

GOOD MORNING: 12/21/18 Farm Direction - Van Trump Report

1 message

The Van Trump Report <reply@vantrumpreport-email.com>

Fri, Dec 21, 2018 at 7:31 AM

Reply-To: Jordan <reply-fec2157975600d7b-314_HTML-36250946-100003450-1@vantrumpreport-email.com>

To: info@farmdirection.com



"Those who have the privilege to know have the duty to act." — **Albert Einstein**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2018
[Printable Copy](#) or [Audio Version](#)

Morning Summary: Stock investors continue to debate if we are now in a full-blown bear market or just experiencing a massively sloppy correction? At one point yesterday, the Nasdaq was down over -20% from its most recent all-time high. I've heard some traders say this is the most negative sentiment they've seen in the market since the financial crisis. I continue to argue it's all perspective... if you are heavily invested in the market right now, then you are probably looking for relief or a way to get out and catch your breath. But if you have had good money on the sideline, you are probably looking for opportunity or stocks you can buy at a bargain. I'm personally still not seeing or hearing of investors stepping in and buying with both hands. In other words, those who are stepping in to buy seem extremely cautious with both their selection and quantity. I continue to argue, it's the "lack of buyers" in the marketplace, not necessarily the heavy bearish bets or direct selling pressure that is causing the slide. Bottom-line, it feels like there are tons of "air-pockets" in the market right now and some of the liquidity concerns are opening up windows where there are very few "buyers". Hence, the absence of "buyers" is allowing the market, at any given moment, to become easily overwhelmed with sell-side pressure. That's why we are catching the sudden drops in altitude... just very little fresh buying! Let's not forget, we also have end of year tax selling and pension fund rebalancing that can also be adding a great deal of uncertainty. Throw on top continued uncertainty surrounding U.S. and Chinese trade relations, Brexit, the U.S. Fed, Italy, conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, sanctions against Iran, a major fallout in Crude Oil, uncertainty with Saudi Arabia, and ongoing political drama in Washington. In case you missed yesterday's bomb, Secretary of Defense, General James "Mad Dog" Mattis announced his resignation. The four star General penned a letter of resignation that contained a couple of sentences which rattled up the market, Mattis said to President Trump, "Because you have the right to have a Secretary of Defense whose views are better aligned with yours on these and other subjects, I believe it is right for me to step down from my position." Mattis' resignation follows a decision by Trump this week to withdraw troops from Syria, something that members of Congress and the Pentagon have expressed opposition to. I should note, President Trump also announced he will be removing about half of our troops from Afghanistan. Mattis' upcoming departure also follows the recent announcement that Chief of Staff General John Kelly is leaving his post at the end of the month. The trade is also paying close attention to continued talk of a government shutdown. From what I understand, without a resolution between both parties, government funding for various departments will expire at midnight. I suspect this will further rattle the stock market and bring about more downside pressure. The economic calendar will start to get very light as we head into the Christmas and New Year holiday. Today, we will be digesting Durable Goods Orders and the latest revision to third quarter GDP. Many of the traders and large investors I know, will be squaring up positions and not returning to the markets until 2019. With even less liquidity next week, I suspect we could see some extreme swings. Our offices will be closed next week, but I will be sending out one last 2018 report on Monday morning. Have a great weekend and enjoy the chaos of that last minute Christmas shopping:)

Pinterest Going Public: *Pinterest Inc. is actively preparing for an IPO that could come as soon as April, according to people familiar with the company's plans, the latest in a line of tech companies ramping up plans to go public. The early word is that Pinterest could achieve a valuation in the public market at or in excess of \$12 billion. In September, Pinterest surpassed more than 250 million monthly active users, who visit the site to browse through billions of images on topics ranging*

SPECIAL Subscriber Pricing
3-DVD SET ONLY \$99



VTC18

The Conference Everyone Is Talking About



Learn insight and thoughts from some of the best and brightest in our industry, while sitting in the comfort of your own home or office.

[Learn More](#)







from living-room furniture to dinner recipes and tattoos. The company generates revenue from ads scattered across its site and is poised to generate revenue in excess of \$700 million this year, up 50% from the prior year. You can read more at [The Wall Street Journal](#)

Juul's 1,500 Employees are Getting a \$2 Billion Bonus from Altria: The tobacco giant Altria is paying Juul's employees a \$2 billion bonus, which averages about \$1.3 million for each employee. The bonus is being paid out as a special dividend as part of the \$12.8 billion investment Altria made in the e-cigarette maker. How much employees get depends on a number of factors including how long they've been with the company and how much stock they own. Juul's co-founders, James Monsees and Adam Bowen's fortunes are set to rise from an estimated \$730 million to more than \$1.36 billion from each of their 3.6% stake in the company after this deal, which makes them the first e-cigarette billionaires. Altria's 35% stake values Juul at \$38 billion, which makes the company more valuable than Airbnb and SpaceX.

Super Saturday Could Ring Up More Than Black Friday: The final Saturday before Christmas is known in the retail industry as "Super Saturday", which falls three days before Christmas this year. This will give shoppers a little more time to use the weekend for last-minute purchases. This year's Super Saturday is expected to be the second-busiest for traffic in stores this holiday season, trailing only Black Friday, according to retail tracking firm ShopperTrak. I've also read reports by retail advisory group Customer Growth Partners that are expecting retailers to ring up more sales on Super Saturday with \$26 billion compared to the \$24 billion spent this past Black Friday. Keep in mind, low gasoline prices across the U.S. are another factor expected to push more shoppers out of their houses this weekend for final store visits. If you waited till the last minute to pick up gifts this weekend, then get ready for some madness.

The Girls Making All Kinds of Great Cookies & Candy: I went downstairs and started to think "Willie Wonka" had moved in to my basement. My wife, daughter, sister, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, nieces, etc. where all over at the house making cookies and candy for the holidays. It's a fun family event for the girls, making homemade cookies and candy all day and night. Everybody brings their best game and cooks up three or four of their favorite cookie and or candy recipes. Every oven in the house is filled to the max as the girls make extra batches of each and every recipe. Once it's all done and a few bottles of wine and margaritas are drank, the treasures are divided up amongst the families participating, and we all end up with a ton of awesome cookies and candies around the house for the holidays. Just what I didn't need... I don't want to disappoint them or not respect their hard work and effort, so I guess I'll just have to fully participate in the consumption each night:) Great times, great family traditions!



