

GOOD MORNING: 05/11/18 Farm Direction - VanTrump Report

2 messages

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Fri, May 11, 2018 at 6:58 AM



"Stay afraid, but do it anyway. What's important is the action. You don't have to wait to be confident. Just do it and eventually the confidence will follow." – **Carrie Fisher**

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018
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Morning Summary: Stocks are trying to build on recent gains. The Dow is up about +1,000 points in the past five trading sessions. For what it's worth, this is the stock markets longest winning stretch since mid-February. In fact, if the Dow closes higher again today it will equal its longest string of advances since early-October. One of the big reasons for the recent bump back to the upside, is that inflationary data appears to be more tame than many had forecast. The 10-year has stayed sub-3% and several recent reports are showing lower than expected consumer prices and less than expected gains in hourly earnings. We are also continuing to see extremely strong U.S. corporate earnings. To this point, about 90% of the S&P 500 companies have reported their Q1 earnings. Of those who have reported, about 80% have beat the analyst estimates. I am also hearing more talk that perhaps earnings haven't peaked as of yet and Q2 results could be equally as good if not better than Q1? There's also more talk about robust U.S. employment. There's also improved geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and North Korea. It was just a few months back President Trump was tweeting about "Little Rocket Man", now we have talks of a possible denuclearization and a scheduled summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore on June 12th. Should it take place, it would be the first direct discussion ever between a US president and a North Korean leader. It also feels like the market dialed back it's worries about a trade conflict between the U.S. and China. I'm certainly not saying the hurdles are all behind us, but the market doesn't seem as fearful or concerned about a full-blown trade war. In fact, as of late there seems to be more reports suggesting that some optimism was forming around the possibility of China and Washington soon taking steps to resolve their differences. Keep in mind, a Chinese political leader is coming in town next week to continue trade talks. One headwind I am paying close attention to is rising energy costs. I've seen several reports as of late talking about the very real possibility of \$90 and \$100 crude oil in 2019. There's talk that a strengthening global economy could add 1.5 million barrels a day to demand, while more problems with Iran and Venezuela could keep global supply fairly tight. As for next week, the traditional economic reports will be fairly light in nature. We will also be finishing up the last of U.S Q1 earnings. Meaning the talking heads in the media, might be searching for things to take about...

NAFTA Talks... House Speaker Paul Ryan has set a May 17 deadline for the Trump administration to submit a new NAFTA deal if it wants lawmakers to vote on the revised pact this year. "We have to have the paper, not just an agreement," he added. A spokeswoman clarified he was referring to a notification of intent to sign the trade accord, not necessarily the full text. (SeekingAlpha)

What If You Would Have Invested \$100 With Warren? It was in May of 1965, Warren Buffett took control of an ailing textile company named Berkshire Hathaway when it's shares were valued at \$19 each. If you'd been able to throw \$100 into Berkshire stock in 1965, you would have been sitting on a cool \$2.4 million by the end of 2017. That same \$100 in the S&P 500 would've turned into about \$15,600, according to The Wall Street Journal, which described the period as "probably the longest and greatest margin of outperformance any investment manager has ever generated." (Source: MarketWatch; Wall Street Journal)

What Has Happened To The Volatility? The Cboe Volatility Index (VIX) is on track for its fifth straight weekly decline, its longest such stretch since August



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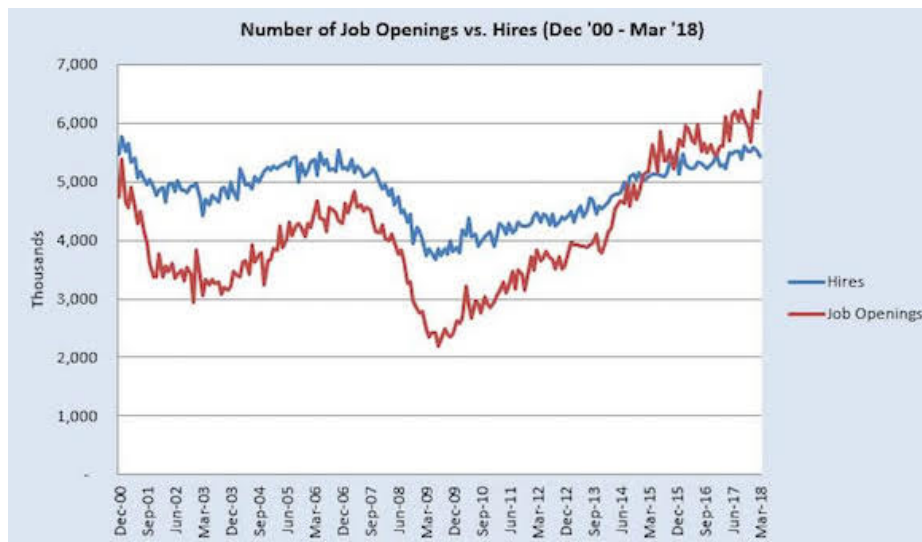


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Today In History

2016. Historically, the VIX's average value is between 19 and 20, meaning that the current level of around 13 is extremely low by historical standards. Earlier this week, the VIX closed below its 200-day moving average for the first time since mid-January. In fact, it's down more than -55% during the past three months.

Very Interesting Jobs Data - The number of job openings in March jumped by +472,000 to a record high of 6.55 million, up over +16% compared to last year. The problem is the number of people that actually got hired was only 5.43 million. Consequently, job openings continue to exceed the number of people starting new jobs, which has been an unusual development over the past few years compared to JOLTS' full history. For example, from December 2000 (when the data was first collected) to July 2014, there were more hires than job openings during every single month. In fact, the difference between hires and job openings averaged about 1 million during that time frame. For most months since 2014, the reverse has been true with job openings outnumbering hires by an average of 323,000. In March, this gap reached a record of 1.13 million in favor of job openings over hiring. Very Interesting data... (Source: DataTrek)



1934, Dust Bowl - A massive storm sends millions of tons of topsoil flying from across the parched Great Plains region of the United States as far east as

New York, Boston and Atlanta. At the time the Great Plains were settled in the mid-1800s, the land was covered by prairie grass, which held moisture in the earth and kept most of the soil from blowing away even during dry spells. By the early 20th century, however, farmers had plowed under much of the grass to create fields. The U.S. entry into World War I in 1917 caused a great need for wheat, and farms began to push their fields to the limit, plowing under more and more grassland with the newly invented tractor. The plowing continued after the war, when the introduction of even more powerful gasoline tractors sped up the process. During the 1920s, wheat production increased by 300 percent, causing a glut in the market by 1931. That year, a severe drought spread across the region. As crops died, wind began to carry dust from the over-plowed and over-grazed lands. The number of dust storms reported jumped from 14 in 1932 to 28 in 1933. The following year, the storms decreased in frequency but increased in intensity, culminating in the most severe storm yet in May 1934. Over a period of two days, high-level winds caught and carried some 350 million tons of silt all the way from the northern Great Plains to the eastern seaboard. According to The New York Times, dust "lodged itself in the eyes and throats of weeping and coughing New Yorkers," and even ships some 300 miles offshore saw dust collect on their decks. Another massive storm on April 15, 1935-known as "Black Sunday"-brought even more attention to the desperate situation in the Great Plains region, which reporter Robert Geiger called the "Dust Bowl." That year, as part of its New Deal program, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration began to enforce federal regulation of farming methods, including crop rotation, grass-seeding and new plowing methods. This worked to a point, reducing dust storms by up to 65 percent, but only the end of the drought in the fall of 1939 would truly bring relief.



