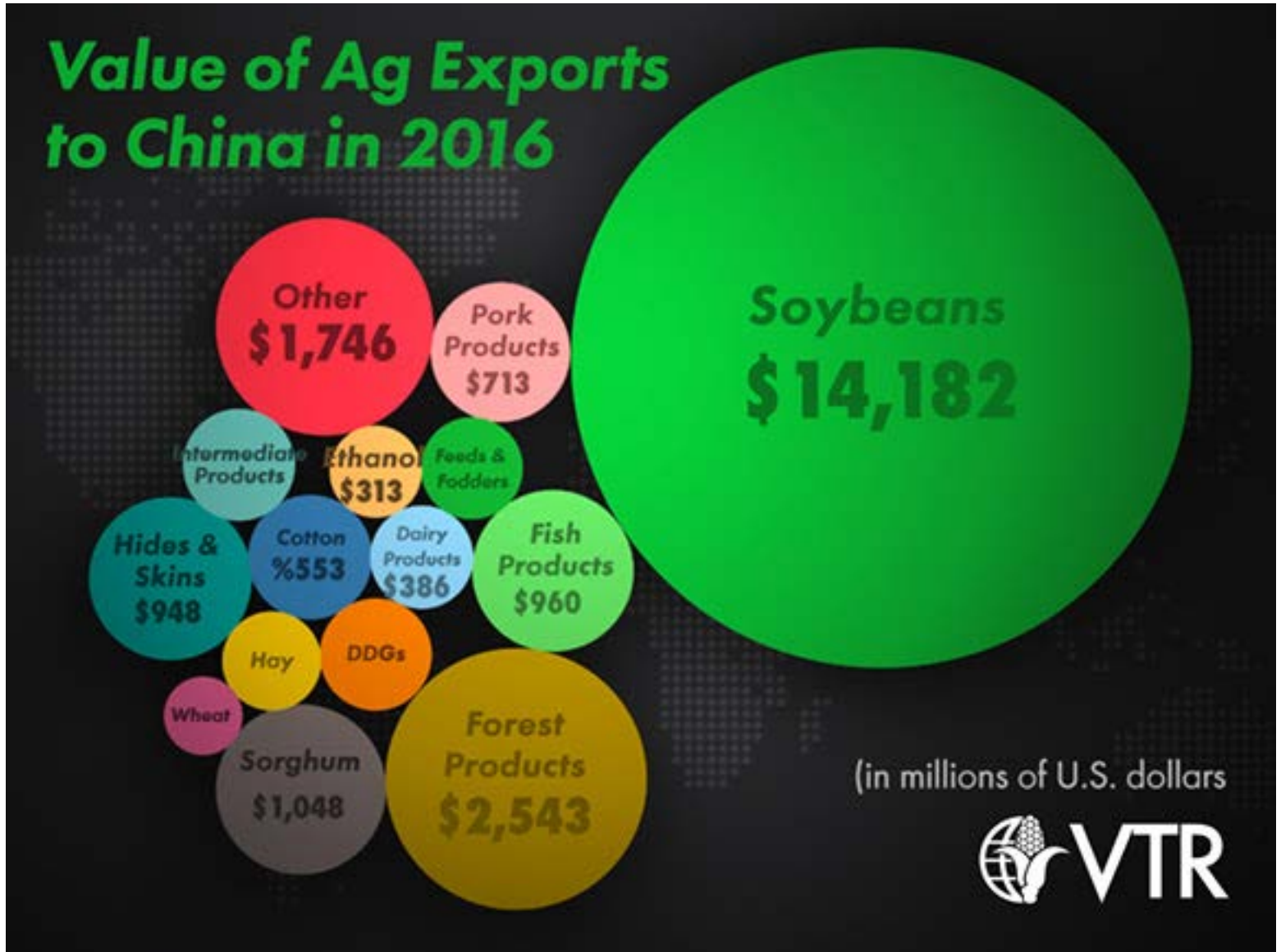
Top U.S. Agricultural Exports in 2017



(Source: USDA, FAS)

Soybean bears seem to be getting a bit louder as we approach tomorrow's USDA Prospective Planting and Quarterly Stock reports. Both numbers are expected to show burdensome data. In fact most sources are thinking soybean acres will not only be historically large, but actually surpass that of planted U.S. corn acres. Bulls continue to point to production problems in Argentina, sub-40 MMT crop, and thoughts of total South American production now falling by -15 to -18 MMTs. Bears are content arguing that the Brazilian crop continues to get larger and will soon be confirmed as a fresh new all-time record. I still believe somewhere down the road this market is going to turn its attention back to