If you have any troubles ordering the DVD's online please call our office at

(816) 322-5300

Today In History



1945, "Old Blood and Guts" dies - On this day, General George S. Patton, commander of the U.S. 3rd Army, dies from injuries suffered not in battle

but in a freak car accident. He was 60 years old. Descended from a long line of military men, Patton graduated from the West Point Military Academy in 1909. He represented the United States in the 1912 Olympics-as the first American participant in the pentathlon. He did not win a medal. He went on to serve in the Tank Corps during World War I, an experience that made Patton a dedicated proponent of tank warfare. During World War II, as commander of the U.S. 7th Army, he captured Palermo, Sicily, in 1943 by just such means. Patton's audacity became evident in 1944, when, during the Battle of the Bulge, he employed an unorthodox strategy that involved a 90-degree pivoting move of his 3rd Army forces, enabling him to speedily relieve the besieged Allied defenders of Bastogne, Belgium. Along the way, Patton's mouth proved as dangerous to his career as the Germans. When he berated and slapped a hospitalized soldier diagnosed with "shell shock," but whom Patton accused of "malingering," the press turned on him, and pressure was applied to cut him down to size. He might have found himself enjoying early retirement had not General Dwight Eisenhower and General George Marshall intervened on his behalf. After several months of inactivity, he was put back to work. And work he did-at the Battle of the Bulge, during which Patton once again succeeded in employing a complex and quick-witted strategy, turning the German thrust into Bastogne into an Allied counterthrust, driving the Germans east across the Rhine. In March 1945, Patton's army swept through southern Germany into Czechoslovakia—which he was stopped from capturing by the Allies, out of respect for the Soviets' postwar political plans for Eastern Europe. Patton had many gifts, but diplomacy was not one of them. After the war, while stationed in Germany, he criticized the process of denazification, the removal of former Nazi Party members from positions of political, administrative, and governmental power. His impolitic press statements questioning the policy caused Eisenhower to remove him as U.S. commander in Bavaria. He was transferred to the 15th Army Group, but in December of 1945 he suffered a broken neck in a car accident and died less than two weeks later.

FARM TANK

Tweets of the Day



Build My Christmas
@buildchristmas

Following

President Coolidge started the National Xmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on the White House lawn in 1923 #ChristmasFact



1985, Harry Chapin earns a #1 with "Cat's In The Cradle"

Harry Chapin earned a reputation as a politically conscious singer-songwriter who dedicated himself, in the years before his untimely death, to various noble causes, including wiping out world hunger. Indeed, his greatest legacy may stem more from his charitable efforts than from his music itself, but for a brief period in the early 1970s, Harry Chapin was a legitimate pop star. On this day in 1974, he earned his one and only #1 pop hit when his bittersweet story-song "Cat's In The Cradle" reached the top of the Billboard Hot 100. Before turning his attention to music at the relatively advanced age of 29, Harry Chapin pursued a career as a film director, earning an Oscar nomination for his 1968 boxing documentary, *Legendary Champions*. In 1971, he recruited a backing band via an ad in *The Village Voice* and recorded his first album. Released in 1972, *Heads & Tales* included what many fans regard as Chapin's signature song—"Taxi," a lushly produced, six-minute-plus story song about a San Francisco cab driver and a long-lost love he picks up as a fare. Despite its length, "Taxi" became a hit, reaching #24 on the Billboard pop chart in the spring of 1972. Chapin's second and third albums were nowhere near as successful as his first, and he'd turned his full-time attention to writing a Broadway show when his fourth album, *Verities & Balderdash*, unexpectedly became a smash hit on the strength of "Cat's In The Cradle," a tale of an absent father and an endless cycle of intergenerational dysfunction based on a poem written by Chapin's wife. "Cat's In The Cradle" was Chapin's last big hit, and though he retained a loyal fan base through the remainder of the 1970s, his work as a social activist during this period was far more significant than his work as a musician. Chapin is widely credited with spurring the creation of the President's Commission on World Hunger in 1977, and he shares indirect responsibility for one of the biggest music charity efforts of all time, USA for Africa, which was organized by Chapin's former manager, Ken Kragen. On the occasion of Chapin's posthumous award of the Congressional Gold Medal in 1987, Kragen, who also organized Hands Across America, credited Chapin as his inspiration: "All of our efforts with hunger and homelessness began with Harry," he said. Born December 7, 1942, in New York City, singer-songwriter Harry Chapin was killed in an auto accident on the Long Island Expressway on July 16, 1981.



1996, Curious George co-creator Margret Rey Dies -

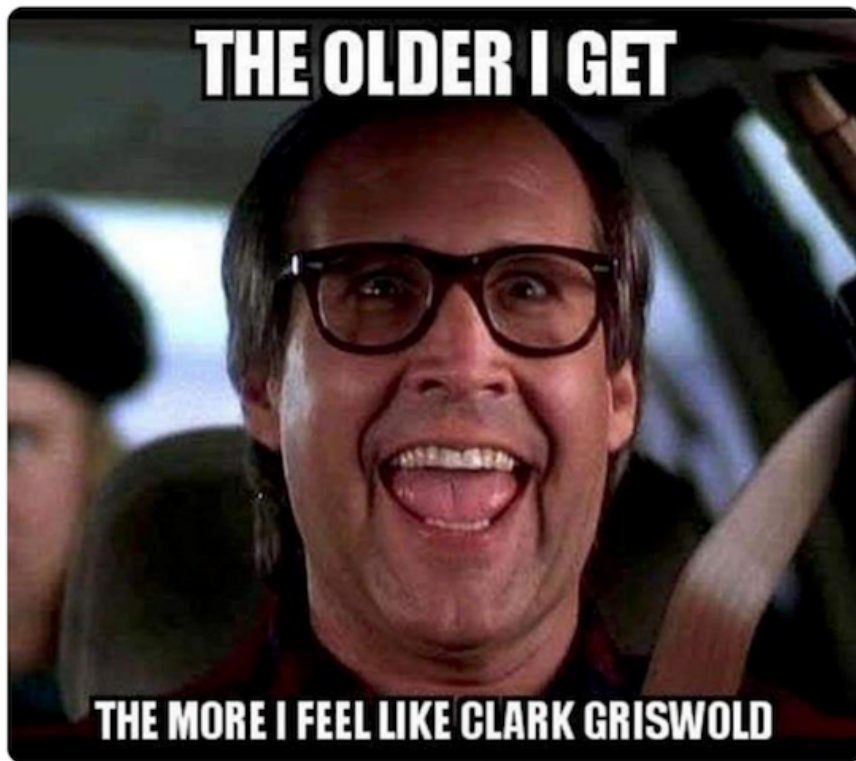
On this day in 1996, Margret Rey, who with her husband Hans created the popular "Curious George" children's books about a mischievous monkey, dies at age 90 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Reys, both German Jews, escaped wartime



† Luke Moody
@luketmoody

Following

This is more true every year
#ChristmasVacation



Europe in 1940 and fled to America. The following year, the first "Curious George" book was published in the United States. Margret Rey was born Margarete Waldstein in Hamburg, Germany, in May 1906. She studied art in her homeland then later moved to Rio de Janeiro and worked as a photographer. In Brazil, she became re-acquainted with Hans Rey (born Hans Reyersbach), a fellow Hamburg native who she had met as a child. The couple married in 1935 then relocated to Paris, France, where Hans was a newspaper cartoonist and Margret wrote advertising copy. In 1939, "Raffy and the Nine Monkeys," a children's book written and illustrated by Hans, was published in France (an English-language version of the book was titled "Cecily G. and the Nine Monkeys"). One of the monkeys in the book, who was always getting in trouble, served as the model for Curious George. As the Reys worked on the manuscript for what would become the first Curious George book, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party continued their rise to power in Europe. In June 1940, shortly before the Nazis entered Paris, Hans and Margret escaped the city on homemade bicycles, taking with them little more than a collection of their manuscripts. After traveling to Spain, Portugal and Brazil, the Reys sailed to New York late that same year. "Curious George" was published in 1941, and the Reys collaborated on six sequels, including "Curious George Takes a Job" (1947), "Curious George Flies a Kite" (1958) and "Curious George Goes to the Hospital" (1966). Hans illustrated the books while Margret did the writing. (Despite their partnership, Hans initially received sole credit on covers, as H.A. Rey, because the couple's publisher thought it would distinguish their books from the glut of female children's book authors at the time.) According to The Los Angeles Times: "Barely 5 feet tall and red-haired, Rey said she occasionally served as her artist husband's human model for their impish little monkey. She would scrunch up her face, move her limbs about or even leap from one piece of furniture to another." After Hans died in 1977, Margret went on to collaborate with Alan Shalleck on more than two dozen Curious George books as well as an animated TV show. When Margret died in December 1996, following complications from a heart attack, a new team continued to produce additional books in the series. Today, the Reys' creation remains a beloved character in children's literature. Curious George books have been translated into multiple languages, sold millions of copies and spawned a variety of merchandising deals.