1947 - The B.F. Goodrich Company of Akron, Ohio, announces it has developed a tubeless tire, a technological innovation that would make automobiles safer and more efficient.

Pneumatic tires-or tires filled with pressurized air-were used on motor vehicles beginning in the late 1800s, when the French rubber manufacturer Michelin & Cie became the first company to develop them. For the first 60 years of their use, pneumatic tires generally relied on an inner tube containing the compressed air and an outer casing that protected the tube and provided traction. The disadvantage of this design was that if the inner tube failed-which was always a risk due to excess heat generated by friction between the tube and the tire

neuro mining

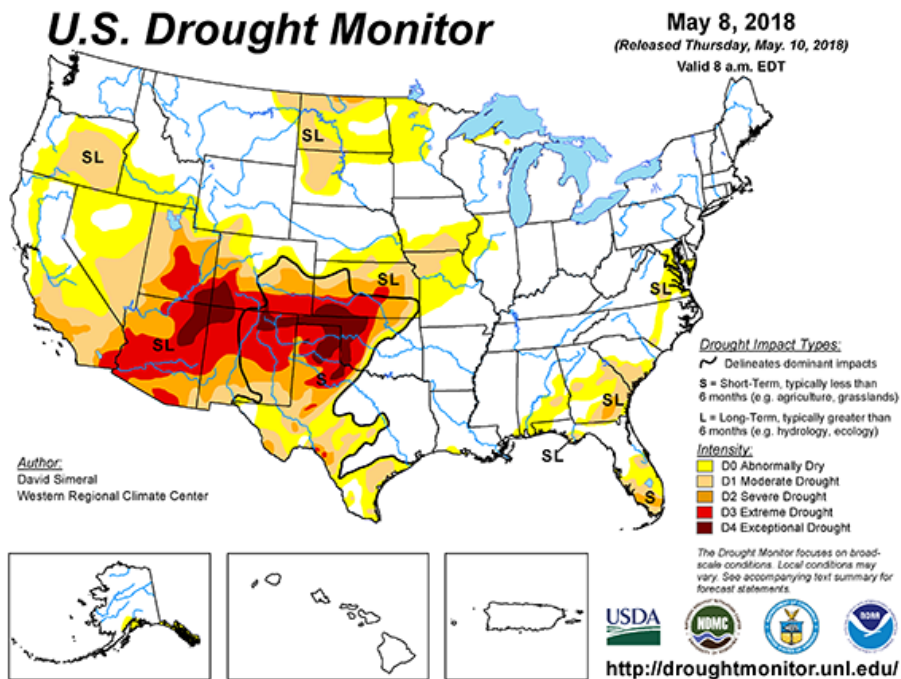
As we age, it gets harder and harder to create new neural pathways in the brain. It's the reason kids find it so easy to learn new things, but as adults it often gets more difficult. Doing brain teasers and solving riddles can be an important part of keeping our brain healthy. The more connections we 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: I can be cracked. I can be made. I can be told. I can be played. What am I?

Weather in the Corn Belt - rain showers in the vicinity of a cold front are ending across the lower Great Lakes region. Markedly cooler weather prevails across the northern Corn Belt, where planting progress remains behind schedule. On May 6, just 9% of Minnesota's corn had been planted, compared to the 5 year average of 44%. On the Plains, cooler weather and rain prevailed yesterday across Montana and the Dakotas. In contrast, warm, breezy weather has caused further deterioration of rangeland, pasture, and winter wheat conditions on the southern Plains. The southern Plains' drought is also causing some spring planting delays. In the South, warm, mostly dry weather favors a rapid pace of planting, as well as winter wheat maturation and summer crop emergence and growth. On May 6, pastures were rated at least 60% good to excellent in six Southeastern States, led by South Carolina (86% good to excellent)

and Alabama (85%). Cool air will expand to encompass much of the northern and western U.S. during the next few days. However, early season warmth will continue across the South. During the weekend and early next week, above normal temperatures will return across the Northwest and eventually expand across the remainder of the northern U.S. Meanwhile periods of rain will continue across the northern U.S. during the next several days, with 1 to 2 inch totals expected in a broad area stretching from the Rockies into the Northeast. In contrast, little or no rain will fall across the southern one-third of the U.S., excluding southern Florida.

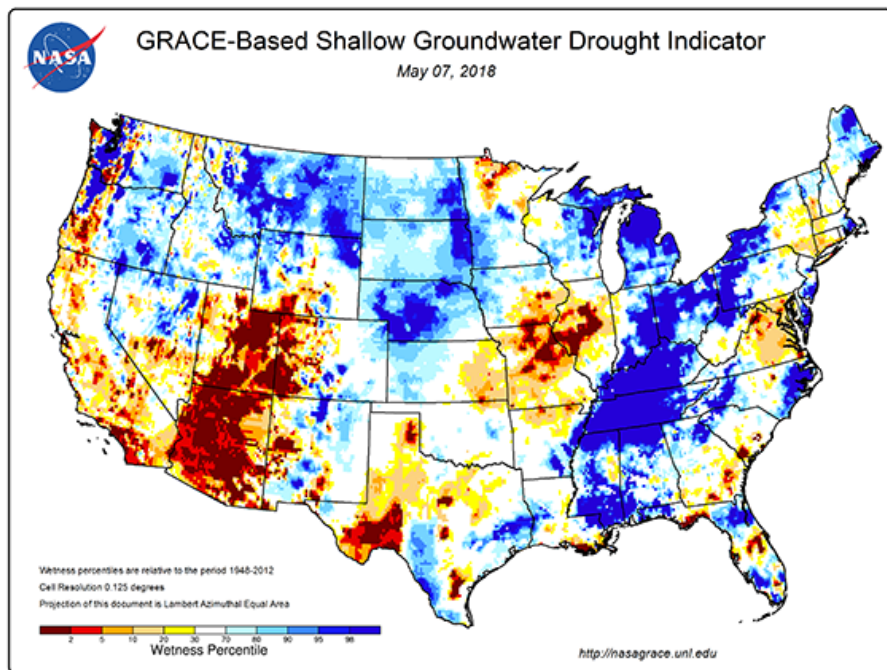
Corn Belt Sees Drought Expand: *In northeastern Iowa and southern Wisconsin, 3 to 5 inches of rain fell this week helping to improve soil moisture and streamflow conditions. This caused Abnormally Dry and Moderate Drought in these areas to be reduced in response to this rainfall. However, areas of Abnormally Dry were introduced to portions of Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri where rainfall has been below normal during the past 60 days - with areas of below normal surface and root zone soil moisture appearing on the latest satellite-based NASA GRACE-based drought products. Now we haven't run this kind of drought map yet as it's fairly new, but this map shows groundwater and soil moisture drought by week. They are based on terrestrial water storage observations from satellite data with warm colors meaning dryer than normal, and bluer colors meaning wetter than normal.*