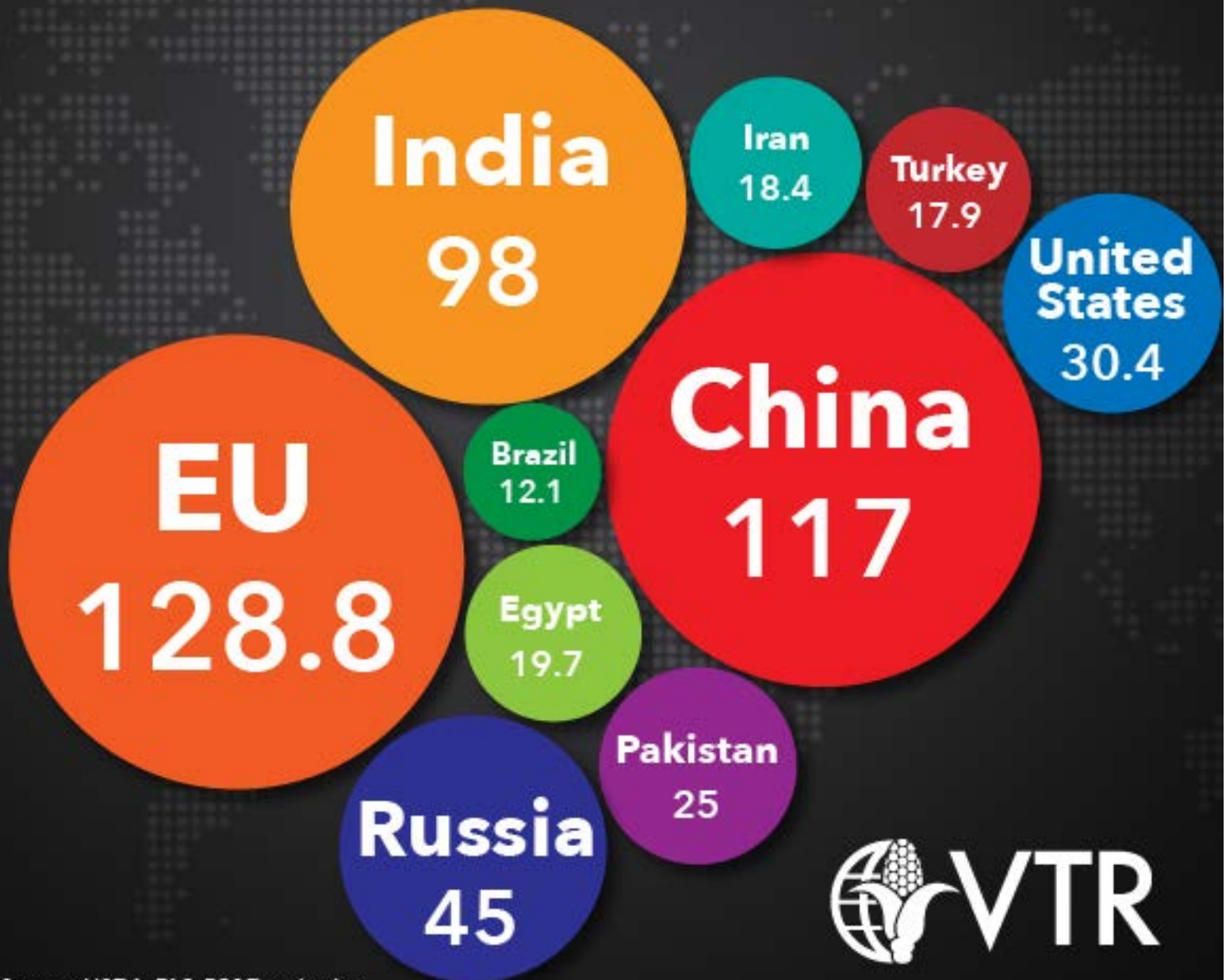
lack of Argentine supply in the marketplace. Right now it all sounds good on paper and in theory, that the Brazilian crop is going to be able to make up the difference. I'm just not sold on that happening as easily as the bears are forecasting. I suspect if the U.S. crop sees any bit of weather complication and the average yield comes into question, perhaps falling to sub-50 bushels per acre, the bears will start to aggressively backpedal. I'm not wanting to get bullish just yet, but I don't believe we've seen the final running of the bulls in 2018. Staying patiently optimistic in regard to higher prices in the weeks ahead.



Wheat exports continue to disappoint and prices remain at the lower end of the recent range. Bulls are talking about a round of freezing temps forecast to move across the southern Plains and Midwest later this weekend. The trade continues to debate total U.S. wheat planting. The bears believe they will see more acres planted than last years 46 million, bulls believe it could be a bit less. Both groups seem to agree that winter wheat acres will be less and spring wheat acres more. There's talk we could ultimately see +500,000 more spring wheat acres. As for U.S. quarterly wheat stocks, most inside the trade are thinking they will again be reported at extremely burdensome levels. In fact, several believe this could be one of the three highest reported in the past 20-years. I would like to

believe, a lot of the bearish fundamentals are already cooked into the current price. But I'm afraid, until we hear or learn more about potential crop failures in the U.S., Australia, Argentina, India or portions of Europe there's just not a lot in the way of fresh new bullish headlines to turn the trade. The downside might be limited for a bit, but the market is in desperate need of new headlines if it wants to move higher. As a spec and producer, I remain patient and on the sideline.