Upcoming Events

Fri. 12/21 – Quarterly Cold Storage, Hogs and Pigs, Monthly Cattle on Feed, Personal Income



mike williams
@mislaphotoguy

Following

Morning drive. #commute
#mikewilliamsphotography
#canonphotography #highcountry
#MontanaMoment #missionvalley #ranchlife
#cattledrive



James Breakwell, Exploding Un... ✓
@XplodingUnicorn

Following

My pig knocked over the Christmas tree.
My wife is still upstairs taking a shower.
It's been nice knowing all of you.



Mon. 12/24 - Christmas Eve; Market Closes at Noon CST


Tues. 12/25 - Christmas Day; US Markets Closed

Fri. 12/28 - Export Sales

Kevin's Song of the Week

WHAT I'M LISTENING TO:



 **Alan Jackson**
"Let It Be Christmas"

Kevin's Song of the Week

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



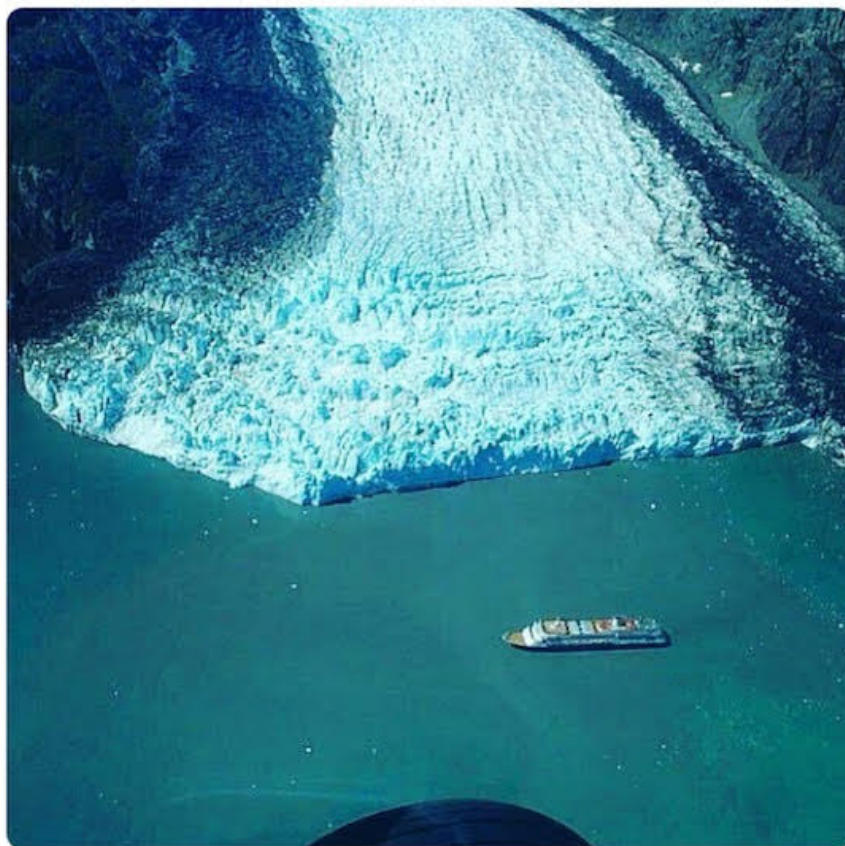
Natural Alaska Beauty

@beauty_alaska

Following

We're all about perspective @alaskanps !
Thanks for sharing such an amazing view!

To put things in #perspective, an #aerialview of a #cruiseship at Margerie Glacier Located in @glacierbaynps Margerie #glacier is a 21 mile long tidewater glacier. It i...
ift.tt/2Qxv3Gu



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.



Rock History In Pics
@RockHistoryPix

Following

Elvis Presley meets with Richard Nixon in the Oval Office on December 21, 1970



Darius Rucker ✓
@dariusrucker

Following

Now, this is one of my favorite shirts... It stands for the children who are fighting for their lives every day at [@StJude](#). Please join me in the movement and get your shirt here: thisshirtsaveslives.org



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.



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:

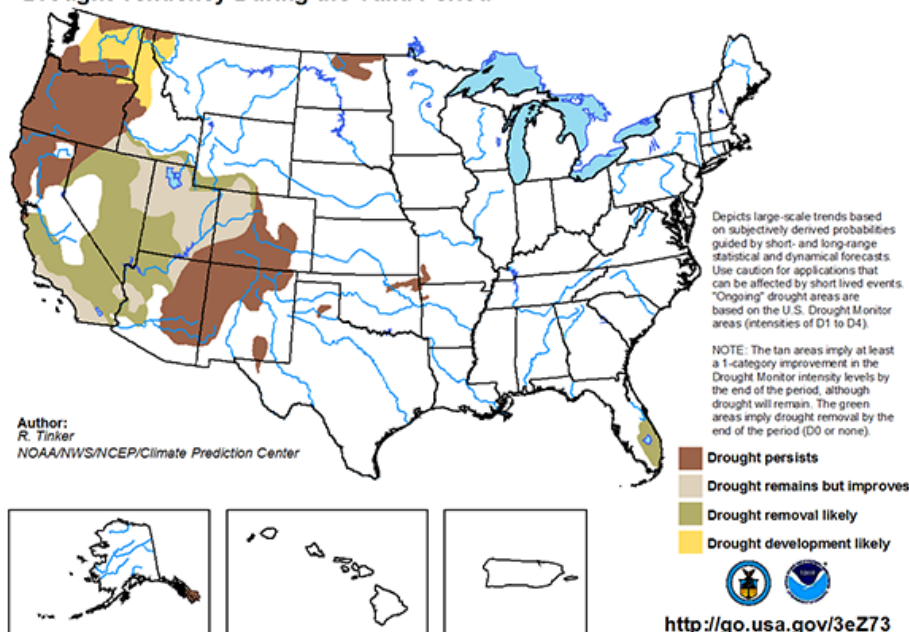
What does a snowman like to eat for breakfast?

Weather across the Corn Belt has seen patches of light rain fall over the last few days, with snow limited to the upper Great Lakes region. Muddy conditions remain a concern in some fields and feed lots due to excessive soil moisture and recent thawing of previously frozen soils. On the Plains, dry weather accompanies near or above normal temperatures. During the last couple of months, drier than normal weather has prevailed in a small area centered across northern and western Oklahoma, including portions of neighboring states, leading to concerns with respect to winter wheat that -- in some cases -- is suffering from poor establishment due to late planting and a protracted period of cold autumn weather. In the South, widespread rain has fallen, primarily east of the Mississippi River.

