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GOOD MORNING: The Van Trump Report 12-20-19

1 message

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

Fri, Dec 20, 2019 at 5:30 AM

Reply-To: Jordan <reply-feca10737261047f-1142_HTML-68584704-100003450-8@vantrumpreport-email.com>

To: josh@farmdirection.com



"The greatest wisdom is in simplicity. Love, respect, tolerance, sharing, gratitude, forgiveness. It's not complex or elaborate. The real knowledge is free. It's encoded in your DNA. All you need is within you. Great teachers have said that from the beginning. Find your heart, and you will find your way." — **Carlos Barrios**

Friday, December 20, 2019

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Morning Summary: Stocks are on track to finish the final full trading week of 2019 on a positive note with all three major indexes again at new record highs! The S&P 500 has now gained over +27% this year, NASDAQ up +35%, while the Dow is up more than +21% so far. Investor optimism has been getting its most recent boost from good news on the trade front. As expected yesterday, the House passed the USMCA (new NAFTA) with overwhelming bipartisan support. According to House Ag Committee Ranking Member Michael Conaway, the trade deal between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada will result in an additional \$2.2 billion in annual agricultural exports from the United States. The Senate won't vote on the deal until early next year but it is widely expected to pass. Turning to China, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin says the U.S. and Beijing will officially sign the "Phase 1" trade deal at the beginning of January, adding that he expects the pact will add about a half percentage point to U.S. growth over the next two year. On the economic front, there is a little disappointment over Existing Home

Sales which fell more than expected in November to an annual rate of 5.35 million units. This marks a -1.7% drop from October's 5.44 million rate and is more than the expected sales decline of -0.2%. Even with the one disappointing month, Existing Home Sales are still up +2.7% from a year ago and November is the fifth straight month of year-on-year gains. Housing experts continue to cite low inventory levels as the biggest problem facing the U.S. housing market, which has in turn inflated prices in many areas. The median existing house price rose +5.4% from a year ago to \$271,300 in November. It was the 93rd consecutive month of year-on-year price gains. Today brings the final estimate for third quarter GDP, which is expected to remain unchanged at +2.1%. Also on the schedule is Corporate Profits, Personal Income and Outlays, Consumer Sentiment, and Kansas City Fed Manufacturing. Next week, ready or not, is Christmas. Don't forget, stock and bond markets are closed on Wednesday for the holiday and both close early on the 24th for Christmas Eve. With that in mind, be aware that markets could see increased volatility due to lower trading volume as many traders take the week off. There is very little data scheduled for release next week with New Home Sales on Monday really the only one worth noting.

NEW Record for U.S. Economy: *As of December, the U.S. economy has expanded for a record 126 straight months, the longest time period in the country's history according to the National Bureau of Economic Research. Put another way, the U.S. has avoided a recession for an entire calendar decade for the first time ever. (Source: CNBC)*

REMEMBER THE TITANS... Herman Boone Dies at 84: *Herman Boone, the Virginia high school football coach who inspired the 2000 film "Remember the Titans," died yesterday morning from cancer.*

In 1958, Herman accepted his first teaching and coaching position at the Luther H. Foster High School in Blackstone, Virginia, where he coached football, basketball and baseball. His teams recorded three district championships.

In 1961, Herman returned to his home state of North Carolina to continue his coaching and teaching career. He accepted a coaching position at the E.J. Hayes High School in Williamston, North Carolina. His football teams amassed a record of 99 wins and 8 losses in a nine-year period. His 1966 football team was recognized by Scholastic Coach's Magazine as "The Number One Football Team in America". In 1969, Boone was fired from his position, informed by the Williamston school board that the town of Williamston "was not ready for a black head coach"

Having integrated schools in 1965, the city of Alexandria, Virginia consolidated students from three high schools into T. C. Williams in 1971, and Boone was named the head coach of the combined team. He lead the school to an undefeated season and state championship in that same year. More importantly, his team was recognized as a galvanizing factor in helping bring the city through desegregation in the early days.