wall—the tire would blow out immediately, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle. The culmination of more than three years of engineering, Goodrich's tubeless tire effectively eliminated the inner tube, trapping the pressurized air within the tire walls themselves. By reinforcing those walls, the company claimed, they were able to combine the puncture-sealing features of inner tubes with an improved ease of riding, high resistance to bruising and superior retention of air pressure. While Goodrich awaited approval from the U.S. Patent Office, the tubeless tires underwent high-speed road testing, were put in service on a fleet of taxis and were used by Ohio state police cars and a number of privately owned passenger cars. The testing proved successful, and in 1952, Goodrich won patents for the tire's various features. Within three years, the tubeless tire came standard on most new automobiles. The radial-ply tire, a tubeless model with walls made of alternating layers—also called plies—of tough rubber cord, was created by Michelin later that decade and is now considered the standard for automobiles in all developed countries.



1949 - The body of Leon Besnard is exhumed in Loudun, France, by authorities searching for evidence of poison. For years, local residents had been suspicious of his wife Marie, as they watched nearly her entire family die untimely and mysterious deaths. Law enforcement officials finally began investigating Marie after the death of her mother earlier in the year. Marie married Leon in August 1929. The couple resented the fact that they lived relatively modestly while their families were so well off. When two of Leon's great aunts perished unexpectedly, most of their money was left to Leon's parents. Consequently, the Besnards invited Leon's parents to live with them. Shortly after moving in, Leon's father died, ostensibly from eating a bad mushroom. Three months later, his widow also died and neighbors began chatting about a Besnard family jinx. The inheritance was split between Leon and his sister, Lucie. Not so surprisingly, the newly rich Lucie died shortly thereafter, supposedly taking her own life. Becoming increasingly greedy, the Besnards began looking outside the family for their next victim. They took in the Rivets as boarders, who, under the Besnards' care, also died abruptly. No one was too surprised when the Rivets' will indicated Marie as the sole beneficiary. Pauline and Virginie Lallerone, cousins of the Besnards, were next in line. When Pauline died, Marie explained that she had mistakenly eaten a bowl of lye. Apparently, her sister Virginie didn't learn her lesson about carelessness, because when she died a week later, Marie told everyone that she too had inadvertently eaten lye. When Marie fell in love with another man in 1947, Leon fell victim to her poisoning as well. Traces of arsenic were found in his exhumed body, as well



Corn bulls are happy to see 2018/19 global corn stocks reduced by -35.8 million tons from a year ago, and if realized would be the lowest since 2012/13. Talk is China has been chewing through more of their domestic supply than many in the trade had estimated. At the same time global demand was pushed +2% higher. Unfortunately, 2018/19 U.S. exports are forecast to decline -125 million bushels compared to exports in 2017/18. The theory seems to be, reduced exports out of Argentina and Brazil during 2017/18 will boost U.S. exports during the first half of the 2018/19 marketing year, but a nearly +265 million bushel increase in the combined corn exports for Ukraine and Russia in 2018/19 will likely increase competition for the U.S., reducing the forecasted U.S. share of global corn trade from the previous year. In fact, the USDA has Ukraine exports jumping higher by around +20%. The good news is, despite a lowered export estimate the U.S., total U.S. ending stocks in 2018/19 are forecast to be down -500 million bushels from last year to just below 1.7 billion bushels. The USDA's new-crop production forecast totaled 14.040 billion bushels. Total acres planted in 2018/19 are forecast at 88.0 million vs. 90.2 in 17/18. Acres harvested in 18/19 are forecast at 80.7 million vs. 82.7 million in 17/18. The yield is forecast at 174.0 in 2018/19 vs. 176.6 in 2017/18. Demand for "Feed & Residual" was forecast at 5.375 billion in 18/19 vs. 5.500 billion in 17/18. Not real sure I agree with that one, but it is what it is. Corn used for ethanol was forecast at 5.625 billion in 18/19 vs. 5.575 billion in 17/18. Net-net, the season-average farm price is projected at \$3.30 to \$4.30 per bushel, up +40 cents at the midpoint compared to 2017/18. Despite the lack of recent price action, I remain a longer-term conservative bull.

as in the rest of her family's corpses. But Marie didn't let a little bit of pesky evidence get in her way. She managed to get a mistrial twice after trace evidence was lost while conducting the tests for poison each time. By her third trial, there wasn't much physical evidence left. On December 12, 1961, Marie Besnard was acquitted. The "Queen of Poisoners," as the French called her, ended up getting away with 13 murders.