Drought To Persist Across Parts of Plains: *The three month outlook is favoring drought to persist in the Four Corners and High Plains, despite a three-month forecast favoring above normal precipitation. Given the extreme and long-term nature of the drought in this region, wetter than normal weather during a drier time of year won't be enough to bring notable improvement. Furthermore, patches of drought are expected to persist in the Plains. Having said all of that, there's little expectation for drought to start or expand across a large portion of the nation's mid-section.*

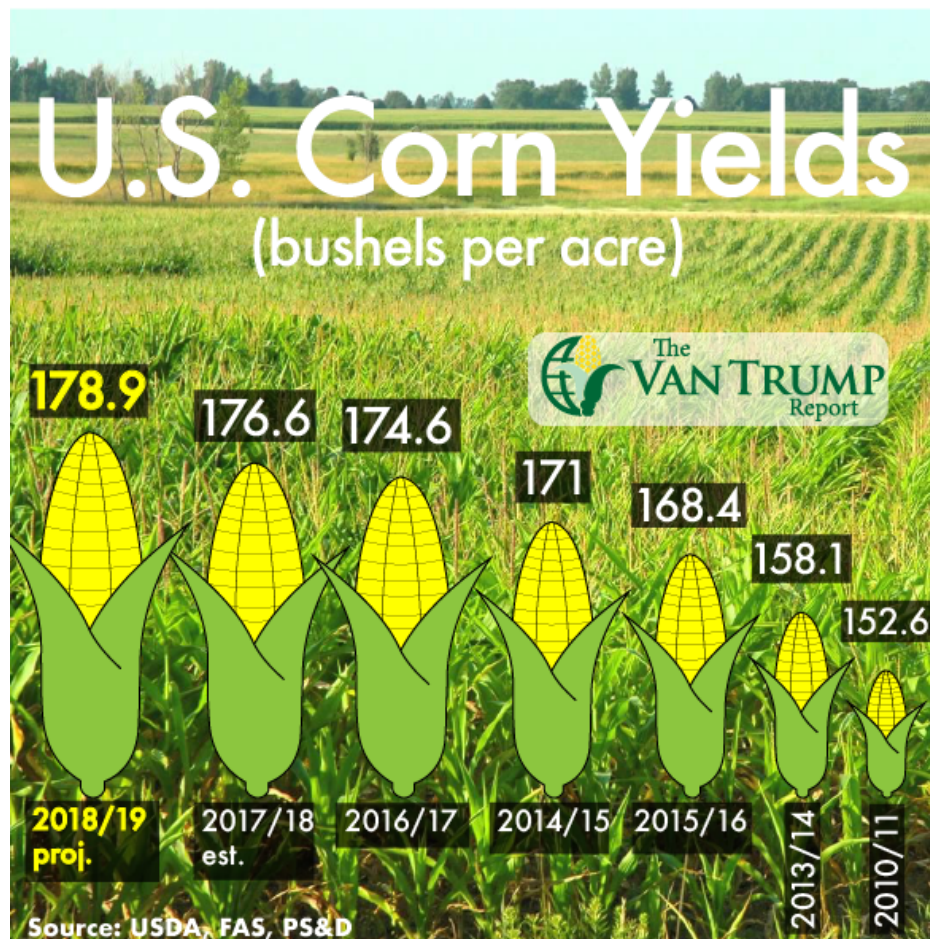
U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for December 20, 2018 - March 31, 2019
Released December 20, 2018



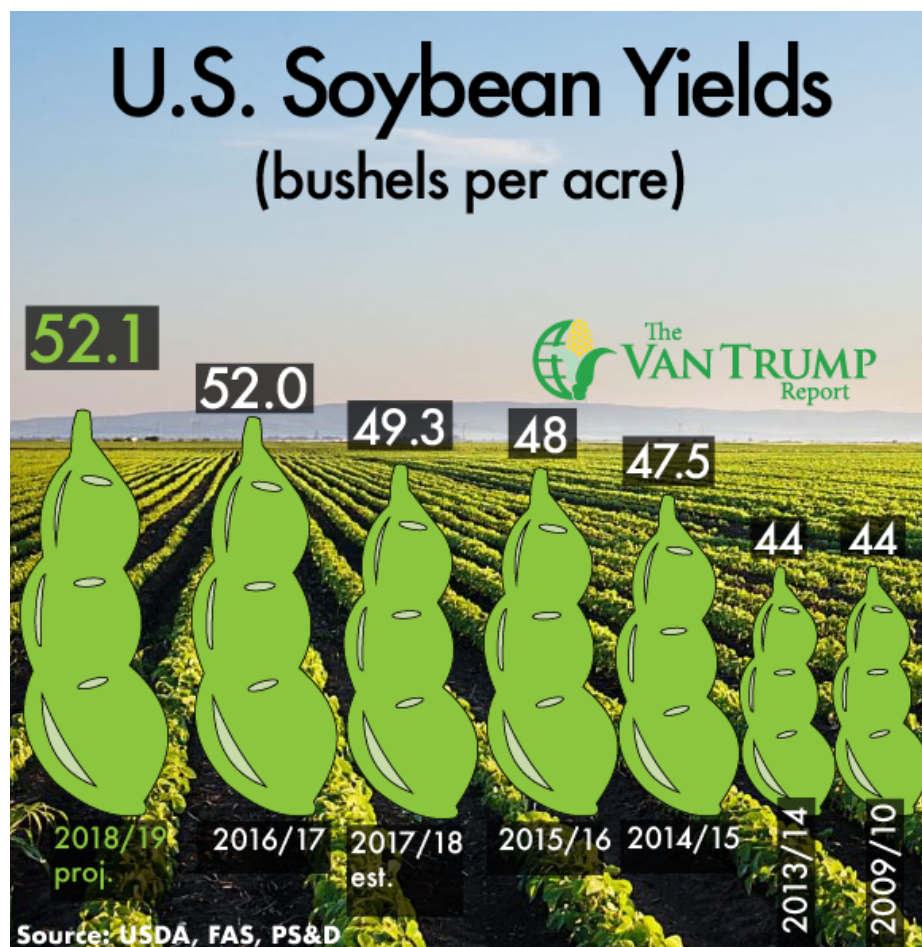
Corn bulls seem impatient as there's still nothing official in the way of Chinese buying U.S. corn, ethanol or DDGs. There also seems to be a bit less weather worry in the air as rains are scheduled to come to a few of the dry areas in Brazil and portions of South

Africa. It also feels like some of the wetter areas in Argentina are going to get some dryness. Net-net, no real significant weather story in play at the moment. Here at home, bulls seem a bit more nervous about the meltdown happening in the crude oil space, the slowdown in ethanol, and the increasing global export competition. There's still some talk that the USDA could further trim the U.S. yield to something nearer 178 bushels per acre, but the fear now is that total demand could also be trimmed and work to offset the production losses on the balance sheet. Bears argue, even if the Chinese step in and purchase between 2 and 4 MMTs of U.S. corn, there's going to be +20 to +25 MMTs more corn produced in South America in 2019. Tough to argue higher prices without fresh new bullish headlines... As a producer, I want to stay patient during this 90-day window with the Chinese. As a spec or end user, I like the thought of being a buyer in the MAR19 contract if we catch another -10 cent break in price. Stay patient!



