

## GOOD MORNING: 04/26/18 Farm Direction - VanTrump Report

2 messages

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*"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."* - Darwin

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018

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**Morning Summary:** Stocks are steady to higher this morning but traders continue to reposition as the U.S. dollar rises to three month highs, the 10-year Treasury trades north of 3% and crude oil is back at levels not seen in over 3 years. The big debate on Wall Street moving forward is if stocks can rally as the big-3... interest rates, oil and the king dollar do the same? Many experienced traders believe this might be the time "doing nothing" pays the best dividend. In other words, moving more troops to the sideline, raising cash liquidity and or increasing dry powder. Personally, I'm staying with my current allocations as a longer-term conservative bull. Most would argue I've already been a bit "under-invested" the past few months, with less exposure to stocks than I've had at anytime the past several years. Interest rates and inflation are clearly inching higher, but "velocity" still remains the huge unknown. With many professional traders sitting on huge stock market profits, they prefer shooting first and asking questions later. Nobody is wanting to actually hang around and see "velocity" gain momentum. That's why we are seeing such extreme volatility, some big players have an itchy trigger-finger and are more uncertain about what might lurk around the next corner. Do you realize, there have already been 30 times in which the S&P 500 has generated daily returns of +1% to the upside or downside this year, which compares to just eight time all of last year. Geopolitically, a couple of items seem to be taking small steps in the right direction. North Korea appears on the surface to be more serious about walking back their nuclear program and talking sense. Washington is indicating it might be more willing to negotiate with China in an attempt to avert a full-blown trade war. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will be heading to China to negotiate. I'm also hearing that U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, National Economic Council director Larry Kudlow and perhaps even White House trade adviser Peter Navarro will also be making the trip. Keep in mind, If the two sides can't reach a deal, the U.S. tariffs would take effect after a May 15 public hearing. President Trump has also recently said, NAFTA 2.0 talks were "doing very nicely." As for today, the European Central Bank announces their latest interest rate decisions. There have been signs of a slowdown in the eurozone economy so the ECBs policy announcement is being closely monitored. Here at home the trade will be digesting U.S. monthly durable goods orders and weekly unemployment claims. There is also another heavy wave of corporate earnings scheduled for release, a few of the big names will be: Amazon, Bristol-Meyer, CME Group, Conoco Phillips, Intel, General Motors, Microsoft, MGM, Pepsi, Starbucks, Union Pacific, and UPS.

**All The "Action" At The Open & Close:** *The first and last half-hour of the US trading day now accounts for 39.6 per cent of all volumes, up from 31.5 per cent a decade ago, according to Credit Suisse data. A decade ago about 16 per cent of all trading happened in the final 30 minutes, but that rose to more than 20 per cent in 2012, and almost 25 per cent this year. The closing auction alone — when most ETFs do their rebalancing — now accounts for 8.2 per cent of volumes in 2018, up from 3 per cent in 2007. Read more at [Financial Times](#)*

**Facebook Continues To Gain New Users:** *Facebook's daily active users increased to 185 million in North America last quarter, despite news of its data breach scandal. The company averaged 1.45 billion daily active users last month, up +13% compared to last year. Facebook also said that cash and equivalents rose to \$44 billion, more than double the amount the company held just two years ago. (Source: CNBC)*



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Today In History

**Americans Donated Record \$2.4 Billion To NRA In March:** *The National Rifle Association's Political Victory Fund raised \$2.4 million in donations in March, setting a new record for the group. From what I understand, the unprecedented total came from supporters concerned with the legislative victories in a number of states and a march on the Capitol to demand changes at the federal level following the Parkland shootings. The data from the Federal Election Commission show that \$1.9 million of the \$2.4 million total, about 80 percent of it, came from small donations of \$200 or less, which was in line with the small-dollar share of previous months' fundraising totals. Obviously, lots of strong feelings on both sides. Read more [HERE](#).*

## NRA donations smash records in March

Monthly donations to NRA Political Victory Fund, January 2000 through March 2018



Source: FEC

WAPQ.ST/WONKBLOG



**121, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus** - The Roman Emperor was born today April the 26th in 121. He jointly ruled the Roman Empire

first with his brother Lucius and then with his son Commodus until his death in 180. He was the last of the so-called Five Good Emperors and it is believed that his death and the instability that followed was the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire. Marcus' father and grandfather were both politically active in the Empire as senators, and he was educated by the best tutors of the time. At his father's death Marcus would be sent to be raised by his grandfather. Aurelius was educated by tutors at his grandfather's home, and it is here that he is taught and influenced by the philosophic way of life. When Hadrian the Emperor of Rome died, it was his uncle Antoninus that would be appointed to be the new Emperor, and his only heir was Marcus. After Antoninus' death Marcus would be formally elected to be the new Emperor and also gained the title Pontifex Maximus, which was the chief priest of the cults, and then demanded that his brother Lucius also be granted the same titles. The next few years were known as the "happy years," under the reign of the two brothers. Wars would be fought in Syria, Greece, and with the Germanic tribes, all won by the Roman Empire. On a tour of the empire, Marcus Aurelius would die on the 17th of March 180 of natural causes. He had acquired the reputation of being a philosopher king. During his reign, he would write a series of twelve books called the "Meditations," that chronicle different periods of his life. These meditations were basically books written for himself and contain Stoic reflections about his life. Throughout the books, one can find that Aurelius believed that one should avoid sensory affections or indulgences, that being rational and clear-minded would allow a man to live in harmony and that a man ought to rise above perceptions of good and evil. He would state in one of his books, "Words that everyone once used are now obsolete, and so are the men whose names were once on everyone's lips. For all things fade away, become the stuff of legend, and are soon buried in oblivion. Mind you, this is true only for those who blazed once like bright stars in the firmament, but for the rest, as soon as a few clods of earth cover their corpses, they are out of sight, and out of mind. In the end, what would you gain from everlasting remembrance? Absolutely nothing, so what is left worth living for?"