Domestic Wheat Consumption 2017/18 Projected (in million metric tons)



Source: USDA, FAS, PS&D 03/27/18



March Prospective Planting

| | March Est. | Avg. Trade Est. | Trade Range | USDA 2017 Planted Acreage | USDA 2018 Outlook |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Corn | ??? | 89.420 | 87.550 - 91.000 | 90.167 | 90.000 |
| Soybeans | ??? | 91.056 | 89.900 - 92.600 | 90.142 | 90.000 |
| Wheat | ??? | 46.297 | 43.900 - 47.200 | 46.012 | 46.500 |
| Winter Wheat | ??? | 32.516 | 31.500 - 32.700 | 32.696 | NA |
| Other Spring | ??? | 11.500 | 10.900 - 11.924 | 11.009 | NA |
| Durum | ??? | 2.384 | 2.200 - 2.500 | 2.307 | NA |

Planted Acres continued

| | March Est. | Avg. Trade Est. | Trade Range | USDA 2017 Planted Acreage | USDA 2018 Outlook |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cotton | ??? | 13.292 | 13.000 - 13.600 | 12.612 | 13.300 |
| Sorghum | ??? | 5.935 | 5.500 - 6.300 | 5.626 | NA |
| Barley | ??? | 2.651 | 2.450 - 2.910 | 2.481 | NA |
| Oats | ??? | 2.759 | 2.525 - 3.300 | 2.588 | NA |
| Rice | ??? | 2.757 | 2.500 - 3.020 | 2.463 | 2.900 |

Ending Stocks

| | March Est. | Avg. Trade Est. | Trade Range | USDA 2017 Planted Acreage | USDA 2018 Outlook |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Corn | ??? | 8.703 | 8.550 - 8.881 | 8.622 | 12.516 |
| Soybeans | ??? | 2.030 | 1.810 - 2.110 | 1.739 | 3.157 |
| Wheat | ??? | 1.498 | 1.450 - 1.640 | 1.659 | 1.874 |



> EU Ban On Palm Oil Would Benefit Soy And Rapeseed: *The EU is reportedly considering banning palm oil in biodiesel. If passed it could represent a windfall for rapeseed and soybean oils, while leaving Indonesia and Malaysia in the position of needing to find alternative markets for 2.6 million tons of palm oil, according to Rabobank. On January 17 the EU Parliament voted on a preliminary measure calling for the elimination of palm oil from biodiesel as of January 2021, however, the decision will not be finalized until the completion of negotiations between the EU Parliament, EU Commission, and the EU Council, and the assurance that it is aligned with World Trade Organization regulations. Currently, palm oil accounts for 27 percent of all feedstocks used in the production of EU biodiesel. (Source: Oilseed and Grain)*

> Senate Majority Leader Wants A Full Pardon For Hemp: *The senator on Monday previewed legislation seeking to free the plant from its ties to marijuana and let it take root as a legitimate crop. Hemp – marijuana’s non-intoxicating cousin – would be removed from the controlled substances list under the bill he’s offering, Senator McConnell said. The result would legalize hemp as an agricultural commodity. “We’re going to give it everything we’ve got to pull it off,” the Senate’s top leader told hemp advocates in his home state. (Source: Forbes)*

> Brazil’s Infrastructure Hinders Competition: *Over the past ten years, Brazil has invested the equivalent of 0.6% of their GDP on infrastructure improvements. This is by far the lowest of the Brics countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). Over the same ten year period, China has invested 10% of their GDP, India has invested 8%, and Russia has invested 7%. In Brazil today, 61% of the grain is transported via highways, 21% is transported by rail, and 14% is transported by water. Brazil has 1.72 million kilometers of federal, state, and local roads but only 12.2% are paved with most of the paved roads in southern and southeastern Brazil. Due to the current state of their infrastructure, Brazil is ranked 123rd in the world for competitiveness. (Source: Soybean and Corn Digest)*

> Billionaire Larry Ellison to Launch Hydroponic Farm: *Software giant Larry Ellison leapt into the health/sustainability arena with the launch last week of a new company, Sensei, a network of hydroponic farms in Lanai, Hawaii. Sensei Farms will start with 10 greenhouses, each measuring 200,000 square feet, with the expectation they will yield 1.7 million pounds of produce annually, Oracle founder Ellison told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser in an interview. That amount is more than enough to supply Lanai, the private Hawaiian island that Ellison bought 98% of in 2012 for \$300 million. (Source: Barrons)*

> India Is Now The World’s Third-Largest Electricity Producer: *India now generates around 1,160.1 billion units of electricity in the financial year 2017, up 4.72% from the previous year. The country is behind only China which produced 6,015 terawatt hours and is ahead of Russia, Japan, Germany, and Canada. Total electricity production stood at*

1,003.52 billion units in India between April 2017 and January 2018. Multiple drivers (like industrial expansion and rising per capita income) are leading to growth in power demand; this is set to continue in the coming years, according to a report by the India Brand Equity Foundation.