Upcoming Events

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

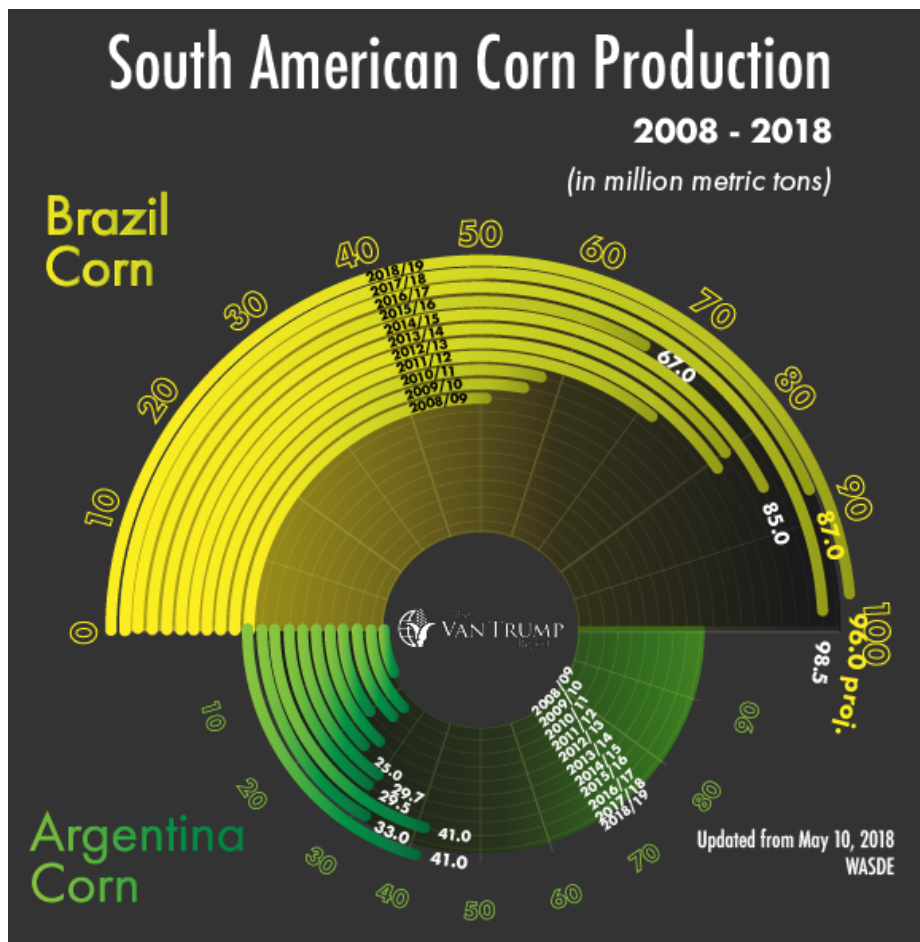
Thurs. 6/28 - Quarterly Hogs and Pigs

Fri. 6/29 - Quarterly Stocks and Acreage

Kevin's Song of the Week



Kevin's Song of the Week



Soybean bulls are happy to see the USDA's new-crop U.S. ending stock estimate lower than anticipated at 415 million bushels. The bears however are questioning the large increase in exports and the smaller acreage estimate. The trade is already having a hard time swallowing the 2017/18 export estimate being north of +2.0 billion bushels, especially with Chinese buyers currently sourcing beans from places outside the U.S. Also keep in mind we still have over +400 million bushels of "sold" but "unshipped" old-crop bushels that need to find a home. The USDA also has 2018/19 Chinese imports forecast +6 MMTs higher with a large portion of that coming from the U.S. Bears are also pointing to the fact South American production actually jumped higher in the USDA report, with Argentine production being lowered by just -1 MMTs, while the Brazilian crop was raised by +2 MMTs to a fresh new record 117 MMTs. Here at home, U.S. new-crop production was forecast at 4.280 billion bushels on 89.0 million planted acres vs. 90.1 million planted in 17/18. The new-crop yield is forecast at 48.5 bushels per acre vs. 49.1 bushels in 17/18. New-crop demand was raised higher for both crush and exports. 2018/19 crush was forecast last at 1.995 billion vs. 1.990 billion in 17/18. Exports in 2018/19 are forecast at 2.290 billion vs. 2.065 billion in 17/18. The Average Farm Price for 18/19 is higher on the top end ranging from \$8.75 to \$11.25 per bushel. As both a producer and a spec, I still believe the lack of available supply out of Argentina will ultimately come back home to roost. Meaning, eventually we see the Chinese or other global buyers come to the U.S. for a wave of supply. If we see any wide-spread production hiccups here in the U.S., prices could push significantly higher, but right now those cards are still buried somewhere in the deck...stay tuned!

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!

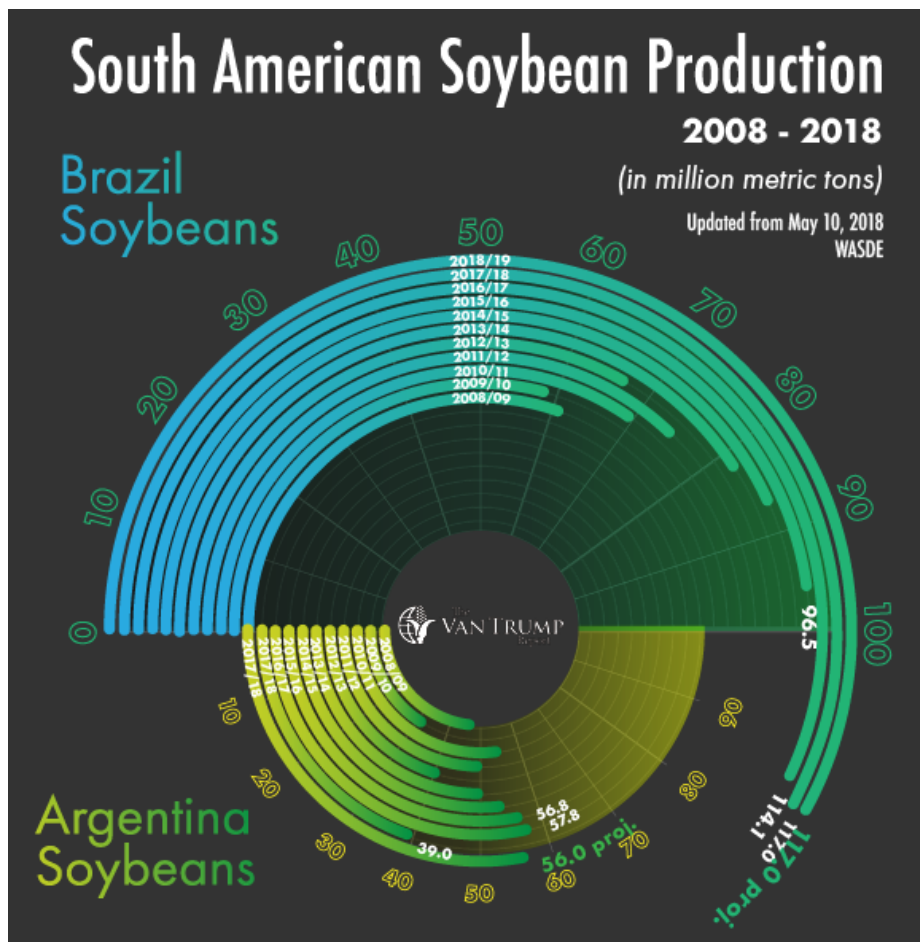
Kevin Van Trump

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



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..."

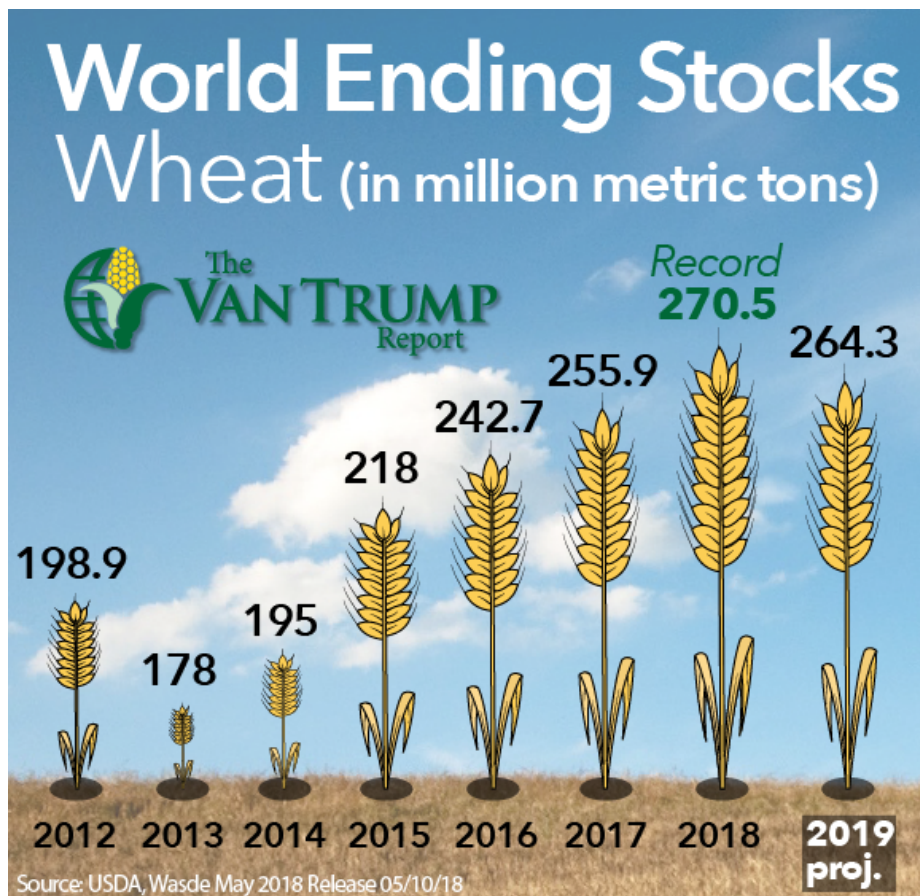
"The markets ability to remain irrational can often times last much longer than your ability to remain solvent..."