**1785, John James Audubon** - The famous American ornithologist, naturalist and painter, John James Audubon was born today on April the

26th, 1785. Born in Les Cayes, Saint-Domingue (modern day Haiti) on a sugar plantation to a father who was a naval officer who had helped the colonist causes during the American Revolution. His father would sell the plantation and move

## 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.

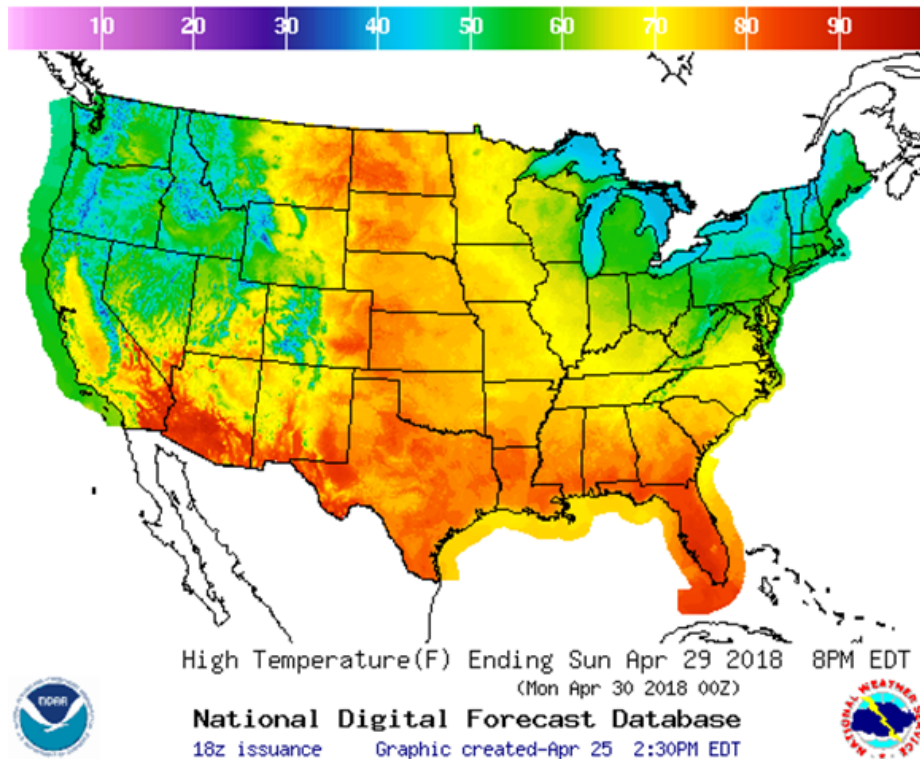
**TODAY'S RIDDLE:** What kind of coat is always wet when you put it on?

**Weather** across the Corn Belt has seen mostly cool and dry this week. A few rain showers did fall in the southwestern Corn Belt yesterday, bringing some good rain to dry areas. Despite this, field conditions are still not ideal for planting activities, but things are improving. On the Plains, much needed rain has returned to portions of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, aiding final wildfire containment efforts and providing some limited drought relief for rangeland, pastures, winter grains, and emerging summer crops. Meanwhile, mild, dry weather on the northern Plains favors an increase in fieldwork. Remember, spring wheat planting has not even begun in Montana and North Dakota, at least as of April 22nd. In the South, mostly dry weather is favoring a limited amount of fieldwork. Despite planting delays, fieldwork is basically on schedule for Southern crops. A storm system crossing the nation's mid-section yesterday will push off to the Northeast today. The trailing system is producing light rain from the southern Plains to the Southeast and along the Atlantic Seaboard. Favorably warm weather will overspread the northern Plains and the Midwest. The 6 to 10 day outlook for April 30 - May 4 calls for the likelihood of near to above normal temperatures nationwide, except for cooler than normal conditions in the southern Atlantic region and



from the Southwest to the northern Plains. Meanwhile, near to above normal precipitation across most of the western and central U.S. should contrast with drier than normal weather in East and the Pacific Northwest.

**Warm Weather this Weekend and Early Next Week:** Looks like planting will be able to speed ahead as temperatures over the weekend are going to heat up. Looking at 60s, 70s and 80s all across the Midwest and Plains. Getting reports of little to no rain from next Sun. - Wed.



**Corn** bulls continue to talk about production hiccups in South America. The Argentine crop has been trimmed aggressively and there's now talk that second-crop corn in parts of Brazil's central and southern corn belt region could be running into a few setbacks. Conditions in some locations are being reported as too dry, but bears point to the extended forecast that shows rains could be on the way in the next 10-14 days. Meaning perhaps the yield drag might not be as significant as some bulls are wanting to toss around. Either way, I still believe the current USDA production estimate for Brazil is overly optimistic and will ultimately need to be trimmed to between 85 and 90 MMTs vs. the current 92 MMTs estimate. As I've mentioned the past few days, if the heat and dry conditions continue, there's an outside chance Brazilian production could fall closer to 80 MMTs, which becomes a much more bullish headline. There's also some talk in the news that Chinese corn acres are going to be down a touch from last year, but it doesn't appear to be a major impact to total Chinese production. Most weather guru's are saying Chinese weather is nearly ideal at the moment, so no major threats of production failure. Demand here at home has been a driving force the past several weeks. Bears are wondering if the recent setbacks in ethanol production and cheaper prices now in South America will create a little uncertainty about future demand? Data released yesterday showed U.S. ethanol production fell for the fifth straight week, and is now running below 1.0 million barrels per day. From a technical perspective, bulls are wanting to see the JUL18 contract close back above \$4.00 per bushel. There's also a lot of eyes on the new-crop DEC18 contract, which hasn't closed back above \$4.15 since early-August of last year. As both a producer and a spec, I remain conservatively bullish.

the family back to France. In 1803, his father would send his son John to the United States to avoid the conscriptions of the Napoleonic Wars and while traveling to American John would catch yellow fever. The ship's captain would leave him in the care of a Quaker family, at Mill Grove, the farm that his father had purchased in the hopes of mining lead, an essential component of bullets. He would begin studying American birds and would even create his own nature museum. Believing that the mining business was too risky, he would sell his father's farm and move to New York City, where he would learn the import and export trade. In 1808, he would marry his neighbor from Mill Grove, Lucy Bakewell and move to Kentucky, where they would have two sons Victor and John Woodhouse Audubon. The family would continue their westward journey, taking their merchant business where ever they went, settling outside St. Louis. He would take frequent hunting and fishing trips, where he would observe and document the natural world and practice his taxidermist hobby. This would lead to the merchant business going bankrupt. Audubon would spend the next several years moving his family all over the South, selling his paintings to earn money. They would settle down in Louisiana where his wife was hired as a teacher. John would take his life's work to England in 1826, with the hopes of publishing a book, "The Birds of America." He was successful in getting the book published. The book would consist of over 700 North American bird species that were hand colored and made with engrave copper plates. He would sell the original oil paintings used in the book to make money as well as to publicize the book. For the rest of his life he would travel back and forth between England and the United States, all in an effort to continue his life's passion of studying, painting and documenting the birds of America. During his life he discovered 25 new species of birds and was elected to the Royal Society of England. He has been honored in America by his sons with the incorporation of the National Audubon Society, having two museums opened that house his works, and by the U.S. postal office with having two series of postage stamps that carry images of his paintings. In 2010 a copy of his book sold at Sotheby's auction for over eleven million dollars.