> **Kim Jong-un Visits China**, where he agreed to denuclearize the Korean peninsula during a meeting with President Xi, while the Chinese leader pledged to uphold his friendship with Pyongyang. The trip was Kim's first known journey abroad since he assumed power in 2011 and is believed by analysts to serve as preparation for upcoming summits with South Korea and the U.S. (Source: SeekingAlpha)

> **Jaguar Will Supply 20,000 Cars To Waymo:** The vehicle in question — a \$69,500 Jaguar i-Pace announced earlier this month, is a further mark of Waymo's ambition in the race with Uber and others to develop a driverless ride-hailing service – as well as a huge boost for Britain's biggest car manufacturer as it takes its first steps into electric vehicles. Waymo says the 20,000 I-Pace models will provide up to 1m rides a day beginning in 2020. Read more [HERE](#)





Southeast North Dakota - *We are not anywhere close to getting in the field after getting nearly 12" of snow over the last week and a half. Then we had freezing rain after that to make things very sloppy. It's near 40 degrees now but supposed to be only 20 degrees late this week. Our early corn planting date is April 15th but I am thinking that we will be lucky to be in the field by May 1st. We will get back closer to our normal 50/50 rotation corn to beans this year. We have had a few acres of wheat but most around us are getting away from it. We have had record production the past two years for corn and beans. Our corn APH is 180bpa but we made 220bpa two years ago and yielded 200bpa in 2017. The soybean yields were just below 50bpa making 47bpa across all the farms. Once things dry out we will get in the field to get some tilling done to open things up.*

Southcentral Illinois - *Over the last few days and looking ahead a couple, we will have received over 4" in our area with others nearby getting more. We can start our corn in a week but it looks like that won't happen due to the cool wet conditions we are under for a bit. The guys with the sandier soil won't have as much of a wait as those of us with more clayish soil. No real concerns here as long as we get planted by mid-May. I sell seeds as well and there are definitely more acres of beans around here. Mostly due to the positive cash flow they offer.*

Northcentral Indiana - *It's raining here with snow coming down only 20 miles away. We had good yields last season but haven't moved all the bushels yet, waiting on higher prices like everyone else. I will be planting more corn myself as I think a lot of guys will be doing beans and adding to an already huge supply. Basis has been acceptable here lately for those needing cash. The cash rents in our area on good ground is in the \$200-\$250 area, with the best land going for \$300 an acre. There was one big operation that just walked away from the game and we are all wondering what's happening with the farm. Keeping eyes open for some land.*



Goodbye Kansas Wheat - Here's a great article written by Tony Dreibus, that I encourage everyone to read. They interview a friend of ours about wheat production here in the U.S. It is well worth your time. Acreage of winter wheat last year fell to 32.6 million, the lowest level since 1909, according to the USDA, meaning a lot of producers are shunning the grain in favor of crops that offer better profitability. Production in 2017 totaled 1.27 billion bushels, the lowest amount since 1978, USDA data show. Read more [HERE](#)

China's Space Station May Crash to Earth on April Fools' Day: China's first space station, Tiangong-1, abandoned and out of control, is expected to drop out of orbit around this weekend, with pieces of it likely to survive the fiery re-entry and crash somewhere on Earth. The European Space Agency just updated its forecast for Tiangong-1's demise, pinpointing its fall anytime from this Friday to next Monday. Read more [HERE](#)