This is definitely one of the best high school football stories out there and one of my families' favorite movies, especially my daughters! As I always say football is more than just a sport. It brings towns and

people together like nothing I've ever seen. I will always remember my football teammates and how we pushed ourselves beyond what we thought were our limits. Click [HERE](#) to watch a few of the highlights from the movie! I also always loved Coach Boones Gettysburg Speech [HERE](#). Take the time to listen!!!

Holiday Schedules to Keep in Mind: *For Christmas Eve, December 24, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and Nasdaq open at their usual time (8:30 a.m. CST) but will close early at 12:00 p.m. Bond markets also open at their normal time but close early at 1:30 p.m. CST. Stock and bond markets will be closed on Christmas Day. All federal agencies will be closed December 24 and 25 for Christmas Eve and Christmas, which means no government reports. Markets are also closed January 1 in observance of New Year's Day.*

Amazon's Van-Buying Spree Delivers a Gift to Auto Industry: *Amazon has built up a fleet of 30,000 last-mile delivery trucks and vans since creating its own delivery network in 2018, and currently handles about half of its own deliveries. That's good news for manufacturers of increasingly ubiquitous gray vans with the blue swoosh, which include Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV and Ford Motor Co. Carmakers have been coping with declining demand from consumers this year in part by boosting deliveries to commercial customers including Amazon and its delivery contractors. Commercial vehicle sales totaled more than 734,000 through November of this year, an +8.7% increase from the same period a year ago, according to Cox. Automakers are tight lipped about their sales to single customers, but Fiat Chrysler - which sells Ram ProMaster vans to Amazon, UPS and the USPS - delivered more than 51,000 vans through September. That was up +25% from a year earlier and put its vans on pace for the best year since at least 2014. Likewise, Ford had record van sales in the third quarter and General Motor's van fleet sales were up +8.3% through October. (Source: [Bloomberg](#))*

NYSE Legend Art Cashin Predicts Market Winning Streak Will Continue in 2020: *This time last year, UBS Financial Services managing director Art Cashin doled out his predictions for 2019. He believed that "the Fed will not hike ever again in 2019," and "there's an outside chance that they cut before the end of 2019." He was spot on with both of those statements, as well as a few others. Cashin sat down with CNBC correspondents at Bobby Van's Steakhouse in New York City to discuss his predictions for 2020, which include another year of zero rate hikes, a continuation of the bull market, and a few periods of volatility. Check out the video [HERE](#).*

The Original Olympic Manifesto Brings Record \$8.8 Million at Auction: *The manifesto for the original Olympics sold for a whopping \$8.8 million at an auction this week in New York. The historic artifact was expected to sell for between \$700,000 and \$1 million, but ended up in the hands of a bidder for over eight times the high end of that already steep price, according to Sotheby's, which hosted the auction. It is the highest price ever paid for a piece of sports memorabilia, breaking the previous record set by a Babe Ruth New York Yankees jersey that sold for \$5.4 million. The document dates back to 1892 and was written by Pierre de Coubertin, the International Olympic Committee founder. Learn more from [CBSSports](#).*