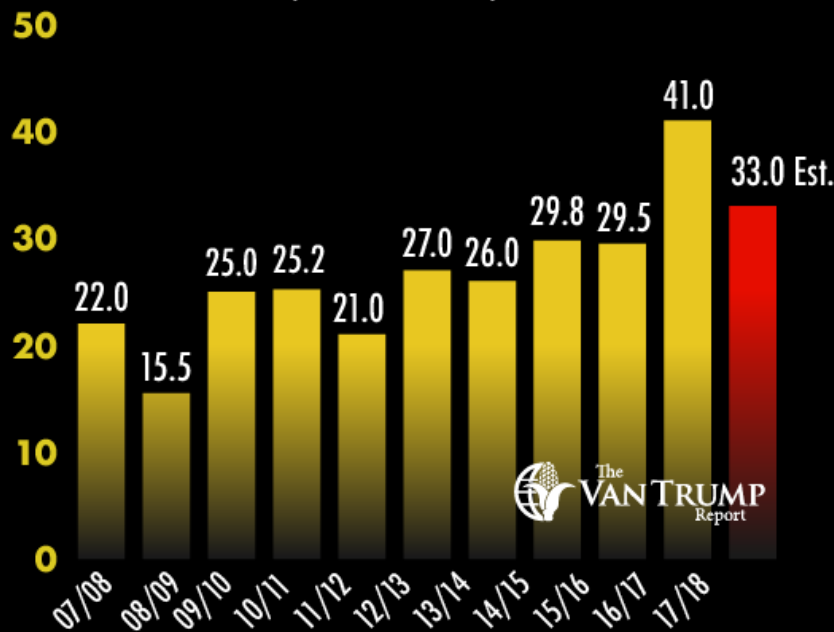


#### 1865, John Wilkes Booth -

Today April 26th, 1865 will be remembered as the day that an American assassin of the beloved President Abraham Lincoln, would meet his maker. John Wilkes Booth born in 1838 to British Shakespearean actors who had immigrated to America in 1821. Booth would be educated at the St. Timothy's military academy until the death of his father when he was fourteen years old. Before leaving school, he met a Gypsy fortune-teller who read his palm and told him "he would live a grand but short life, doomed to die young and meet a bad

# Argentina Corn Production

(in Million Metric Tons)



Source: USDA, WASDE numbers from April 10, 2018 report

**Soybean** bulls are talking about further complications inside Argentina. This time it's a logistical problem. From what I understand, a bulk carrier from Hong Kong had a collision with a key port near Rosario, Argentina, which in the past has been a large port for exporting meal. Specifics show the accident occurred at north end of "Terminal 6", and the port could be negatively impacted for the next 3 to 6 months. This will obviously add more complications and further slow Argentine shipments. I should also note, the International Grains Council (ICG) cut their Argentine crop production estimate from 43 down to 38 MMTs vs. the USDA currently at 40 MMTs. Bulls are also thinking the U.S. might soon be getting closer to inking a trade deal of some sort with China. Headlines show that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and several other top U.S. advisors will be heading to China to hammer out a deal. It sounds like Mnuchin will be joined in China by U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lightizer and Director of the White House's National Economic Council, Larry Kudlow. There's also some talk that trade adviser Peter Navarro, may also join the group. Hopes are we can make a deal and avoid the 25% proposed tariff placed on U.S. soybeans and again start selling beans to the Chinese. Bears continue to point towards record production coming out of Brazil, some talking as high as 119 MMTs vs. the current USDA estimate of 115 MMTs. Bears also point to the fact U.S. producers are going to plant a record number of new-crop acres. As I've mentioned as of late, this market is going to be all about timing. I certainly see the bullish argument, but just worry we might still be a bit early to the party.

end." Booth would become increasing drawn to acting and would make his stage debut in 1855 at the age of seventeen. He would take rolls in the theaters of Baltimore and Philadelphia and became idolized by his audiences. Booth would act in 83 plays, mostly Shakespearean, and his sister recalls that he stated his favorite roll was that of Brutus who slayed a tyrant. As an actor he was becoming very wealth, earning nearly twenty thousand dollars per year. When the civil war broke out and the southern states secession had take place, Booth would publicly support the South and call it heroic. The result would be that he was banned from some of the theatre stages in the north for making treasonable statements. However, he would continue his acting career becoming known as a star of the first magnitude. His friend John T Ford would open a 1500 seat theatre in Washington D.C. and Booth would be the first leading man to appear on stage there. Politically, Booth was strongly opposed to the abolitionist, even attending the hanging of John Brown in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. His home state, Maryland, did not support seceding nor did it support the Union and would not follow it into war, and his hatred for Lincoln was dividing his family. It is speculated that Booth became involved in Confederate clandestine operations, even to go as far as planning a kidnapping of President Lincoln. In 1865 Booth and his Confederate co-conspirators planned a kidnapping to happen near a hospital where Lincoln was to visit. Lincoln, changed his plans at the last moment and attended a reception at the National Hotel, coincidentally the same hotel Booth was then residing. When Booth learned that General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox, he would change his plans from kidnapping to assassination. He would learn from his friends at Ford's theatre, that President Lincoln and the Grants would be attending Ford's theatre on April the 14th, Good Friday, he would set his plans for the assassination into motion. At 10 p.m. that night he would slip into the President's box and shoot the Lincoln in the back of the head with a 41 caliber Deringer. He would jump down to the stage, break his leg, and shout "Thus always to tyrants." Making his escape with the help of some friends. Booth would make it to the farm a Confederate soldier named Garrett on April the 23rd. Lt. Colonel Everton Conger and intelligence officer with the Union, would track Booth to this tobacco farm and order the assassin to surrender. Booth would decline, and the soldiers would set fire to the barn where Booth was hiding. It would be Sergeant Boston Corbett that would shoot and kill Booth.