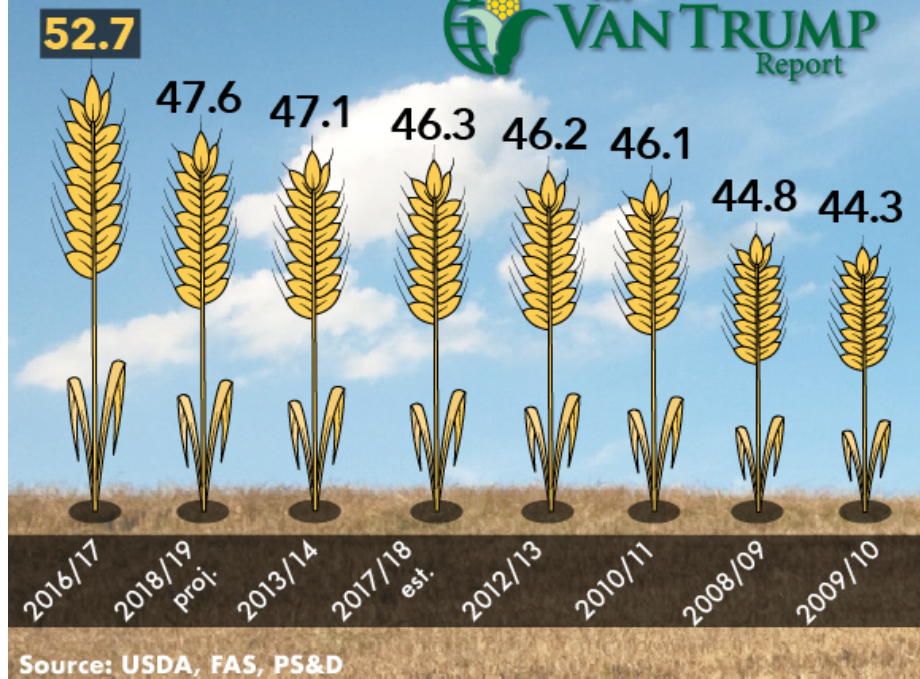
Soybean bulls continue to act disappointed by the announcements of Chinese purchases. As I pointed out earlier this week, bulls are getting themselves excited on the rumors of Chinese buying, then rally the market higher in hopes of a major purchase. Unfortunately, once they hear the official announcement from the USDA, the bulls seem unimpressed and the market sells off. In fact, prices of U.S. soybeans has fallen back to levels before the trade truce between U.S. president Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping was announced back at the first of the month. I've heard some technical bulls say we needed to "close the gap" left on the chart that occurred between Friday, November 30th and December 3rd. Remember, this was when the G20 meeting in Argentina took place, and when president Trump and Xi agreed to a 90-day trade truce. Since then, the Chinese have purchased around 3.0 MMTs of U.S. soybeans. Unfortunately, the bulls are wanting to see double that amount sooner rather than later. It feels like the bulls are wanting to see 5.0 to 6.0 MMTs within the first 30 to 45-days, then perhaps another 2.0 to 4.0 MMTs during the remaining 90-day window. Keep in mind, at this stage of the game last year, U.S. exporters had already shipped about 18 MMTs of soybeans to China and had another 5.0 MMTs of sales outstanding and waiting to be shipped. Another major unknown is South American weather. As I mentioned above in the corn comments, weather in South America is still of great importance, but for the moment it looks like conditions in both Brazil and Argentina have improved to some degree. Areas of Brazil that have been too dry are getting some rainfall, while parts of Argentina that have been too wet will start to dry out a bit. Hence, bears are thinking South American supplies are right around the corner waiting for the Chinese buyers. Remember, Brazil got a record number of acres in the ground this year at a record pace, meaning a large portion of the crop looks as if it will be harvested a couple of weeks earlier than normal. I'm thinking we should start hearing a lot more about the Brazilian harvest starting in mid-January, which is only a

few weeks away. I've heard a couple of sources inside Brazil say producers in the top producing state of Mato Grosso, will have +5% harvested by the first week in January. Bottom-line, it feels like the trade has placed the Chinese "on the clock", and they need to make more significant purchases before the record Brazilian crop comes online. The market is struggling to find direction even with headlines of Chinese buying, this makes me feel like the tilt is still to the downside...



Wheat bulls are happy to learn that Egypt selected Ukraine and Romanian exporters over supply out of Russia. This is another sign that Russian exports might be drying up. Keep in mind, Russian officials are supposedly holding a meeting with some of their largest exporters to discuss limitations and specifics moving forward. Bulls believe this is a sign that the Russian government is wanting to somehow limit the number of bushels leaving their country. Here at home, most sources are saying the recent round of cooperative U.S. weather, has helped to improve the winter wheat situation, hence keeping a lid on a portion of the nearby rally. As both a spec and a producer, I remain conservatively bullish, but fully understand we need some fresh new headlines if we want to keep momentum moving higher. I continue to pay close attention to the outside macro markets, the longer-term direction of the U.S. dollar, and political tensions in the Black Sea region.

U.S. Wheat Yields (bushels per acre)



> Real Rises Driving Brazil's Soybean Higher: With a rising real vs. the U.S. dollar as well as a decent demand story, cash premiums for Brazil's soybeans were sent higher Thursday. I'm told there was solid demand from Mexico and Bangladesh as U.S. prices sent the buyers to Brazil.

> Pakistan Helping Fill the Soybean Void: In the current 2018 marketing year, Pakistan has bought 1.72 MMT of U.S. soybeans so far, compared to just 630 TMT in the entire 2017 marketing year. A few years ago, Pakistan's imports of U.S. soybeans were insignificant — with numbers near zero. The country has since become a growing importer of soybeans. From 2015 to 2016, Pakistan's U.S. imports rose from 166,368 metric tons (MT) of soy to 630 TMT, with an incremental purchase of over 463,632 MT of U.S. Soy in 2017. A significant jump in purchases of U.S. soybeans at 1.72 MMT is seen in the 2018 marketing year, 2.7 times higher than what was imported in the 2017 marketing year, showing increased customer preference. (Source: USSoy)

> USDA Allows Fully Cooked Polish Pork Back in U.S.: Following a strenuous review of export protocols, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is lifting restrictions on all establishments located in the contiguous free zones. Raw and heat treated products will still retain restrictions for the time being.

> Currency Fluctuations Hurting Coffee Producers: Recent currency fluctuations have pushed the price of coffee significantly lower, with procures receiving as little as \$1 per pound, some of the lowest prices since the 2008. (Source: WSJ)

> Will Chinese Cyber Attacks Affect U.S. China Talks: U.S. officials indicted two Chinese nationals connected to the Chinese Ministry of State Security for their role in stealing technology. I'm told that more than 45 entities in 12 U.S. states were affected. From what I understand, companies targeted came from the aviation industry, space, satellites, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, and financial services. We'll see how this plays out within the trade talks with China.