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.

Wheat bulls are happy to see the USDA forecasting the smallest winter wheat crop in 16 years. Unfortunately, the 2018/19 total U.S. wheat crop is projected at 1.821 billion bushels, up +5% from the prior year. Interestingly, the all wheat yield is projected at 46.8 bushels per acre, up slightly from 2017/18. Winter wheat yields are obviously below average in the drought affected states of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Also there's going to be a large number of "abandoned acres" which probably end up not counting against yield as they will be zeroed out. From what I understand, both Texas and Oklahoma could actually see a record number of "abandoned" winter wheat acres, Texas perhaps 66% abandoned, Oklahoma 53% abandoned, Colorado 8% and Kansas 5% abandoned. Good news is, the USDA's season-average farm price is projected at a range of \$4.50 to \$5.50 per bushel. The midpoint of this range is up +30 cents per bushel from the previous year and the highest since 2014/15. From a global perspective, wheat production is projected at 747.8 million tons, down -10.6 million from the previous year's record. Most of the year-over-year production decline stems from a -13.0 million ton reduction for Russia. Many bears say the USDA, almost always as of late, have underestimated the Russian crop. Global wheat consumption is projected at a record 753.9 million tons, up +10.1 million from 2017/18. With total use rising faster than supplies, global ending stocks are projected to decline -6.1 million tons to 264.3 million. As both a producer and a spec, I continue to like the thought of reducing more long-term price risk on the weather related rallies. I know the USDA is forecasting increased domestic use and increased exports in 2018/19 but it's just hard for me to get my hands around that until I see more production problems for Russia, Ukraine and portions of Europe.



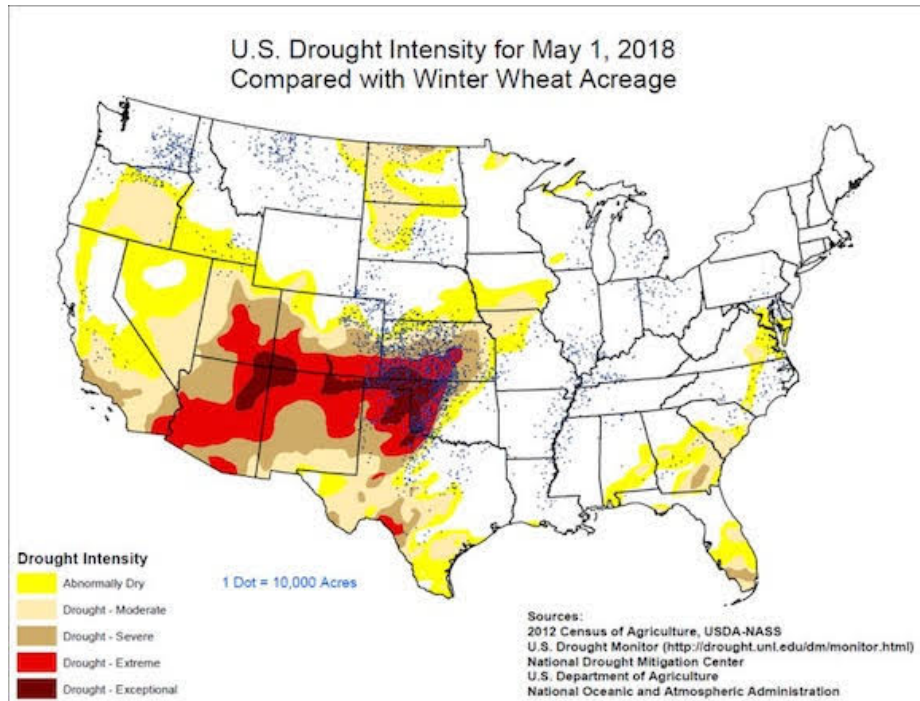
Farm Direction
RECIPES

★ **FAMILY FAVORITES** ★
-SENT IN BY OUR READERS-

Strawberry Shortcake No-Bake Icebox Cake

CLICK TO SEE RECIPE

Interesting Graphic From the USDA... Showing U.S. winter wheat acres in drought areas. The dots equal 10,000 acres. Can certainly understand the "abandoned" acres.



> Ethanol's Discount to Gasoline Widest in Nearly Four Years: The United States exported nearly 1.4 billion gallons of fuel ethanol in 2017, surpassing the previous record of 1.2 billion gallons set in 2011. U.S. imports of ethanol in 2017 increased compared with 2016 but remained relatively small at 77 million gallons, resulting in the United States being a net exporter of ethanol for the eighth consecutive year. Fuel ethanol exports to Brazil increased for the fourth consecutive year, reaching 450 million gallons in 2017 and accounting for nearly one-third of all U.S. fuel ethanol exports. Canada remained the second-leading destination of U.S. fuel ethanol, receiving nearly 330 million gallons in 2017, 5 percent higher than the level exported in 2016. China was the third-leading destination for U.S. fuel ethanol in 2016, but U.S. exports to China fell by 88 percent in 2017, largely because of China's increase in the tariff on U.S. fuel ethanol from 5 percent to 30 percent at the start of 2017. The discount between ethanol futures and gasoline futures reached its widest gap in nearly four years on Wednesday as gasoline prices continued to rally and ethanol prices nudged lower. The last time the discount of ethanol futures to gasoline futures topped 70 cents was Oct. 8, 2014, when it was at 72.8 cts/gal. (Source: [EthanolProducer](#))

> Debating India Wheat Forecast? Wheat production estimate has been raised higher to 95 million metric tons (MMT) on reports of higher yield realization in northern India. On April 16, 2018, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) released its first long-range forecast predicting normal 2018 southwest monsoon (June-September) rainfall. Personally, I've heard a few weather guru's who are saying the monsoon is going to be anything but normal. It will be interesting to see how it plays out...

> Chinese Imports To Shrink: The ministry of agriculture in its monthly supply and demand report on Thursday said that, despite consumption increasing 0.6% to 111.2 million mt, the volume of imports would fall for the first time in a decade from 0.3% to 95.65 million mt. Production would increase from 14.6 million mt last year to 15.27 million mt as China encourages its farmers to diversify planting away from corn and into soybean by encouraging crop rotation and through direct payments. (Source: [Agricensus](#))

> Apples Aluminum Play: Today Apple says it's partnering with the aluminum producer Alcoa and the smelting tech company Rio Tinto to develop a new way of producing aluminum that releases oxygen, not carbon dioxide. The three companies, along with the governments of Canada and Quebec are investing a combined \$144 million in the R&D, which is being done near Alcoa's headquarters in Pittsburgh. Apple's share is \$10.1 million. The governments are investing about \$47 million. You can read more [HERE](#).