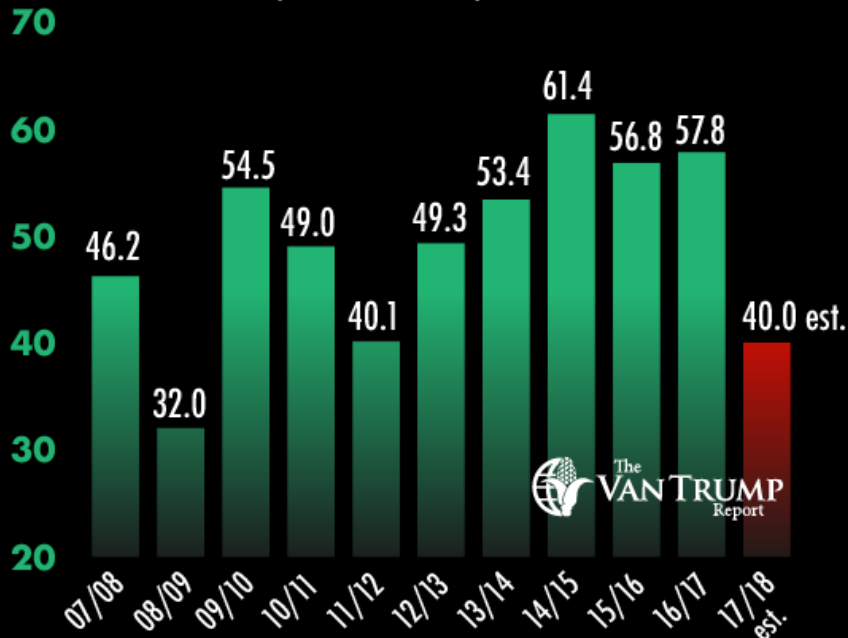
## Upcoming Events

**Tues.-Wed. 5/1-5/2** - FOMC Meeting

**Thurs. 5/10** - USDA Supply and Demand

# Argentina Soybean Production

(in Million Metric Tons)



Source: USDA, WASDE numbers from April 10, 2018 report

**Wheat** bulls are trying to position themselves ahead of next weeks Wheat Quality Council's Tour. There's a lot of talk that extremely dry conditions and winter-kill may negatively surprise some tour participants, who will ultimately be forced to forecast lower U.S. production numbers. Keep in mind, tour participants will also probably see more "abandoned" acres in the report. Bears are pointing to better rains forecast for portions of the U.S. Plains and continued nearby strength in the U.S. dollar. There's also continued strong production headlines from low-cost producers like Russia and Europe. There's also talk that Argentine wheat could be larger than forecast. I should note, there are starting to be some bulls talking about areas in Southern Russia perhaps becoming a bit too dry, so I will move that on to the radar, but at the moment it's not a factor. As a producer, I like the thought of reducing as much of our remaining new-crop risk as possible on any further rallies. I'm just worried once the weather headlines and tour comments run their course the market could selloff on burdensome supply and demand numbers. As a spec, I remain on the sideline, only looking to be a buyer on a significant break.

**Thurs. 5/17** - Farm Labor

**Tues. 5/22** - Cold Storage

**Wed. 5/23** - Minutes From 5/2 FOMC Meeting Released

**Fri. 5/25** - Cattle on Feed

**Mon. 5/28** - Memorial Day - Markets Closed

**Tues. 6/12** - USDA Supply and Demand

**Tues.-Wed. 6/12-6/13** - FOMC Meeting

**Fri. 6/22** - Cattle on Feed

**Fri. 6/22** - Cold Storage

**Thurs. 6/28** - Quarterly Hogs and Pigs

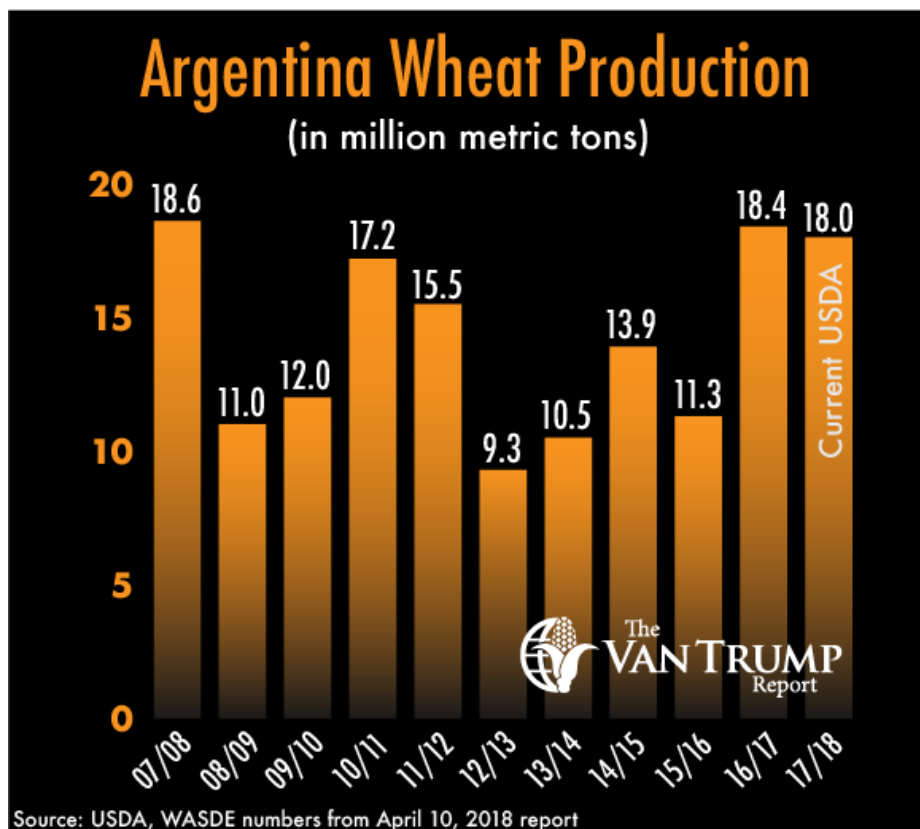
**Fri. 6/29** - Quarterly Stocks and Acreage

## Kevin's Song of the Week



## Kevin's Song of the Week





**> Sonny Perdue Celebrates One Year Anniversary:** U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue commemorated his first year at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today by releasing a new interactive website and video. In his first year, Secretary Perdue and the USDA team made breakthroughs in agricultural trade, moved to reduce burdensome regulations, responded to natural disasters, and battled through the worst fire season on record. Click [HERE](#) to see the compilation of year one.

**> Russian Wheat Off To Slow Start:** Cold weather in central areas and the Volga valley delayed the resumption of winter wheat growth by about two to three weeks compared with last year, according to the Institute for Agricultural Market Studies, or IKAR. Lingering snow has also given farmers in the world's top exporter less time to sow spring crops, potentially leading to smaller-than-expected plantings. That prompted IKAR to cut its harvest estimate to between 72 million and 78 million metric tons, down at least 9 percent from a year earlier. I'm hearing there are others saying it will need to be cut further.