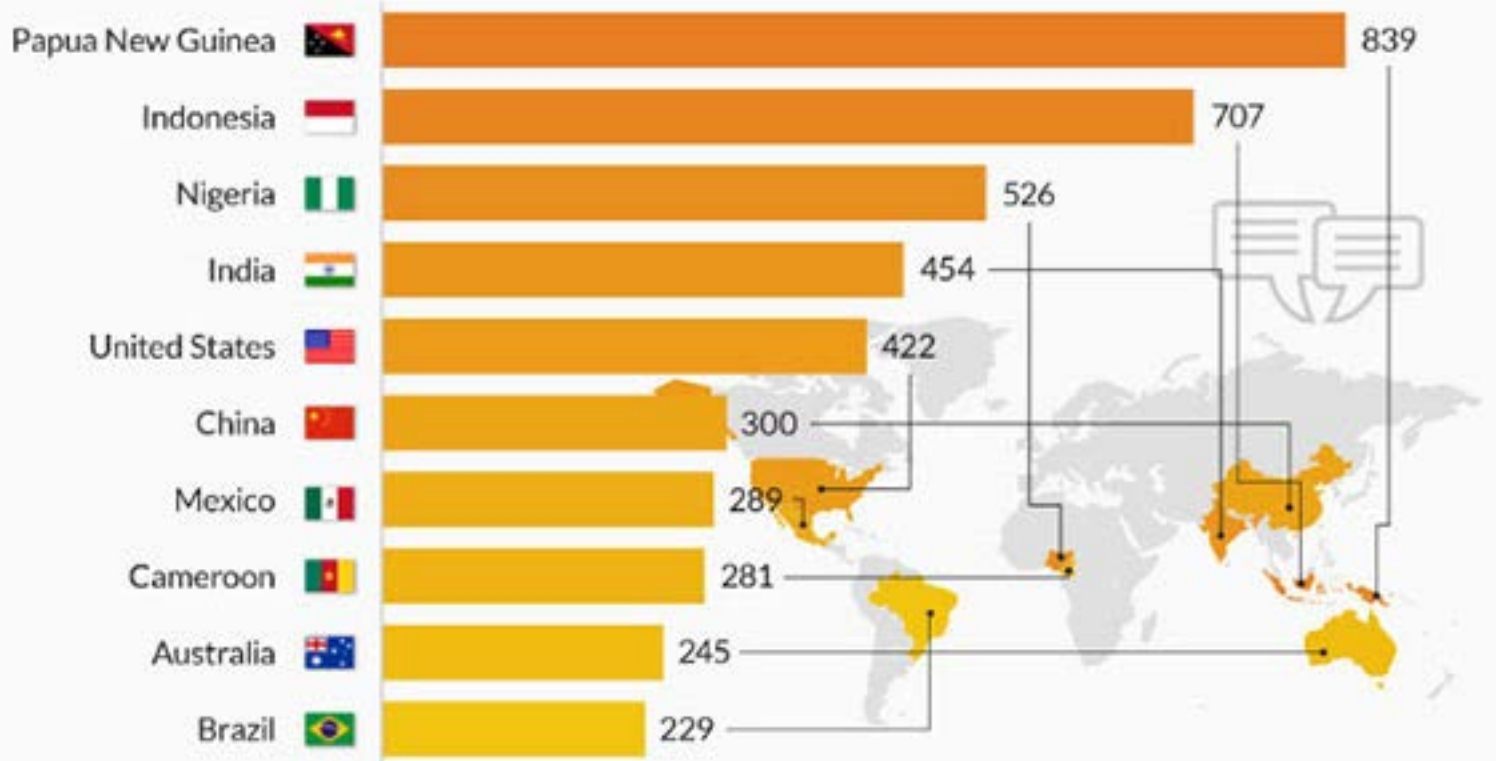
That Little Blue Pill: Released to the public 20 years ago, Viagra changed the way Americans have sex—and the way they talk about it. Formally approved by the Food and Drug Administration 20 years ago, on March 27, 1998, Pfizer's drug became an instant hit. Many say it was Pfizer's marketing strategy, choosing to speak of Viagra in terms of "male enhancement." It adopted the medicalized language of "erectile dysfunction"—a problem easily solved with its convenient medical solution—in an attempt to shed the freight of "impotence." As part of its marketing of Viagra, the company announced that half of men over 40 are afflicted with "ED." How can something so common be shameful? Viagra—like Prozac, the anti-depression medication introduced in 1987—proved to be a "blockbuster drug": By the end of 1999, the pills had netted Pfizer more than \$1 billion. By 2000, nearly 200,000 prescriptions for it were being filled each week; 17 million Americans had used it. In 2002, Pfizer became the fifth most profitable corporation in the United States. Read more [HERE](#)

Spotify Growing and Going Public: Ahead of Spotify's IPO next week, the company believes it could end 2018 with 96 million paying subscribers, a +36% rise from last year. It also thinks revenue could reach \$6.6 billion (+30%) and that gross margins could increase to 25% from 21%. Its shares will start trading — via a "direct listing" instead of a traditional IPO, next Tuesday, April 3. Read more [HERE](#)

Can Speaking More Than One Language Boost Your Economy? Multilingualism is good for the economy, researchers have found. Countries that actively nurture different languages reap a range of rewards, from more successful exports to a more innovative workforce. "Language matters on a large-scale national level and at the level of smaller businesses," says Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, a research fellow in Language Studies at the University of Bristol, citing data that links economic growth to linguistic diversity. Read more [HERE](#).

The Countries With The Most Spoken Languages

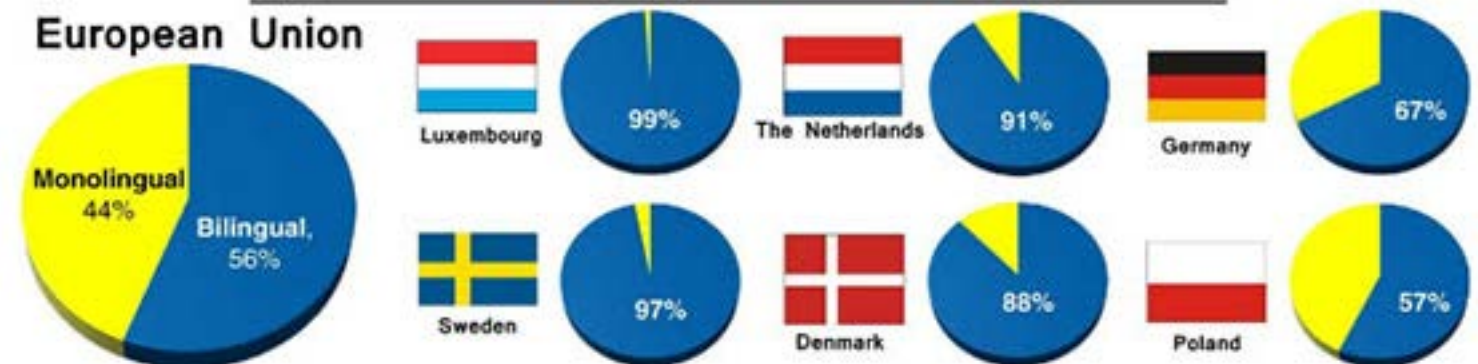
Number of living languages spoken per country in 2015