> **Exxon Gets Ethanol 'Hardship' Waiver:** Hearing reports that Exxon Mobil won an EPA waiver that exempts its small refinery in Billings, Montana, from having to comply with the federal mandate to blend ethanol into gasoline. (Source: Reuters)

> **No More Money For Insect Farming:** A bipartisan Senate bill filed this month aims to cut government spending by banning the use of federal funds for research into cricket farming or to develop and taste-test bug-based foods for human consumption. (Source: Food & Wine)

> **U.S. Population Only Grew 0.6%:** The U.S. population is growing at its slowest rate since 1937, with the West and South growing faster than Northeast, according to Census Bureau figures reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. U.S. population grew by 0.6%, to 327.2 million people, between fiscal 2017 and fiscal 2018. I'm told the falling growth rate can reportedly be attributed to the nation's low birthrate and a rising death rate. (Source: The Hill)

> **Cigna Closes \$54 Billion Deal To Buy Express Scripts:** This merger will create one of the biggest providers of pharmacy benefits and insurance plans in the U.S. The deal puts Cigna in direct competition with two other healthcare companies set up the same way -- Aetna with CVS Health and United Health Group with Optum. Cigna's deal has already passed antitrust scrutiny. (Source: CNBC)

> **What's Next for Blockchain:** 2018 has not been kind to this nascent sector, with prices dropping, media interest waning, and massively declining public interest. However, under the surface, blockchain technology is developing at a rapid rate, with engineers and academics alike taking a keen interest. Indeed, even as ICO fever has died down, traditional venture funding in the space is up year-over-year. CB Insights examined 18 of the biggest blockchain trends, covering everything from bitcoin mining to security tokens to smart contract platforms. Take a look at the chart to see what's next.

Emerging Trends in Blockchain Technology





FROM THE FIELD

Northcentral Ohio – There are tons of soybeans sitting in bins around here that were rejected by the elevator. Most of my friends don't really have a home for them. They have a series of problems from damaged and split beans to mold and discoloration. The elevator won't even take them because they don't have an open bin to put them in. We can't store them because they will mix with our better beans and might contaminate them. Right now, they are literally sitting in the back of two semi's and we are debating just stringing them along the ground or slowly mixing them in our grinder and feeding them to cattle. We have a few neighbors that are semi interested in them, but they won't bring more than \$5.00 per bushel, best case scenario. The guy that is talking about buying them is having us send them out to be tested to make sure they won't hurt his cattle. An older gentleman told me they should be fine, but this guy wants to be sure before he buys them.

Northern Montana – The snow is gone we have been 40 degrees for several weeks now. I think it's supposed to cool off a little during Christmas but after that we look pretty mild for the foreseeable future. When we planted our winter wheat towards the end of September, we had a 3-week cold snap where it got 10 degrees at night and about 30 degrees during the day. The wheat just laid in the ground and didn't do much but towards the middle of October we warmed back up and now we have a pretty good stand of winter wheat. The guys that planted late have rough looking wheat but as a whole everything looks pretty good. Last year our wheat made right around 53 bushels per acre, so we really can't complain about that. Now we are just working on getting it sold... hoping President Trump helps us out by coming to a resolution to this Chinese situation.

Central Iowa – We raised a decent crop and from everyone I have talk to they have raised an average crop as well but from what I understand there is not a record crop in Iowa. Maybe I'm in an isolated area but we didn't wait in line at the elevator hardly ever this year. I don't see bags like we do most year. I even check the guys farm that I know uses bags like they are going out of style. He has just a few. I haven't seen any big corn piles outside the elevator. I don't remember them filling trains and shipping it out. I just don't think the corn is nearly as plentiful as the USDA would like us all to believe. We raised an average crop and we are south of the excessive rain and wind, so I know those guys didn't put out a bumper crop. There is not a corn still in the field in this area or soybeans. I am going to bet that the government lowers yield in the next report and if they are smart, they will lower it substantially, especially if Iowa makes up 18% of US corn. It's just not here.



CROSSING WIRES

A place to share intelligent thoughts...

FBN Announces Winners of Farmer2Farmer Startup Pitch Contest: Augean Robotics, a startup building autonomous farm equipment, and Rogo, an automated soil testing startup, both won awards at Farmers Business Network's first startup pitch contest last week. FBN selected the six startups from nearly 100 that applied in partnership with AgFunder. These six startups participated in the pitch contest held at FBN's annual Farmer2Farmer conference where each was given six minutes to pitch their technologies in front of an audience of nearly 3,000. Six judges questioned the startups after their pitches and scored them to select the Judges' Choice Award winner, which was Augean Robotics. Both companies will be featured on FBN Direct Marketplace for free for a year, a platform that connects farmers with exclusive FBN-member discounts from companies farmers know. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about this contest!

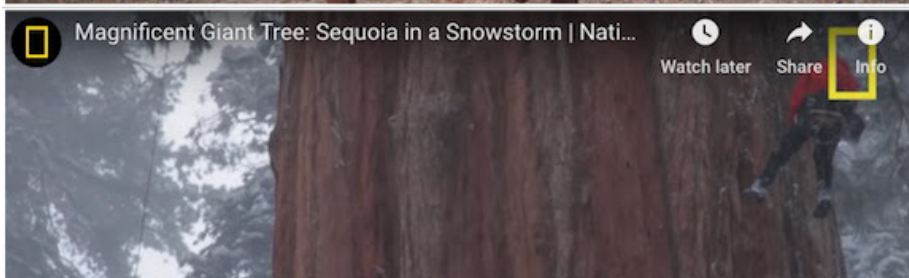
Coinbase Launches 2019 Expansion: Coinbase has launched its cryptocurrency trading platform in more markets as the firm plans an "aggressive" international push next year. The company said it has expanded its product to several European countries and overseas territories, including Lithuania, Iceland, Andorra, Gibraltar, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. Some of the markets Coinbase is expanding into are becoming increasingly popular destinations for cryptocurrency and blockchain-related start-ups. Gibraltar, for instance, has a domestic licensing process for such firms to become registered blockchain technology providers. Iceland, meanwhile, has become a popular hub for so-called cryptocurrency mining, an electricity-intensive process that keeps the

underlying blockchain network ticking, due to an abundance of renewable energy. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about this expansion!

Want to Make Your First Million... Make an App: It's completely possible to develop a million-dollar business by selling apps for iPhones and iPads through Apple's App Store. In fact, 164 different app developers marked their first \$1 million year in the United States in 2018, according to a new analysis from Sensor Tower, an analytics firm focusing on Apple's App Store and Google Play. It's a sign that despite Apple's much-criticised 30% cut of in-app purchases and sometimes arbitrary rules, it's still possible to create a real business on the App Store. "The booming App Store ecosystem is responsible for more than 1.5 million American jobs," Apple said in a press release earlier this month. "The number of publishers with their first \$1 million or greater year on the U.S. App Store grew by approximately 15% over 2017, when we found that 143 achieved this milestone," Sensor Tower analysts wrote. 88 app publishers had their first \$1 million year on the U.S. Google Play store in 2018, too. Read more [HERE](#).

Are You Ready to Take 100% Responsibility For Your Life: Where decisions are made in a single moment, commitment is seeing those decisions into the future. Especially when life gets difficult. In his book, *Outwitting the Devil*, Napoleon Hill discusses a moment in which he met his "other self" -- the side of him that wasn't indecisive and unclear about the future. This "other self" operated entirely out of faith and definiteness of purpose. After several months of deep depression, when Hill was at a personal rock bottom, he reached a point where enough was enough. He got to the point where he no longer cared what other people thought of him. He heard the voice in his head -- his "other self" -- and he decided to follow that voice with complete obedience, regardless of how ridiculous or seemingly crazy it was. He didn't allow himself even a second to question himself or hesitate. As the ancient philosopher, Cato said, "He who hesitates is lost." As I read this, I was reminded of some hard-earned truths that only experience was able to teach me. Read more [HERE](#) if you are ready to reassess and step out with confidence in your choices.