**> Boeing Crushes Earnings Estimates:** Faster production helped Boeing deliver even more airplanes in the first quarter, boosting profits and bringing the company a step closer to its long-term goals for manufacturing efficiency. The strong start to 2018 enabled the aerospace giant to raise its full-year earnings forecast by 50 cents, to a range of \$16.40 to \$16.60 per share, while maintaining its revenue outlook at a range of \$96 billion to \$98 billion. Shares of Boeing climbed 2 percent in trading Wednesday. (Source: CNBC)

**> Global Wine Production Hits 60 Year Low:** Worldwide wine production totaled 250 million hectoliters in 2017—an 8.6% fall from output in 2016, reports Reuters. That was its lowest level since 1957. The fall is mainly due to weather problems in Europe, which caused hardships for wine producers in the region. Poor weather conditions including droughts and storms hindered production in the main growing regions of France including Bordeaux and Champagne. Over in South America, Chile also had a rough year, with production down 6%. At the same time, global wine consumption increased 1.8%, meaning that while there is less wine to go around, more people are wanting it.

## NEXT level THINKING



My goal at "The Van Trump Report" is to help readers better identify the moving parts and dynamics associated with the financial markets, geopolitical events, economics, media and culture that is currently influencing and shaping the direction of the agricultural markets. I like to believe I "Challenge the Traditional" and encourage our readers to think outside the box.

I use story telling techniques that are written in an easy to read format to help convey my current thoughts about business, markets, technology, weather, sports and life. I also like to include links, filter the noise, and pass along in-depth research and information that I believe could challenge your current thought process and help you make more informed decisions. In addition I include valuable lessons I have learned from other traders, executives and investors, along with an occasional inspirational piece about life, family and faith.

What I do not do in "The Van Trump Report" is give specific financial advice or tell individuals how to invest or how to specifically hedge. Remember, this information is being read by hedge fund managers, bankers, CEO's, and Ag leaders around the globe, therefore it's NOT tailored to fit your specific individual needs. For specific investment or hedging advice please seek the help of a licensed representative that can better understand your particular situation, individual needs and overall risk tolerance. This information should ONLY be used for educational and entertainment purposes.

My family and I would like to thank you again for your support!

*Kevin Van Trump*

### What Others Are Saying

"I am a recent subscriber to Kevin's newsletter, but I'm a long-time reader of many other high-profile marketing services. I am particularly impressed with the thorough manner in which Kevin evaluates every economic aspect, both nationally and internationally, that influences commodity prices. His analysis and conclusions are highly thought out and conveyed in layman's terms so that the reader can comprehend the numerous and often complex interrelationships that impact the markets. Kevin is a real attribute to the agricultural sector."

**A.M., FDIC**

"As a national federal farm policy administrator and commodity producer, I find it critical to keep updated with what is going on in the real world of agriculture and with the domestic and global markets. Of all the services I've have been privy to or have subscribed to over the past 20 years I've found in the past several months of engaging in your "Farm Direction" services to be the best perception and analysis of what is really

**> EPA's Pruitt Seeks Transparency For All Research Used:** EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is proposing new requirements for any scientific research used to establish future agency regulations. The change, long sought by conservatives, could have significant implications for decisions on everything from the toxicity of household products to the level of soot that power plants can emit. Many scientists argue that applying a standard to public health and environmental studies that is not currently required by peer-reviewed journals would limit the information the EPA could take into account. (Source: sfgate)

**> McDonald's 'Experience Of The Future' Opens In Chicago:** McDonald's is opening a new concept restaurant today in Chicago. Located at its new corporate headquarters, the 'experience of the future' will draw from a global theme as well as introducing new technology like kiosk and mobile ordering, table and curbside service and Uber eats. Here are some of the international selections you will find available: Cheese and Bacon-Loaded Fries from Australia; McSpicy Chicken Sandwich from Hong Kong; The Mighty Angus Burger from Canada; Two salads from France. And, for dessert? The McFlurry Prestigio from Brazil -- vanilla ice cream with strawberry sauce and mini chocolate coconut candy bars. (Source: WGNTV)

**> Would The Real Beef Please Stand Up:** A group of companies at the forefront of the plant-based protein movement is pushing back against calls by the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) and others to change how they label their products. The Good Food Institute (GFI) is opposed to limiting the terms "beef" and "meat" to products from slaughtered cattle only. It will be interesting to see what response the GFI will have if the ruling doesn't go their way. I suspect we see a massive marketing campaign on the ills of real beef.

**> Sorghum Shipments Find A New Home:** Beijing's 179 percent tariffs on U.S. sorghum have caused vessels to be diverted for new homes. A vessel carrying 69,842 tonnes of sorghum switched destinations to Dammam, Saudi Arabia from China earlier in the day Wednesday. The three cargoes were sold to Saudi Arabia at a price of \$190 a ton delivered, trade sources told Reuters. Most cargoes that were loaded when the new tariff was established are finding new homes. (Source: Reuters)

**> Land Ho!!...** Hong Kong bulk carrier Ocean Treasure has collided with a dock at a grain port terminal in Argentina's Santa Fe province, causing severe damage to the infrastructure and jeopardizing grain and oilseed exports. Terminal 6 is the largest grain terminal in the Rosario-San Lorenzo's grain export hub in terms of volume and it is estimated the port will be shut down for a few months at least for repairs. I'm told this dock loaded 22% of the soymeal exported last year. Click [HERE](#) to watch the video.



**Northwest Missouri** - We did not have much snow over the winter and have missed most of the significant rains this spring. The ground is not dry but we could use some soaking rains to help rebuild the subsurface moisture levels. The dirt has worked well with seed going in the ground this past week and I think there should be plenty of moisture to get things germinated and emerged but nothing past that. We have gotten all of our corn in except about 100 acres. I wanted to wait for the soil temps to warm up a little but we had the opportunity and rolled with it. We are waiting today due

happening in today's world. Not only here in the United States, but across the globe as well. US farmers need this type of help and information to assist them in their daily efforts. I commend you for a job well done. Please let me know if I can ever be of any help or assistance to you in the future..."

**L.T., Assistant Deputy Administrator  
for Farm Programs USDA**

#### My Own Personal Truisms

"Not To Trade, is often considered a good trading decision..."

"First Rule of HOLES: When you are in one stop digging..."

"Every looser in Vegas, always walks away from the table thinking he could have done better, the winners on the other hand leave while on top..."

"Bulls make money, Bears make money, but pigs get slaughtered..."

"The markets ability to remain irrational can often times last much longer than your ability to remain solvent..."