@StatistaCharts Source: Ethnologue

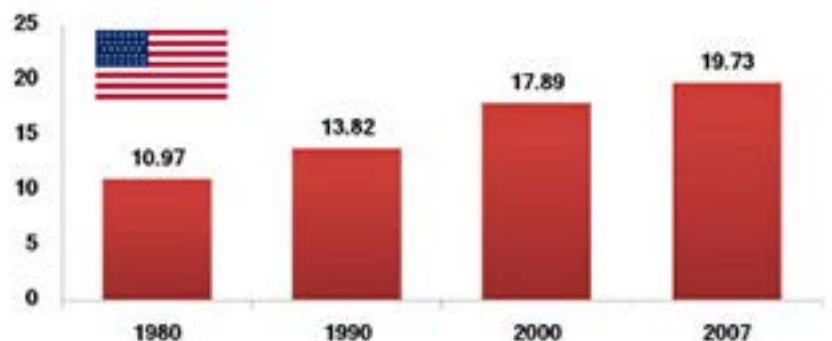
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Percentage of Bilingual Speakers in the World



Source: European Commission, "Europeans and their Languages," 2006

Percentage of US Population who spoke a language other than English at home by year



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey



Wheat Disease in Britain & Europe Is Making a Resurgence

Wheat stem rust has not been seen in the U.K. for nearly 60 years and now recent outbreaks have occurred that have many scientists wondering what has resurrected the disease. From what I understand, Over 80% of 57 wheat varieties tested in Britain are susceptible to the strain of stem rust that was discovered in an infected plant in Suffolk in 2013, the first time the disease has reappeared since 1955. It is believed that a lack of resistance in modern European varieties, changes in climate conditions and the increased presence of an alternative host, barberry have contributed to the recent outbreaks. It's worth noting that efforts to conserve the barberry carpet moth, an endangered species, has led to the planting of barberry across the UK in the past twenty years. Interestingly, this same strain battered wheat crops in Ethiopia and caused smaller outbreaks in Sweden, Denmark and Germany in 2013. Stem rust can devastate wheat crops which feed nearly 20% of the world's population. Keep in mind that stem rust disease was controlled for decades through the use of resistant wheat varieties bred in the 1950s by scientist Norman Borlaug and his colleagues and widespread adoption of those varieties sparked the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 70s. It's worth noting that the late Nobel laureate Borlaug said that the greatest ally of the pathogen is our short memory. Meaning, we may have been lulled to sleep after we apparently had conquered the problem. According to Ravi Singh, a wheat scientist at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, this disease mutates quickly to overcome resistance controlled by single genes. I'm told that the hope for achieving resistance to rust disease, the scientists will have to make wheat's resistance genetically complex, combining multiple genes and resistance approaches. I suspect that with the advances in science, developing a genetically complex resistance is within reach. (Source: cimmyt.org, phys.org)



Opening Day... What You Need To Know About The 2018 MLB Season

The 2018 Major League Baseball regular season will begin tomorrow March 29 — the earliest Opening Day in league history. In addition to the early start, this will be the first year all 30 MLB teams will be in action on Opening Day. The full slate of games begins on ESPN at 12:30 p.m., when the Miami Marlins host the Chicago Cubs. Below are a few interesting thoughts:

The Regular Season: *As has been the case since 2013, all teams will play their four division opponents 19 times each for a total of 76 games. They will play six or seven games against each of the other 10 same-league opponents for a total of 66 games, and 20 inter-league games.*

Can the Houston Astros Repeat As Champions? *It always feels like a safe bet to side with the defending champs, even though the last team to win consecutive titles was the New York Yankees, who won three straight from 1998-2000. The Astros had the most potent offense in the majors last season and should be among the highest-scoring teams again, barring any major injuries or drop-offs in production. Houston has the potential to be a powerhouse for the foreseeable future, especially with its core of Jose Altuve, Carlos Correa, George Springer and Alex Bregman locked up through at least the 2020 season. The Astros further bolstered their starting rotation with the acquisition of Gerrit Cole to go along with Dallas Keuchel and Justin Verlander.*