First Time Ever This 3200-Year-Old Tree Fully Photographed: This 3,200-Year-old tree is located in Sequoia National Park, in the Sierra Nevadas, in California. Until now, this gigantic tree has never been viewed entirely in a single picture, but thanks to the team from National Geographic, we can't say that any longer. The enormous tree stands at an awe-inspiring 247 feet high, and is 27 feet wide. I'm told tree is not done growing, and continues to add 35 cubic feet every year. Locals have nicknamed it, "The President." If you take a look at the video [HERE](#) you will be left with a sense of wonder and appreciation for the beauty God has given us on this planet.



MORE VIDEOS

3200 YEARS OLD



0:55 / 1:51



YouTube





ImpactVision... Providing Real Time Food Decisions

ImpactVision and its hyperspectral imaging technology is being called a gamechanger for the food system space. It's estimated that 30% to 50% of food produced globally is currently being wasted each year. Using non-invasive techniques, ImpactVision, is using the technology to provide food quality information like freshness, shelf life, or contamination at production grade speeds. Major players like the world's largest transporter of food, Maersk, have made strategic investments in the company as they ship around 30% of all refrigerated containers globally and have a burning desire to develop more transparency across the supply chain. If you didn't know, hyperspectral images combine the power of digital imaging with spectroscopy, meaning different objects reflect light in a specific way, generating unique spectral signatures which represent particular food characteristics, such as moisture or tenderness. I'm told, ImpactVision is building a library of these signatures to help food businesses accurately identify products and predict their quality attributes during processing. From what I understand, ImpactVision's system combines both a camera that collects hyperspectral images and machine learning software. By mounting the camera above a conveyor belt in food processing facilities, companies can capture images of products in real time, as they pass below. Then, the startup's software models analyze those images to provide insights about the quality of the product instantly and non-invasively. I should mention, the machine learning models are not only able to identify unique patterns in chemical composition relating to food quality, but the proprietary software then provides real-time, actionable insights about food, such as the freshness of fish, the dry matter of avocados, the presence of foreign objects and even beef quality and tenderness. Bottom line here is that this higher level of insights throughout the supply chain will allow food companies to make decisions on sorting, packing and distributing based on the various quality attributes, and by accessing this data earlier in the supply chain, companies are able to deliver more consistent quality, generate premium products, maximize yields, and prevent supply chain waste. In my opinion, there are benefits for both consumers and producers as well. As a producer, this technology will be able to create premium categories providing better margins for those able to deliver consistent quality and for consumers, you will have the opportunity to buy higher quality, healthier produce. I should mention that only five years ago the cost of hyper-spectral was so high it would have been unfeasible to even start a company like ImpactVision. Just think where we will be in another five years... make sure you are on the right side of technology and trying your best to stay current. (Source: agfundernews, Impactvision)



Welcome To The First Day Of Winter

The first day of Winter is now officially upon us, with the Winter Solstice arriving at 4:23 a.m. CST today, December 21. This first day of winter is also the shortest day of the year for those of us here in the Northern Hemisphere - it's the longest day of the year for those in the Southern Hemisphere. This year the first day of winter will clock in at only 9 hours and 15 minutes of daylight. The word solstice comes from Latin sol "sun" and sistere "to stand still." At the winter solstice, the Sun's path has reached its southernmost position. The next day, the path will advance northward. However, a few days before and after the winter solstice, the change is so slight that the Sun's path seems to stay the same, or stand still. The Sun is directly overhead at "high-noon" on Winter Solstice at the latitude called the Tropic of Capricorn. The day after the winter solstice marks the beginning of lengthening days, leading up to the summer solstice in June. The December solstice marks the 'turning of the Sun' as the days slowly get longer. Celebrations of the lighter days to come have been common throughout history with feasts, festivals and holidays, as well as various tributes. In addition, December's full Moon, the Full Cold Moon or Long Night Moon, will also appear on the night of the 21st, though it will not be at its absolute peak until the next day. So, keep your eyes peeled for a Winter Solstice Full Moon that night! Believe it or not, the last time it occurred was 2010 and the next full Moon to actually peak on the winter solstice won't be until 2094! You will also be able to see Mercury and Jupiter in conjunction in the long night sky. On top of all that, the Ursid meteor shower will peak on the nights of December 21 and 22, adding shooting stars to the mix. Below are a few of the most popular, along with some other interesting facts: (Sources: Live Science, Time-Science Magazine, Almanac.com)

Saturnalia: *The festival of Saturnalia was one of the most popular Roman celebrations. It was a seven day holiday that began on December 17 with a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn, in the Roman Forum, and a public banquet, followed by private gift-giving, continual partying, and a carnival atmosphere that overturned Roman social norms. The festival was characterized as a free-for-all when all discipline and orderly behavior was ignored.*

Feast of Juul: *The Feast of Juul (where we get the term 'Yule' from at this time of year) was a pre-Christian festival observed in Scandinavia at the time of the December solstice. People would light fires to symbolize the heat and light of the returning sun and a Juul (or Yule) log was brought in and dropped in the hearth as a tribute the Norse god Thor. The Yule Log often was an entire tree, carefully chosen and brought into the house with great ceremony and sometimes, the*

largest end of the log would be placed into the fire hearth, while the rest of the tree stuck out into the room. The log was burned until nothing but ash remained. The ashes were then collected and either strewn on the fields as fertilizer every night until Twelfth Night or kept as a charm and or as medicine.

Stonehenge: This structure in southern England is one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. Carefully positioned rocks form what's known as a megalith, which some think may have begun as a burial site. It was built between 3000 B.C. and 2000 B.C., over the course of roughly 1,500 years, in a series of several major phases. When the sun sets on the winter solstice, its rays align with what is known as the central Altar stone and the Slaughter stone.

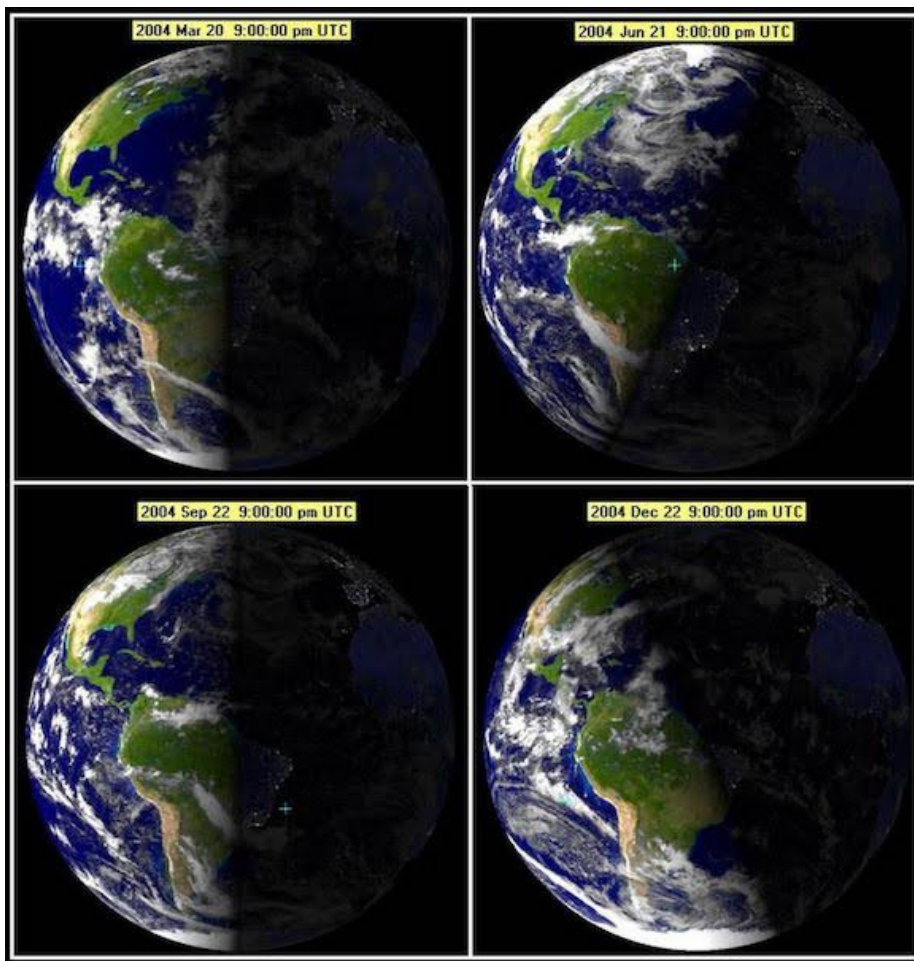
Maeshowe: Built-in Orkney, Scotland, around 2800 B.C., Maeshowe is a burial ground that appears as a grassy mound rising about 24 feet above a grassy field. The inside of the mound contains a maze of chambers and passageways that become illuminated by sunlight during the winter solstice.