I'm more of a long-term player, therefore you will not see me give many short-term suggestions or trade ideas. One of my most important rules is that I always follow my long-term direction. Therefore, as long as I am "bullish" a market I will only play that particular market in one of three ways.

- Option #1 - Conservatively long.
- Option #2 - Aggressively long.
- Option #3 - Sitting on the sideline.

I never initiate a "short" position in a market that I am "bullish" longer-term, nor do I initiate a "long" position in a market I am "bearish" longer-term.



to 100% chance of rain later this afternoon. The beans will start to go in about a week from now. I would like to see a little more moisture in the ground before we start.

**Central Nebraska** - There has not been that much planted here as we have only gotten one quarter in the ground. The soil temperatures are only in the 40-degree range which is a good 20 degrees less than last year at this time. We received about .5" of rain yesterday and have another chance this weekend. We will have a few more beans this year but nothing in a large way. Normally, we have about one-third of our crop in bean acres and two-thirds corn. All of our farms are irrigated. It could be an interesting year after having the late high winds that knocked a lot of ears to the ground. We have a lot of wind in this part of the country but normally it will knock down the entire plant, not just knock the ears off. I have had a couple explanations that say the ear was heavier last year due to the better kernel development, which the plant couldn't handle. Our crop would have been one of the best probably 250+bpa but we had near 50bpa on the ground. We grazed cattle all winter which helped but there is still a lot of kernels laying around.

**Southern Illinois** - We are still waiting to get the planters rolling. The ground was about right and fit late last week and we probably could have planted but they were calling for rains over the weekend. I am glad that we waited because between Sunday and this afternoon we got almost 5" of rain. As of right now, it will be at least next week before we will be able to plant. There is one chance of rain in the forecast that we need to avoid to make that happen. We have a corn planter and a bean planter set up, so we will probably be going back and forth between fields. Our bottom ground will definitely take a few more days to firm up that our hill ground farms.

## CROSSING WIRES

A place to share intelligent thoughts...

**Fast N' Loud' Star Richard Rawlings Began With The End In Mind:** Richard Rawlings, is the star of the Discovery Channels' Fast N' Loud, and the owner of Gas Monkey, the garage that the show is filmed in. I have to admit, I enjoy the show when I happen to see it, but just couldn't get a grip on whether I liked Rawlings or not. If I was honest, I'd say he just came off too arrogant for my taste. Like him or not, after reading the linked article, I am now impressed with how he has gone about his business. One of my key concepts when planning anything is to start with the end in mind and Rawlings may have one of the best stories I've read in regards to that. I recommend taking the time to read this article by Entrepreneur where Rawlings shares what I consider critical elements on success in business and life. Read more [HERE](#).

**Forget Big Brother...China's 600 Million Cameras Are Watching You:** It's like a sci-fi thriller where everyone has a public rating system based on their social media ranking. And you need respectable scores to have access to basic daily routines, like access to booking a flight or getting online, things we take for granted. But for residents of China, it's becoming a reality. By 2020 the country plans to give all its 1.4 billion citizens a personal score, based on how they behave, according to CBS News. I'm told the system will act like credit scores, but rather than being judged by your financial choices, you will be scored on your behavior. It's almost surreal to think about but many Chinese are already banned from various travel modes. It may be hard to imagine where this ends. Read more [HERE](#).

**Rarely Seen Ice Patterns From The Arctic:** Three strange, circular, amoeba-shaped ice patterns were spotted from a research plane earlier this month in Arctic sea ice, and even the top experts at NASA haven't been able to figure out what caused them. "We saw these sorta-circular features only for a few minutes today," mission scientist John Sonntag wrote from the field. "I don't recall seeing this sort of thing elsewhere." Check out the circles [HERE](#).

**Who Is Actually Protecting Our Nation:** The United States ended the draft for military service in 1973, transitioning to the all-volunteer force that exists today. At the time, the active component of the military comprised 2.2 million men and women. Now, this group comprises just under 1.29 million, or less than 0.5 percent of the U.S. population. Who are they? Where are they from? Check out the details [HERE](#).

**Unintentional Art:** An unfortunate accident on US-231 North one mile south of the William Natcher Bridge in Kentucky, did have a silver lining...an instant aluminum sculpture. Thankfully, the driver only suffered minor scratches but the chemical reaction from the molten Aluminum mixing with the air did produce some interesting art.







### **Palm Trees Keep Moving North**

I suspect not many of you wouldn't expect to find palm trees unless you are in warm, sunny and southern climates, but from what I'm told, anywhere that the average temperature of the coldest month is above 36, a palm tree can realistically survive. With temperatures increasing across various regions, we are seeing many plant and animal species migrate farther north. Traditionally, we think of the Caribbean or Hawaii when we picture palm trees in our mind but amazingly, some of the over 2,500 species are hardy enough to grow in locations that regularly get snowfall. In a new study published in Nature's Scientific Reports, researchers determined that certain species of palms could survive in spots previously thought uninhabitable. For instance, take Norfolk, Virginia and Greenville, North Carolina. As recently as the 1980s, these cities were too cold to permit palms to survive without a hefty amount of human assistance. Now, they've breached that climate border and research suggests palms could survive there now. Interestingly, we hear about "climate borders" moving as we speak to producers across the northern regions. Many tell us the calendar has moved a month back from 30 years ago. Keep in mind that beyond just average temperatures, there are other factors involved should you decide to plant a palm, such as the presence of cultivars and the amount of competition with the natural vegetation. It's worth noting that should you decide to plant a palm - the first year is critical for the survival of your tree. If the seedlings make it through their first winter, it stands a good chance of survival. David Greenwood, a paleobotanist from Brandon University who also worked on the study, said the authors wanted to see how cold some palms could go. Greenwood told Earther that the Chinese windmill palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) is especially cold hardy, and is commonly cultivated for this reason. Windmill palms have recently been found in the forests of southern Switzerland—the foothills of the Alps—after one such decorative palm escaped and spread "simply because frost is not as prevalent as it used to be," according to the study. I suspect we will take another look at adding some "tropical" scheme to our landscape plans this year so we can have that Florida feel year round. (Source: Earther)



### **Worst "Passwords"**

Each year we run a story about the worst passwords. Inconceivably, "password" has been one of the worst passwords to have. In fact, "password" had the top spot for many years. The worst password this year is "123456". However, don't be sad for "password" has only dropped one spot to number 2. SplashData, a password management application, puts out a list of the worst, most insecure passwords one can set each year. SplashData gives a couple tips if you are having trouble choosing strong passwords. Use passwords of eight characters or more with mixed types of characters. But even passwords with common substitutions like "dr4mat1c" can be vulnerable to attackers' increasingly sophisticated technology, and random combinations like "j%7K&yPx\$" can be difficult to remember. One way to create more secure passwords that are easy to recall is to use passphrases — short words with spaces or other characters separating them. It's best to use random words rather than common phrases. Its most recent list of the 25 most common passwords includes the following:

1. 123456
2. password
3. 12345678
4. qwerty

5. 12345
6. 123456789
7. letmein
8. 1234567
9. football
10. iloveyou
11. admin
12. welcome
13. monkey
14. login
15. abc123
16. starwars
17. 123123
18. dragon
19. passw0rd
20. master
21. hello
22. freedom
23. whatever
24. qazwsx
25. trustno1





## HOW FAST CAN A HACKER'S COMPUTER GUESS YOUR PASSWORD?



6 lowercase letters:  
**10 MINUTES**



7 lowercase and  
uppercase letters:  
**23 DAYS**



8 lowercase,  
uppercase, numbers,  
and symbols:  
**463 YEARS**

### Best QB Class Since Elway, Marino And Kelly...2018 NFL Draft

The 2018 NFL draft will kickoff Thursday, April 26th in Arlington, Texas. For the first time ever, the draft will take place inside an NFL stadium. The space will be transformed to engage fans of all ages participating in interactive exhibits, games, virtual reality experiences and player autograph sessions. I suspect with Jerry Jones' involvement, the event will not disappoint. This year's draft will certainly have a spotlight on the quarterbacks. Most experts think the QB class will be the best in recent years. It could play out with six signal-callers selected in the first round, which hasn't happened since the 1983 class, that included Elway, Marino, and Kelly. There are still a lot of moving pieces and things change rapidly, but here are some thoughts as to what you might see unfolding over the three crazy days known as the NFL Draft.

- **The Cleveland Browns Picks** - *The Brown's history of first round picks is a story in itself, but this year it may be hard to mess it up. The Browns have two of the first four picks and three second-round picks. This in itself could provide some early draft fireworks by selecting a QB or two... to take the reigns of the 0-16 bottom dwellers. There is talk the Browns like Sam Darnold of USC but the Wyoming QB Josh Allen is in the top spot for most teams. It seems definite the Browns choose a QB but will it be with the first or fourth pick? If they feel the QB's are equal maybe they trade the number one spot, still get a quality QB and save the cash. This is the first time since 2000 that a team has two of the top five picks. When you have draft picks like these it can change the future of the entire franchise if executed properly. Bottom line the Browns have the best draft capital in 25 years now let's see what they can do with it.*
- **Quarterback Bonanza** - *This is a QB heavy class that will have four high first-round picks, possibly the first four picks, with some analysts saying we may see six picked in the first round. The "Big Four" QB's include Wyoming's Josh Allen, USC's Sam Darnold, Oklahoma's Baker Mayfield and UCLA's Josh Rosen. Two others with the top tier guys are Louisville's Lamar Jackson and Oklahoma State's Mason Rudolph. Here's a closer look at the top four:*

> **Sam Darnold, USC** - *My top pick thanks to his performance at his pro days and I believe he has the big time experience playing at USC. Darnold's pro day was highly anticipated because he was the only top quarterback prospect that chose not to throw at the NFL Scouting Combine. Darnold has a big frame, which the scouts love, at 6-foot-3, 221-pound. He seems to have the internal clock in his head to throw the ball or scramble to make positive yardage.*

> **Josh Allen, Wyoming** - *At almost six foot five inches, he physically fits the role but does not seem to have the high profile wins on his resume that would push him to the top spot. The questions of playing at a lesser Division I school is downplayed to some degree after last years Carson Wentz success story. Unlike Wentz, Allen's record against quality Division I schools is not as impressive and his individual stats show less than 50% completion rating in those games.*

> **Baker Mayfield, Oklahoma** - *The 2017 Heisman Trophy winner, looks to be headed to the Jets with the third pick overall. Many analysts feel Mayfield has improved his draft stock more than anyone else this spring, moving up from a second-day pick. Mayfield has*

more intangibles than the other top quarterbacks and he has stated that he always plays with a chip on his shoulder. Mayfield is just under 6'1" and 220 pounds, which may be holding him back a little but most scouts have been impressed with his athleticism.

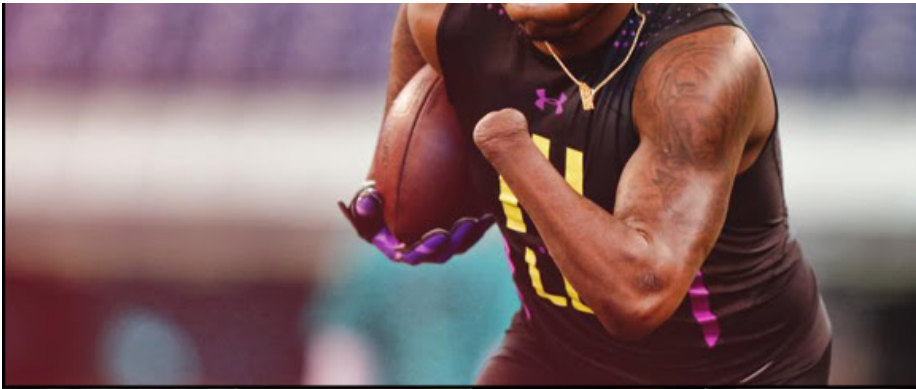
> **Josh Rosen, UCLA** - Rosen could be the odd man out and slide lower. Most scouts are questioning his durability being 6'4", 226 pounds, which he has added extra weight after being injured and missing most of last season due to a shoulder injury. Insiders say the kid is tougher than most have given him credit for.