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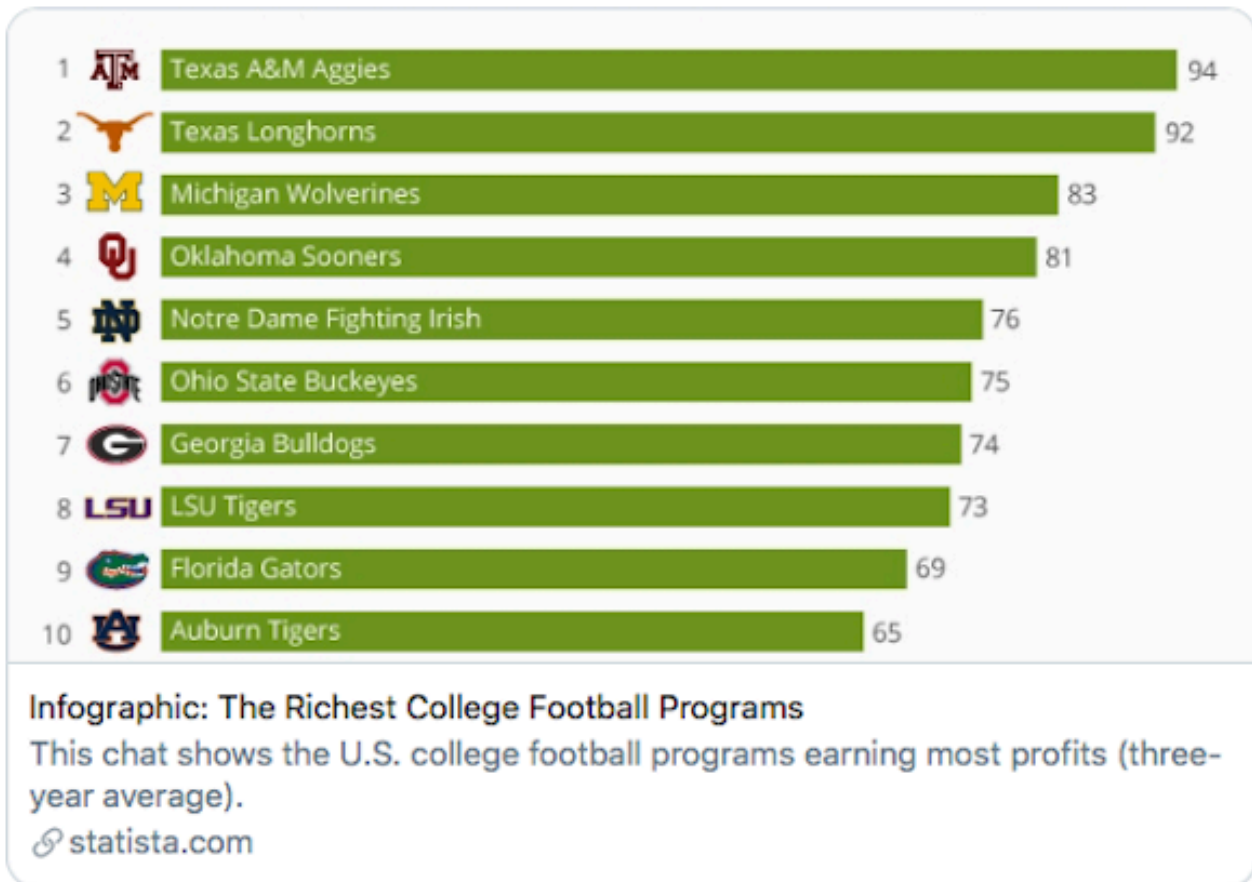
FARM TANK

Tweets of the Day





Despite being played by amateurs, [#collegefootball](#) is big business. statista.com/chart/20152/co... @Forbes
#NCAA



BritnieDiMaggio
@DiBritnie

Woke up to Smitty the Elf doing a "science experiment" with Posty this morning.... @Smitty
@PostMalone @rriproarin

[#ElfOnTheShelf](#) [#Smitty](#) [#Posty](#)





Jorgensen Land and Cattle
@JorgLandCat



Thankfully, corn harvest 2019 is coming to an end. It took longer than we prefer and we lost a few acres to snow drifts, but we made it through! [#harvest19](#) [#corn](#) [#uptoouearsinsnow](#)





Tom Farms
@TomFarms



[#TodayAtTomFarms](#). Friday the 13th came a day early with some breakdowns yesterday.

With any luck today, we will finish...as long as we didn't just jinx us by posting this!

[#TomFarms](#) [#Harvest19](#) [#ReadyToBeFinished](#) [#Corn](#)
[#Dekalb](#) [#Bayer](#) [#JohnDeere](#) PC Chad



Greg Muller
@GregMuller6



Seen this shopping today, had a good chuckle.