> Break The Eggs And The Myth: Eating up to 12 eggs a week does not increase cardiovascular risk, even for those with type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes, according to University of Sydney researchers. Published in the American Journal for Clinical Nutrition, the study found no difference in risk markers among those who ate two eggs or fewer a week and those who ate a dozen. (Source: [fooddive](#))

> Gold-Dusted Chicken Wings Are Coming: The Ainsworth, a New York eatery, is now serving what they are calling "Foodgod 24 Karat Wings" in two of its Manhattan locations. These are chicken wings marinated in a combination of coconut butter, gold butter, chipotle, and honey batter for 24 hours, then sprinkled with real gold flakes. The 24 Karat wings come in order of 10 for \$30 or 20 for \$60. Big spenders can get an order of 50 wings with a bottle of Champagne Armand de Brignac for a casual \$1,000. (Source: [NY Daily News](#))

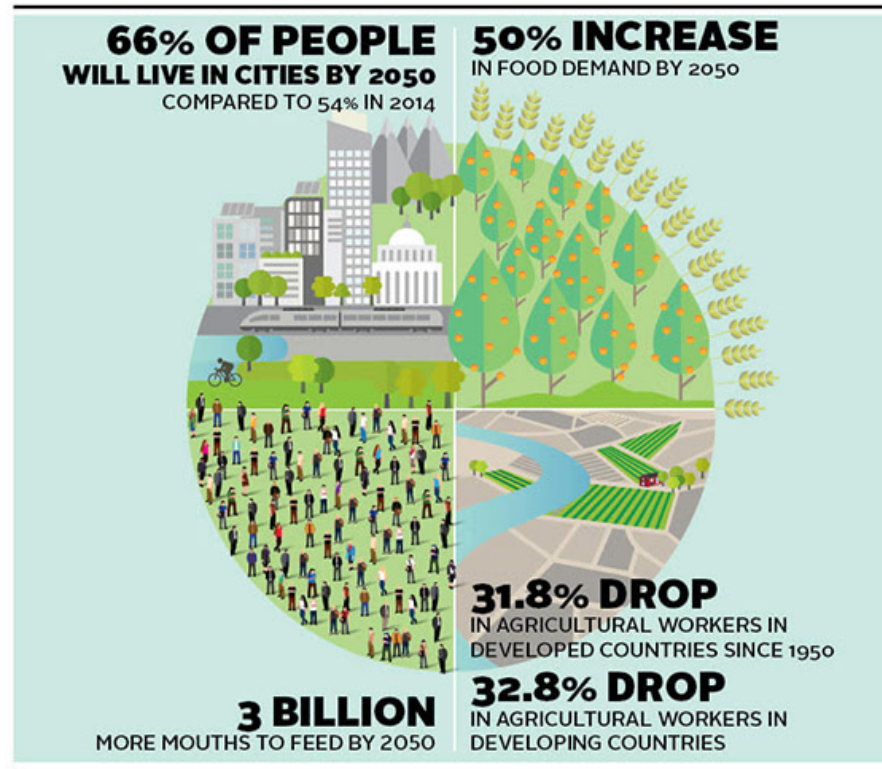
> Whose Paying The Bills? Total consumer credit rose 5.1% in the first quarter, compared to a year earlier, or by \$184 billion, to \$3.824 trillion (not seasonally adjusted), according to the Federal Reserve. This includes credit-card debt, auto loans, and student loans, but not mortgage-related debt. That 5.1% year-over-year increase isn't setting any records - in 2011, year-over-year increases ran over 11%. But it does show that Americans are dealing with the economy and their joys and woes the American way: by piling on debt faster than the overall economy is growing. Read more [HERE](#).

> The Reusable Rocket: Elon Musk has made his next bold statement, the latest configuration of his rocket - the Falcon 9 Block 5 - is designed to fly as many as 10 times without any scheduled maintenance, and ultimately could be refurbished and blast off at least 100 times. The strategy would cut the price of orbital launches to around \$5M, from about \$50M currently. SpaceX (SPACE) is set to launch the latest rocket for the first time this afternoon. (Source: [Wall Street Breakfast](#))

> Is Your Farming Operation Ready? According to many studies we see as of late, by 2050, population growth will lead to a 50% increase in demand for food, studies show, making improved technology in farming a necessity. Analytics and automation technology are major areas, according to a new paper co-authored by Stanford professors. You can read more from Stanford Business [HERE](#).

CONFLATING TRENDS

SEVERAL TRENDS ARE PUSHING AG-TECH FORWARD



SOURCE: FAO



FROM THE FIELD

Western Indiana - We have been fortunate the past few weeks to miss the rains that have really slowed guys down in this region. We are farther along than we thought we would have been having about 75% of our corn in the ground and about 60% of the beans planted. We decided to roll the planters a little earlier than some but the dirt was fit. We hope to stay ahead of schedule and get things done before the rains that are supposed to be here next week. We are all no-till and there is decent moisture but the guys that have done any tillage are on the dry side. I think that this the smoothest we have had in probably six years. We are heavy into cover crops and we have had to manage those differently this year but very happy with the results. Most guys are very optimistic here as corn prices have risen over the past month.

Northeast Louisiana - We finished planting one week ago and are looking at some knee-high corn. Some guys are still planting but it won't be long before they finish. We are all corn and beans this year. We have sat out of the rice market the last two years as things just haven't been good enough to pull us back into the game. A lot of folks don't realize exactly how much work is involved in rice production. We had average crops last year with corn at 180bpa and beans at low 70'sbpa. We have a little corn left to market, wishing we would have sold more in March. Basis in our area for corn is around +22 right now. Right now we are just prepping for some irrigation work.

Central Ohio - Crops went in quick this year once the weather turned. I even heard that one farmer was able to get his four thousand acres in the ground in just 8 days. The corn is up around here and looks great. Production was good here last year but we need to move some beans from the elevators here. It's been a long time since we've seen so many beans sitting around this late in the years. We have some elevators say they have only unloaded a very small percentage of their inventories. Usually by this time our bins are needing stock. Basis in our area now is near -.17 under.

CROSSING WIRES

A place to share intelligent thoughts...

Can Siri Be Fooled? Researchers at UC Berkeley have shown they can embed within songs stealthy commands for popular voice assistants that can prompt platforms like Siri, Alexa or Google Assistant to carry out actions without humans getting wise. The research, reported earlier by The New York Times, is a more actionable evolution of something security researchers have been showing great interest in — fooling Siri. Read more [HERE](#).

Tell The Kids To Start Now: If you have \$100 to spare each month, you may want to consider investing it instead of spending it immediately. Later down the road, your frugality will be rewarded with a nice chunk of cash that you can use when you retire. Start investing today and a \$60,000 investment could turn into a nest egg of \$522,000 in 50 years, according to an analysis by The Motley Fool, a financial services company. Even if you don't have half a century to wait, a \$12,000 investment will grow an extra \$5700 over the course of 10 years, netting you \$17,700. Not a bad return for just \$100 a month. Read more [HERE](#).