Murder's Row 2.0? *The Yankees did a classic Yankee thing this off-season by adding National League MVP Giancarlo Stanton to a team that already boasted American League rookie of the year Aaron Judge. The Yankees now have the only two players who hit at least 50 home runs last season in their lineup. Aaron Judge became the first rookie to hit 50 (he finished with 52), and Stanton led the majors with 59 as a Miami Marlin. Only five times have teammates each hit more than 45 home runs in the same season:*

1961 Yankees: Roger Maris (61) and Mickey Mantle (54)

1927 Yankees: Babe Ruth (60) and Lou Gehrig (47)

1931 Yankees: Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig (46)

2001 Texas Rangers: A-Rod (52) and Rafael Palmeiro (47)

2005 Red Sox: David Ortiz (47) and Manny Ramirez (45)

3000 Hit Club - *The Angels' Albert Pujols currently has 2,968 hits, with 614 career home runs, he would join Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and Alex Rodriguez as the only players in history with 600 home runs and 3,000 hits. Pujols could also reach 2,000 RBIs.*

Big Names New Homes - *There was a lot of offseason movement, below are a few of the highlights:*

Jake Arrieta, pitcher, Philadelphia (from Chicago Cubs)

Yu Darvish, pitcher, Chicago Cubs (from Los Angeles Dodgers)

Carlos Santana, first baseman, Philadelphia (from Cleveland)

Eric Hosmer, first baseman, San Diego (from Kansas City)

Evan Longoria, third baseman, San Fran (from Tampa Bay)

Giancarlo Stanton, outfielder, Yankees (from Miami)

Andrew McCutchen, outfielder, San Francisco (from Pittsburgh)

Marcell Ozuna, outfielder, St. Louis (from Miami)
Dee Gordon, outfielder, Seattle (from Miami)
Christian Yelich, outfielder, Milwaukee (from Miami)
J.D. Martinez, outfielder, Boston (from Arizona)

Contract Players To Watch - *Players in the final years of their current deals are always in the spotlight because it's never too early to start talking about next year's free agents. Below are some of the star players whose contracts are up at the end of the season:*

Bryce Harper, Washington Nationals outfielder
Manny Machado, Baltimore Orioles infielder
Clayton Kershaw, Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher
Craig Kimbrel, Boston Red Sox closer
Josh Donaldson, Toronto Blue Jays infielder

Rules Changes - *As Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred continues exploring ways to make games move quicker, the 2018 season will feature some rule changes in an attempt to speed things up. The length of an average game last season was a record three hours, eight minutes. It's the sixth straight year in which the average game has taken three hours to be played. On Feb. 19, Manfred announced four new rules changes including limiting the number of mound visits in a game to six per team, shorter commercial breaks between innings and during pitching changes, and direct access to slow-motion angles in all 30 stadium replay review rooms.*

2018 World Series, MLB Draft & All-Star Game - *The Postseason will begin on October 2. The 2018 World Series is set to begin on October 23, and a potential Game 7 is scheduled on October 31. The 2018 MLB Draft will be held from June 4 to 6 in Secaucus, New Jersey. The 89th Major League Baseball All-Star Game will be held on July 17 at Nationals Park, the home of the Washington Nationals.*

Odd Of Winning It All - *World Series odds in parentheses, courtesy of OddsShark.com*

- 1. Houston Astros (+500)*
- 2. Los Angeles Dodgers (+500)*
- 3. New York Yankees (+600)*
- 4. Cleveland Indians (+650)*
- 5. Chicago Cubs (+750)*
- 6. Washington Nationals (+900)*
- 7. Boston Red Sox (+1000)*
- 8. Arizona Diamondbacks (+2500)*
- 9. St. Louis Cardinals (+2000)*
- 10. Los Angeles Angels (+2500)*
- 11. Milwaukee Brewers (+3000)*
- 12. Minnesota Twins (+3000)*
- 13. Colorado Rockies (+5000)*
- 14. Seattle Mariners (+3500)*
- 15. Toronto Blue Jays (+3500)*
- 16. San Francisco Giants (+2200)*
- 17. Texas Rangers (+20000)*

18. San Diego Padres (+20000)
19. New York Mets (+3000)
20. Oakland Athletics (+20000)
21. Baltimore Orioles (+20000)
22. Atlanta Braves (+17500)
23. Philadelphia Phillies (+10000)
24. Tampa Bay Rays (+15000)
25. Pittsburgh Pirates (+15000)
26. Chicago White Sox (+20000)
27. Cincinnati Reds (+25000)
28. Kansas City Royals (+50000)
29. Detroit Tigers (+50000)
30. Miami Marlins (+50000)