- **A Look Back At The 1983 QB Draft** - The 1983 draft may have been the best quarterback class ever. Prior to the draft, no one knew the implications that would shape franchises, fan bases, and cities ever since those decisions. Here in Kansas City, because of its shortcomings in that draft, the Chiefs had not taken a first round signal caller, until last year, drafting Patrick Mahomes. The league seems to be struggling to pick between the prospects in this year's class, though, as much as the coaches and executives of 1983, who struggled to separate the wheat from the chaff until well after the fact. Elway was the No.1 pick, but the Chiefs still managed to draft Todd Blackledge seven picks before Jim Kelly. Blackledge threw 29 career touchdowns. Kelly topped 29 in 1991 alone. Tony Eason was taken one pick after Kelly and 12 picks before Dan Marino, who would post the greatest passing season in league history later in his career.
- **The Edge Rule** - In the NFL if you can put pressure on the quarterback without blitzing good things will happen. That usually begins with a strong, quick DE that has great hands and footwork. Bradley Chubb, North Carolina, 6'4" and 269 pounds, looks to be that guy in this year's draft. He leaves the Wolfpack as the record holder in sacks (26) and tackles for loss (53), surpassing former No.1 overall pick Mario Williams in both categories. Arden Key, from LSU may be the most talented pass-rusher in the class, yet professional organizations are more worried about his durability and off-field issues.
- **The Running backs** - You can expect a running back will be the next offensive player picked after the QB's. The top running back taken this year should be Saquon Barkley, Penn State, who has used his speed and size to be mentioned as one of the best backs in the Nittany Lions history. Barkley capped off his final college game with a 175-yard and two-touchdown performance in the Fiesta Bowl. Derrius Guice, LSU is not at the level of Barkley but has proven himself in the SEC and looks to be the second back to be taken. All teams are looking for who will be the Kareem Hunt of this year's class, who the Kansas City Chiefs stole in the third round last year.
- **Wide Receivers** - It looks to be a two-horse race for the top spot between underclassmen Calvin Ridley, Alabama and Courtland Sutton, SMU. Sutton is a big strong receiver that has a tendency to receive the ball at its high point out reaching defenders. His quickness and large frame have him projected as an instant deep threat in the NFL. Ridley ran one of the fastest 40 times at this year's NFL Scouting Combine but struggled in other drills. Ridley's weight at 180 pounds could be a durability concern for most scouts. Texas A&M's Christian Kirk a big bodied, great hands guy that has the first-round potential. Most think there may be only one WR selected in the first round.
- **Delusion Of The Draft** - No team has really outperformed any other through the years of the draft. Many like to think all the time spent in their "warrooms" have given them an edge but it is much like trading, where anyone who says they're sure that any of these prospects is going to turn into a star or a mistake is kidding themselves. The best teams in the league have succeeded by amassing extra picks through compensatory selections and by trading down, which has worked well for the Patriots under Bill Belichick.
- **The Guys On An Island** - In last year's draft there were 30 cornerbacks drafted and this year's group could surpass that number. In this deep group, there are two guys that stand out the most, Alabama's Minkah Fitzpatrick and Ohio State's Denzel Ward viewed as the draft's best pure cover corner. Most scouts think that Fitzpatrick can play any position in the defensive backfield, making him a possible top-five pick. Ward is compared to the teammate from last year, Marshon Lattimore, who was the 11th overall pick and dominated as an NFL rookie.
- **In The Trenches** - In last year's NFL draft there were only 33 offensive linemen that came off the board, which was the lowest total in the previous 50 years. This year's draft will again be limited for quality offensive linemen but the number one guard may be the best in the last 15 years. Notre Dame's Quenton Nelson, 6'5", 330-pound, is that guy. He is the total package when it comes to linemen and many analysts believe if he had played the tackle position, he could be the top pick in the draft. Georgia's Isaiah Wynn, 6'2", 302 pounds, is battle tested and talent to be selected in the first round.
- **"Against All Odds" Maybe The Best Story Of The Draft** - If you have not heard about Shaquem Griffin, the University of Central Florida linebacker with one hand, you will see him in attendance at the draft this year. At the combine, Griffin went from a relative unknown, feel-good story into a national sensation and a player teams may covet. He used a prosthetic hand to help put up 20 reps in the bench press and then clocked a time of 4.38 seconds in the 40-yard dash, the

fastest of any linebacker in the history of the combine. Regardless of when his name gets called or where he ends up, it will be the culmination of a lifelong dream for Griffin, who had always been overshadowed by his brother, Shaquill, now a cornerback for the Seattle Seahawks. "I'll be very emotional," Griffin said. "I'll cry a lot. My mom will cry even more, so there's gonna be a lot of crying going on."

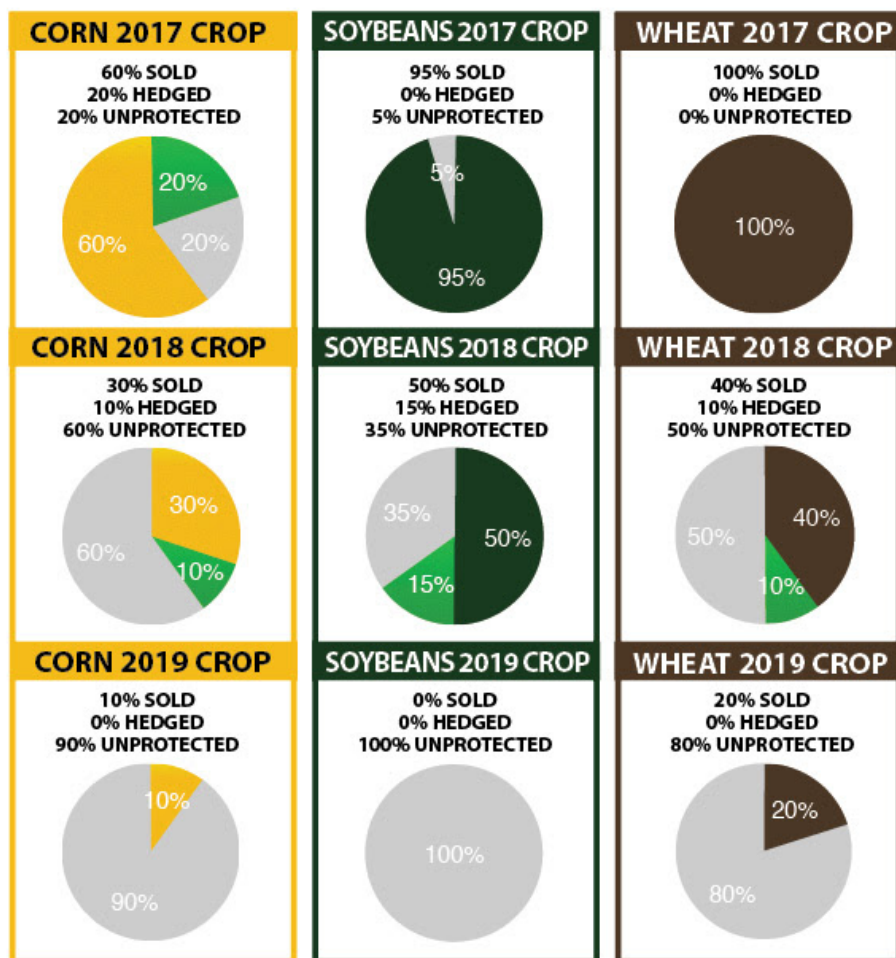






**ANSWER to riddle:** A coat of paint.

**CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS**



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