Stone lines at Cerro del Gentil pyramid: In 2013, researchers discovered two stone lines that, when approached straight on, appear to frame Peru's Cerro del Gentil pyramid in the distance. The lines are located roughly 1.2 miles southeast of the pyramid, and extend about 1,640 feet. Using 3D-modeling software, the researchers discovered that the winter solstice sun sets exactly where the lines converge on the pyramid in the horizon.

Is the Winter Solstice related to Christmas? Sort of. There's no date in the Bible specifically pointing to Dec. 25 as the birth of Jesus Christ, so some experts believe the Christian church selected the date several centuries later, tying it to the Roman holiday Dies Natalis Solis Invictus, or the Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun. The winter solstice serves a turning point in many cultures, which is why it was tied to the Mayan apocalypse scare that marked the end of the calendar and to some believers, the end of the world.

Does the solstice mark the start of winter or the mid-point of winter? There is not a black-and-white answer—it depends. The solstice is the beginning of astronomical winter. Astronomical seasons are based on the position of the Earth in relation to the Sun. However, meteorological seasons are based on the annual temperature cycle. In order to compare climatological statistics from one year to the next, meteorologists break the seasons down into groupings of three months. Winter includes December, January, and February.

Does the solstice always occur on December 21? The shortest day of the year often falls on December 21st, but the modern calendar of 365 days a year - with an extra day every four years - does not correspond exactly to the solar year of 365.2422 days. The solstice can happen on December 20, 21, 22 or 23, though December 20 or 23 solstices are rare. The last December 23 solstice was in 1903 and will not happen again until 2303.



One Of My Favorite Christmas Stories...

The story I included below is one of my all-time favorites. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have though the years.

For the Man Who Hated Christmas

By Nancy W. Gavin

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past ten years.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it-overspending and the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma – the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was on the wrestling team at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids – all kids. He so enjoyed coaching little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes, and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed a small, white envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done, and that this was his gift from me.

Mike's smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year. And that same bright smile lit up succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.

The white envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children – ignoring their new toys – would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents.

As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the small, white envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree. And the next morning, I found it was magically joined by three more.

Unbeknownst to the others, each of our three children had for the first time placed a white envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing to take down that special envelope.

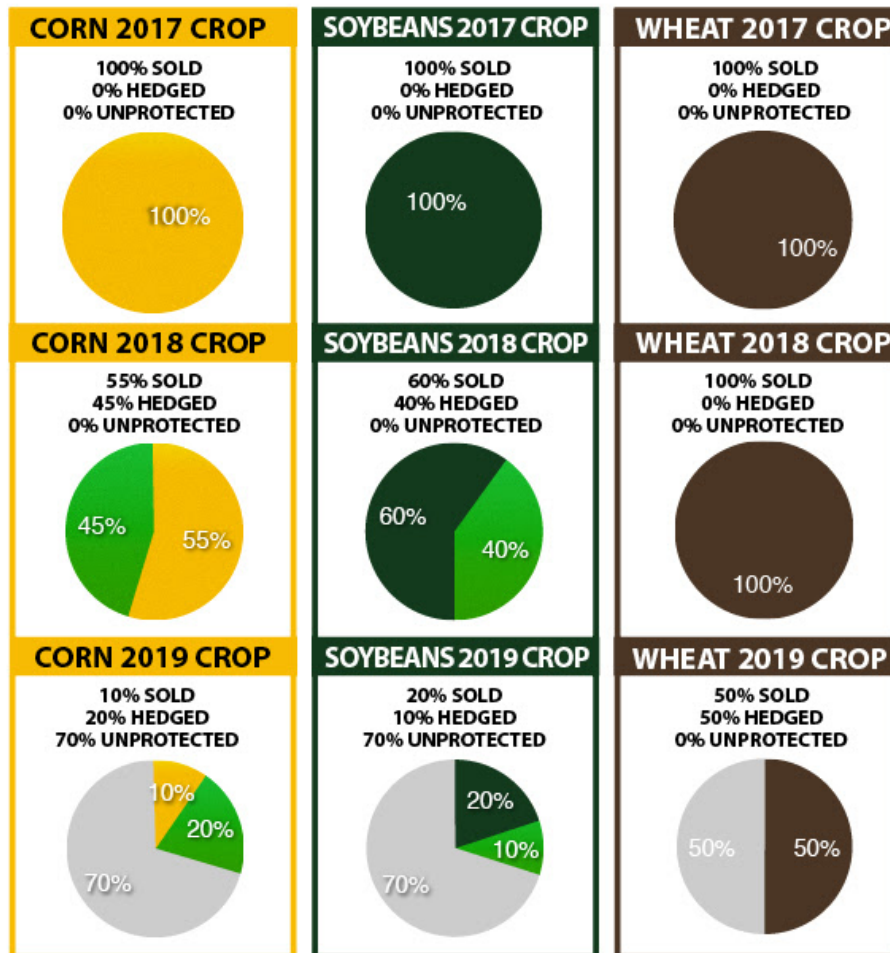
Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit will always be with us.



ANSWER to riddle: Frosted Flakes

CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS

PLEASE READ The Van Trump Report is a publication intended to give analytical research to the Agricultural community. The Van Trump Report is not rendering investment or hedging advice based on individual portfolios or individual business operations. Kevin Van Trump is NOT registered as a stock or commodity advisor in any jurisdiction. You need to consult with your own registered advisor for specific strategies and ideas that are appropriate to your specific portfolio or business entity. Information included in this report is derived from many sources believed to be reliable but no representation is made that it is accurate or complete. This report is not intended, and shall not constitute, or be construed as an offer or recommendation to "buy", "sell" or "invest" in any securities or commodities referred to in this report. Rather, this research is intended to identify issues and macro situations that those invested in the agricultural industry should be aware of to help better assess and improve their own risk management skills. Please read the entire [DISCLAIMER PAGE](#) for full risk-disclosure and copyright laws.



© FARM DIRECTION 2011

[About Us](#) | [Testimonials](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Update Profile](#)

This email was sent by: **Farm Direction**
1020 Pennsylvania Ave Kansas City, MO, 64105, US