Special Goodbye And Thank You To My Father-In-Law

Many of you through the years have had the pleasure of meeting and conversing with my father-in-law, Mike Gnefkow. It's with a saddened heart, I have to let everyone know he has passed away. Mike always enjoyed meeting our readers, attending our financial conferences and hearing the thoughts of other ag leaders, traders and investors. He has been the rock of our family as far back as I can remember. He will truly be missed by us all. In case you hadn't heard his story. He married his high school sweetheart, Susan Douglas. The two eloped to North Carolina at the young age of 18, and have since been married for 51 years. Having to provide for his family, Mike began a blue collar career. Working many extremely long hard hours, he was able to claw his way to the top of his profession, all while being an amazing husband and father to three wonderful children. He also found

time to hold several positions with Local Union #27, offices of Financial Secretary, Executive Board, and Pension Board. Mike also served as Chairman of the Board for the South Metro Fire District and on the TIF Committee for our local hometown. To say hard work and a great personality can pay huge dividends, would be a massive understatement when speaking about my father-in-law. Through the years he was able to amass an extensive real estate portfolio, large stock portfolio and even owned a company called "The Mutual Fund Store" in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He had an uncanny knack for staying ahead of the curve and understanding economic trends and cycles. He wasn't afraid of change, risk or hard work. In fact, he was the one that persuaded me to take a deeper look at Bitcoin and a couple of other crypto currencies a few years back, again ahead of his time. However, much more important than his financial accomplishments, was the role-model he was to our entire family. He would have turned 70 years old on Monday. I already miss him!

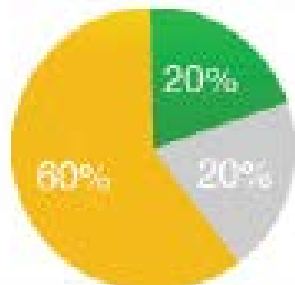
To bring everyone up to speed... My father-in-law had a freak accident. About a week after attending our conference in Kansas City in December, he started buttoning down the house getting ready to head to Hawaii for three-months for the winter. Following his retirement, Mike and Susie had done this routine the past several winters. He was making a couple of final adjustments, wanting to disconnect and unhook the garage door opener. Jumped on a ladder, just like he had a million times, but this time took a major tumble. He fell across the side-rail of his pickup truck breaking his ribs and collar bone, was then slung back the other direction, landing on his head, ultimately suffering a traumatic brain injury. After being rushed to the hospital they found a blood clot on the brainstem and performed emergency surgery. He was in ICU for several weeks and in the hospital for the past few months. Unfortunately he was unable to recover. There were moments of clarity where he and I had quality conversation. He thanked me for being a good son-in-law and taking great care of his daughter and his grandchildren. He had always believed in me and I was proud to have not let him down. He also stressed how fragile life is and that I should never take anything for granted. He said, you just never know when a simple routine task can turn into a nightmare and completely flip your life upside down. He stressed that "time" is an insanely valuable commodity that we should always cherish! As you can imagine, I will deeply miss the common sense and worldly wisdom he often provided... Below is a picture of my wife Michelle and her Mom and Dad a couple of months before the accident. Thanks again to all of those who have sent prayers and wishes to our family, it means a lot!



CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS

CORN 2017 CROP

60% SOLD
20% HEDGED
20% UNPROTECTED



SOYBEANS 2017 CROP

95% SOLD
0% HEDGED
5% UNPROTECTED



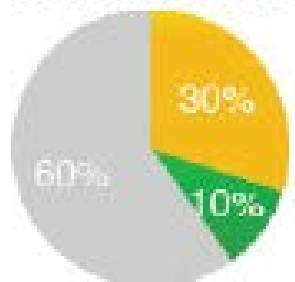
WHEAT 2017 CROP

100% SOLD
0% HEDGED
0% UNPROTECTED



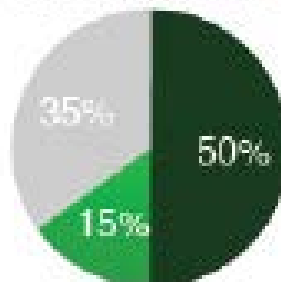
CORN 2018 CROP

30% SOLD
10% HEDGED
60% UNPROTECTED



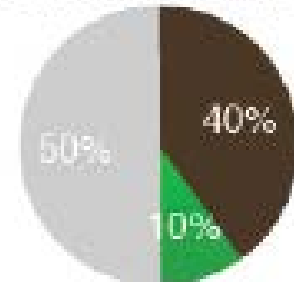
SOYBEANS 2018 CROP

50% SOLD
15% HEDGED
35% UNPROTECTED



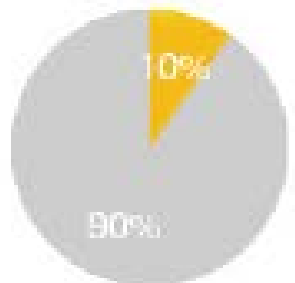
WHEAT 2018 CROP

40% SOLD
10% HEDGED
50% UNPROTECTED



CORN 2019 CROP

10% SOLD
0% HEDGED
90% UNPROTECTED



SOYBEANS 2019 CROP

0% SOLD
0% HEDGED
100% UNPROTECTED



WHEAT 2019 CROP

20% SOLD
0% HEDGED
80% UNPROTECTED