Hopeful About The "Happiness" Curve: The midlife doldrums are real. But fear not; they don't last forever. Take it from Jonathan Rauch, a journalist and author who has systematically studied every bit of research on happiness across the life course. The results of his quest are the subject of his smart new book, "The Happiness Curve, Why Life Gets Better After 50." See what Rauch has learned about The Happiness Curve [HERE](#)

How In The World Is That Possible... One of the world's most famous buildings, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, has survived everything from four powerful earthquakes to two world wars. But how in the world has it not fallen down. Engineers may have solved the mystery of how the building has managed to survive, undamaged, for centuries. Ironically, the reason the tower is tilted is also why it survived so long. Find out the answer [HERE](#).

Costly Commute: In a perfect example of how tech companies are making the cities they take up residence in unaffordable, this burned out home in San Jose, CA has sold for far more than its original listing price of \$800,000. The fire-ravaged shack and its 5,8000 square foot lot happens to be very close to the proposed site of the \$67 million Google Village lots and has sold for \$938,000. It shows that buyers are trading money for time as they value living close to their employment. In fact, buying the home may ultimately end up being a good investment given that the median price for a house in the area is around \$1.4 million.



New Study On How Much Food Is Wasted... Interesting Data!

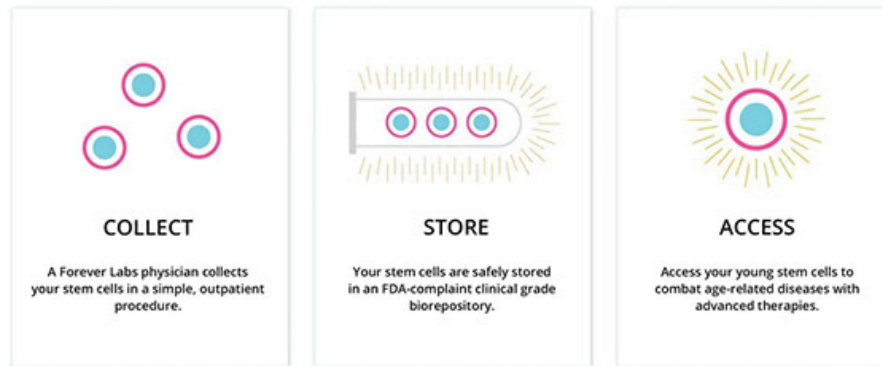
This one makes you think a bit. A new study published in the journal [PLOS ONE](#) puts a number on how much food Americans waste every year and suggests that it has large environmental consequences. The new data suggests that the average American wastes about one pound of food per day. That totals about 25% of all food by weight available for consumption in the U.S. -- or about 30% of all available calories. That number just

seems crazy to me. They go a bit further and propose that the cost of this waste is estimated to be equivalent to about 30 million acres of cropland, using 4.2 trillion gallons of water and nearly 2 billion pounds of fertilizer. The new research is based on a large-scale survey and cross-referenced with other federal data sets then amplified by modeling tools, so as to determine how much food we waste and how much environmental input that translates to. You can find the full study [HERE](#). Some are saying there's a possibility that the amount of total food waste could actually be larger than the researchers calculated, as the study focused only on waste by "consumers at home" or when "eating out". It did not take into account industrial or commercial waste. Interestingly, the research found the most wasted foods are actually from higher quality diets. Fruits and vegetable represented 39% of the food wasted per person. Dairy and beef were the second and third most wasted foods, respectively. As for why the food is wasted, for fruits and vegetables in particular it is often the perception they are flawed, or have gone bad. For other types of food, answers ranged from too large of portion sizes to confusion about expiration dates. Of course, the "why" is always going to be difficult to answer. However, it is clear that food waste is becoming a more important question with the government and the media. With so many people pointing fingers at the producers and people at the beginning of the food supply chain, studies like this help show the consumers also have a lot to work on... (Source: PlosOne)



Forever Labs Wants To Bank Our Immortality

Science will one day add measurable years to our lives. Forever Labs, is a "longevity company" in Ann Arbor, Michigan that has invested millions making that very bet. Founded three years ago by Dr. Mark Katakowski, the company is noted for being the first to not only collect, but also store adult stem cells. From what I can gather, it seems like the smart play is for a 20, 30 or 40 year old to have their stem-cells extracted and stored for use at a later date. The thought is if you have your younger stem-cells stored and available they might just save your life and add many more years. Forever Labs is hoping that scientist will develop therapies that will combat age-related diseases, and yes perhaps aging itself. Remember, our stem cells are what replenish our blood, bone, immune system as well as other vital body systems. Meaning, by having access to our cells before they get polluted, altered or changed by age, we have a much better chance of battling future ailments. The procedure of injecting genetically matched younger stem cells is already finding huge success in trials with mice, as results show a significant increase in the lifespan of the aged mice. Keep in mind, such attempts are not inexpensive as of yet. Forever Labs charges \$7,000 for the procedure as well as providing lifetime storage. If you are intrigued, and it's hard not to be, it is recommended to harvest stem cells as a young adult, though I'm told even your 60-year-old stem cells will help you when you are 70s or 80s. Extracting the stem cells is a minimally invasive out-patient procedure performed with local anesthetic. The entire procedure takes about 15 minutes, with most clients report a fleeting (5-10) second pressure-like sensation upon withdrawal. It is worth noting that there are hundreds of registered clinical trials using stem cells for treatments of ailments including heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, Alzheimer's, and more, all giving hope that future answers may truly extend life. You can learn more [HERE](#). (Source: CNBC, Forever Labs)



Storing your young stem cells can ensure they remain undamaged even as the years pass.



Happy Mothers Day!

Don't forget...Mothers Day is this Sunday. As most of you know, my Mom passed away back in 2000. Even though she is no longer with us, not a day goes by that her memories and life lessons don't pop into my head. I can still hear her voice loud and clear, see her giant smile when Michelle and I would come back home and feel the hugs and kisses when we would leave. I can hear her words of encouragement when she knew I was struggling or needed that little pick-me up. I can hear her voice of reason when I started getting a little ornery or pushing the limits. There is no debating, our Mom's will always hold a special place in all our hearts. Those of you lucky enough to still have your Mom, give her an extra long hug this weekend. I'm not saying I have any regrets, because I had an awesome relationship with my Mom... but what I wouldn't give for just one more Mother's Day celebration together. I remember hearing Bryant Gumble once say he would exchanged the last five years of his life to just play one more round of golf with his Dad. I hate to point out the obvious, but just remember there is an "expiration date" on life and all the small little details we often take for granted need to be relished in. I know my Mom would be proud of all the grandchildren's accomplishments and the families both my sister and my wife and I have built. The only advice I can give is never take "time" for granted. Unfortunately in this life many of us never know what we have until we lose it. "Love you Mom, miss you a bunch." I wish all Mom's out there a happy Mothers Day!