[#harvest19](#)

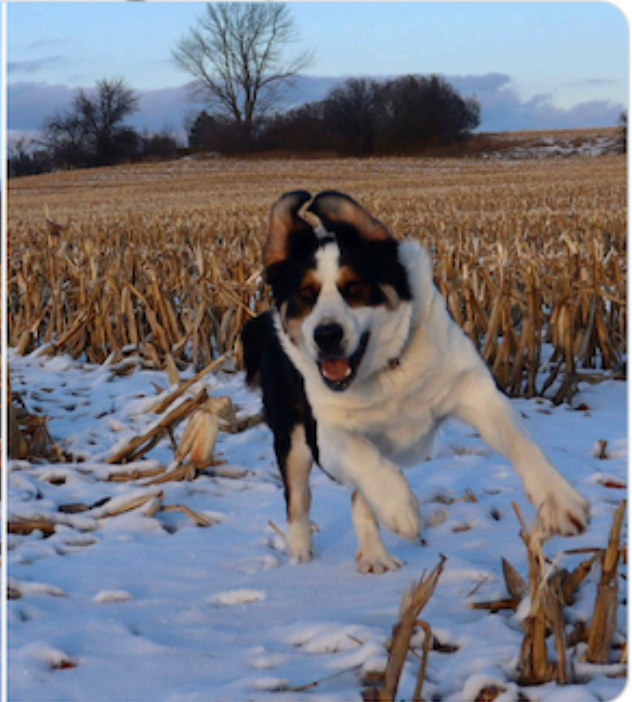
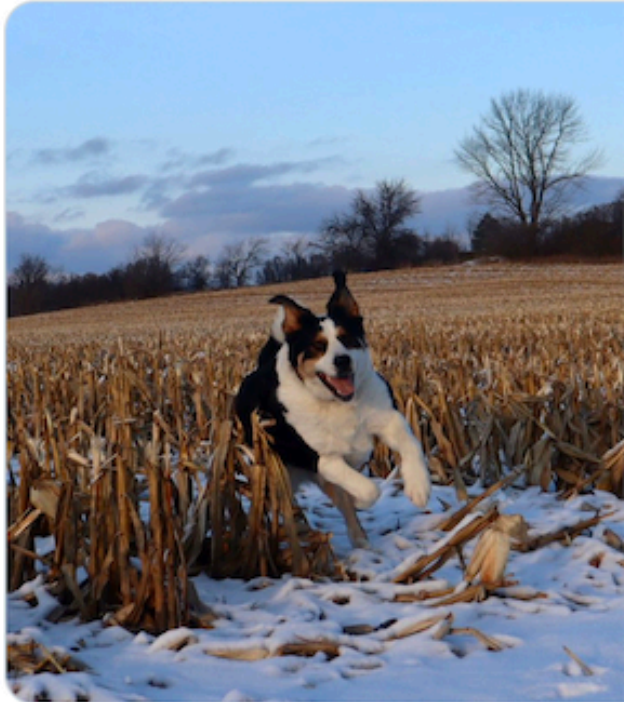




Katie Macfarlane
@FarlaneLivestk



That "finished [#harvest19](#)" feeling
Otonabee-South Monaghan, Ontario





Motivational Quotes
@DavidRoads



You can't change what's going on around you until you start changing what's going on within you.

Don't be afraid to
CHANGE.

You may lose
something good
but you may gain
something better.