Interesting Mother's Day Facts

Moms & Babies: *There are approximately 2 billion mothers in the world, with 4 babies born each second.*

Most Children: *The world's most prolific mother was a Russian lady, Mrs. Vassilyev, who had 69 children in 27 pregnancies. She had no single births, but multiple sets of twins, triplets and quadruplets. And it seems 67 of those kids survived past infancy.*

Oldest to Youngest: *Elizabeth Ann Buttle is the mother who holds the record for the longest interval between the birth of two children. She gave birth to Belinda on May 19, 1956 and Joseph on November 20, 1997. The babies were born 41 years 185 days apart. She was 60 years old when her son Joseph was born.*

Flowers: *Bet you didn't know that almost 70% of gifts given are in the form of flowers. In fact 13% of moms actually buy themselves flowers for the occasion. People now spend close to \$2.0 billion on flowers each Mothers Day.*

Cards: *There are 133 million cards exchanged annually, according to Hallmark, making it the third-largest card-sending holiday in the U.S.*

Phone Calls: *More phone calls are made on Mother's Day than any other day of the year. These holiday chats with Mom often cause phone traffic to spike by as much as 37 percent.*

A man stopped at a flower shop to order some flowers to be wired to his mother who lived two hundred miles away. As he got out of his car he noticed a young girl sitting on the curb sobbing.

He asked her what was wrong and she replied, "I wanted to buy a red rose for my mother.

But I only have seventy-five cents, and a rose costs two dollars."

The man smiled and said, "Come on in with me. I'll buy you a rose."

He bought the little girl her rose and ordered his own mother's flowers. As they were leaving he offered the girl a ride home.

She said, "Yes, please! You can take me to my mother."

She directed him to a cemetery, where she placed the rose on a freshly dug grave.

The man returned to the flower shop, canceled the wire order, picked up a bouquet and drove the two hundred miles to his mother's house.

Last Light by Stone Wallace

Mom loved sparklers. The way they lit up the night, the way they sizzled and danced like tiny stars falling from heaven.

She made sure to bring some along those summers our family spent together by the lake. We'd sit near the water's edge and wave our sparklers, writing our names in the air with a flourish.

Sparklers never lost their magic for Mom. She kept a box around even after we were grown, even after she was widowed for a second time and she moved into a senior citizens' residence.

We sat in beach chairs and watched the sunlight fade from the sky. Mom broke out a box of sparklers and lit one. The little starbursts chased the years from her face. I felt the reassurance I always did in my mother's presence—as if some of her unwavering faith had been transfused into me. Everything will be all right, I thought. No problem was too big for God's light. I was there with her one summer night, still hurting from my recent divorce. I didn't really say much at dinner, and Mom must have sensed my unhappiness. "Come on, Sweetie," she said. "Sit out on the balcony with me."

Eventually Mom's health failed. She was in and out of the hospital. One November evening I got a call from my sister Shelley. Mom was back in the hospital and had taken a turn for the worse.

But she seemed to be rallying by the time I got there. I figured I would let her rest. "I'll see you tomorrow, Mom," I said and kissed her on the forehead. I'd barely walked in the door at home when Shelley called again. Mom was gone.

After the funeral Shelley and I set to cleaning out Mom's apartment. We emptied the cabinets and closets, donated furniture to a thrift store. We put aside boxes of clothes and linens for the church rummage sale. Pots and pans and dishes we boxed up for our siblings. Then Shelley and I vacuumed and scrubbed every inch of that apartment. Mom would have wanted it that way.

Then we were done. There were only faint rectangles made of unfaded paint on the walls where pictures had hung, slight indents in the carpet where furniture had been. It was almost as if Mom had never lived there at all, and in that instant all the sadness I'd kept in check in the days following Mom's funeral welled up within me. She was gone.

"Let me check the kitchen one last time," Shelley said. I heard drawers and cabinet doors opening and closing. "Stone!" Shelley called.

I rushed into the kitchen. There on the bottom shelf of a cabinet that I had emptied and my sister had wiped completely clean was a thin silvery thing—one lone sparkler.

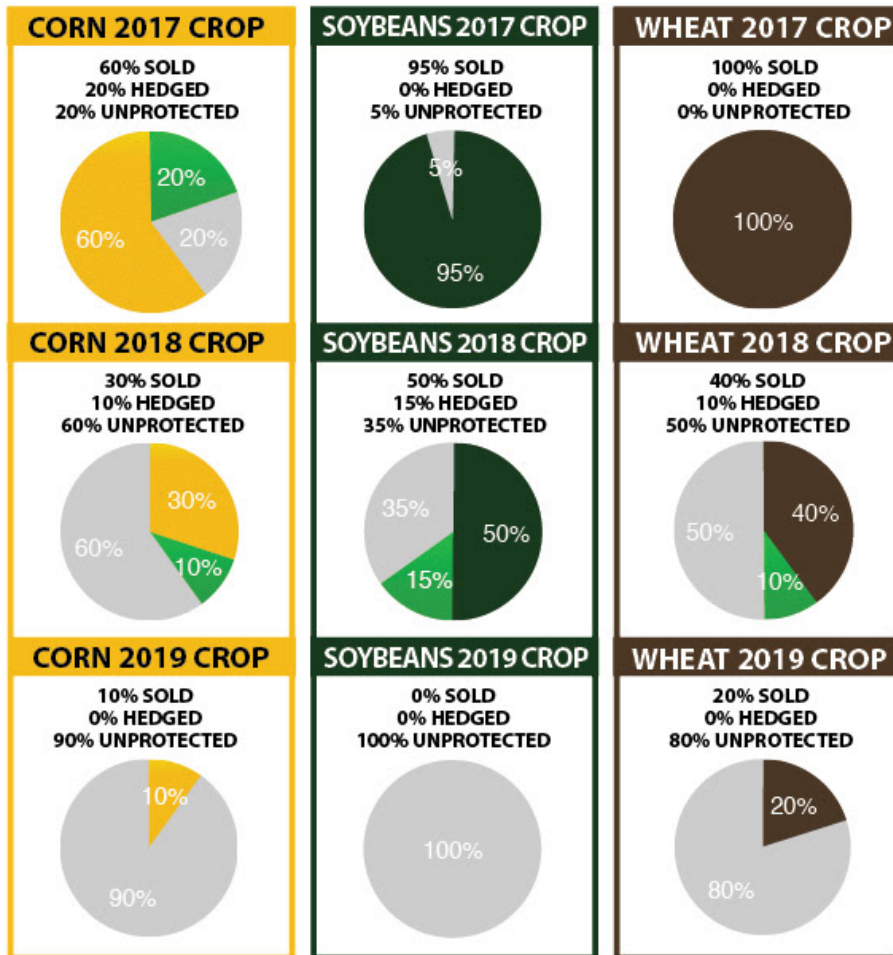
We took it out onto the balcony. I struck a match and lit the tip. The sparks sizzled and danced in the brisk air, and I felt warmed by their brilliance.

Warmed, most of all, by the faith my mother had given me. A little piece of heaven here on earth, like Mom's last sparkler.



ANSWER to riddle: A joke.

CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS



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