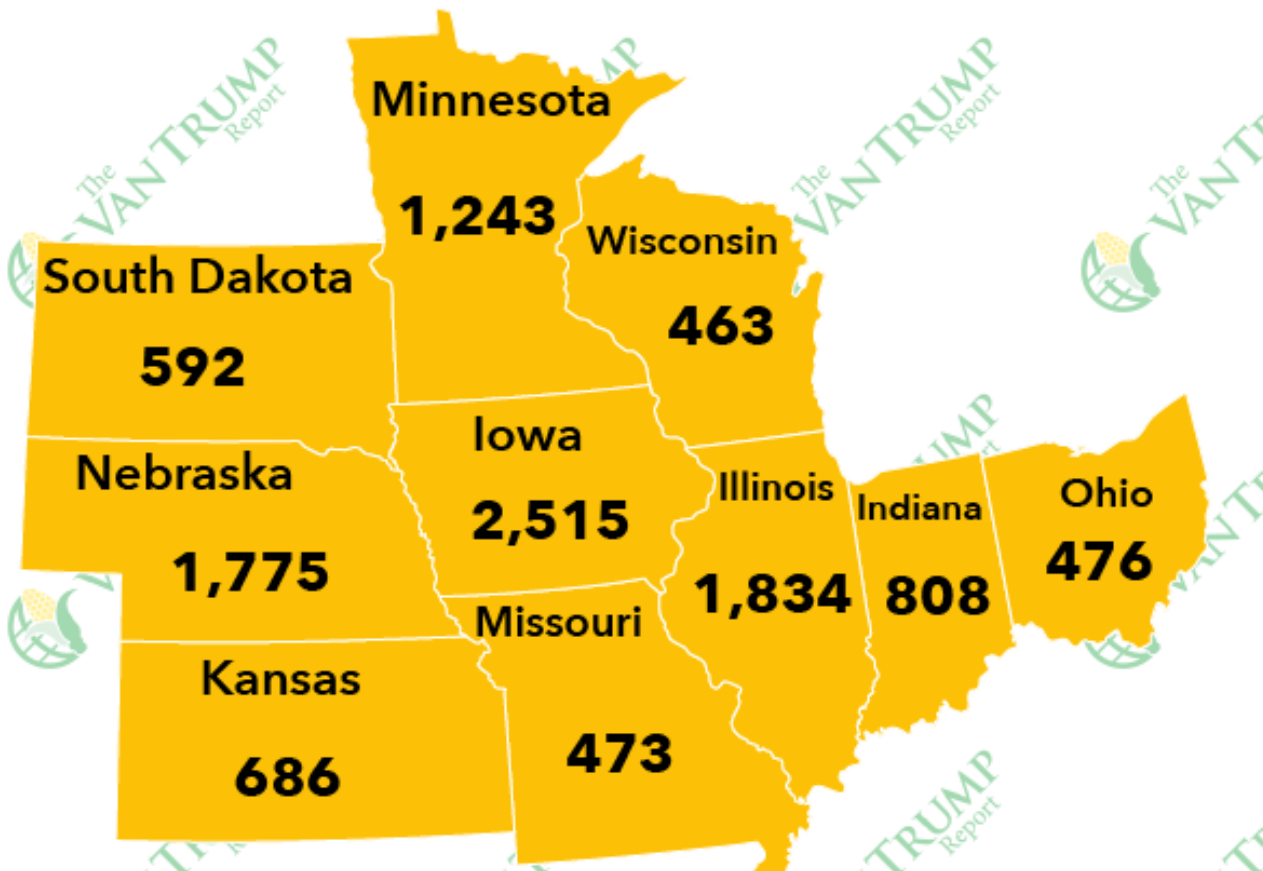


Corn CORN COMMENTS

bulls are disappointed by Wheller and the EPA's decision to move forward with the suggested Department of Energy's RFS proposal rather than actual original waivers issued which now creates some uncertainty that corn-based ethanol blending will reach at least 15 billion gallons. Bears are also talking about improved weather and rainfall in parts of Argentina. From what I'm hearing, producers in Argentina should have close to 70% to 75% of their corn crop planted by Christmas/New Years. Reports circulating show about 35% to 40% of the crop that is planted is in "Good-to-Excellent" condition, which is down about -10% to -15% from last year. As a producer, I still like the thought of selling up to 60% to 70% of old-crop bushels at +\$4.00 vs. JUL20 contract and reowning the board in some capacity. I've also booked close to 30% of my estimated 2020 production at +\$4.00 vs. the DEC20 contract, and also reowning the board via a bull ratio spread, long the DEC20 \$4.0 calls and selling (2) \$4.50 calls to finance. I just like the fact it helps eliminate some downside risk in case things fall apart and U.S. producers plant more acres. As a spec, I'm still holding a small bullish position, but looking to exit just ahead or into the January 10th report. I'm a bit worried that even if the USDA makes the production cut and lowers exports and raises feed and

residual, ultimately lowering the balance sheet, the experienced bulls may use the opportunity or rally to pass the baton to the small spec players who are notoriously late to the party. Bottom line, pay close attention to price action heading into the January 10 USDA report. If we catch a little bullish momentum on a short-covering fund rally, I will more than likely be selling into and pricing a bit more cash bushels.

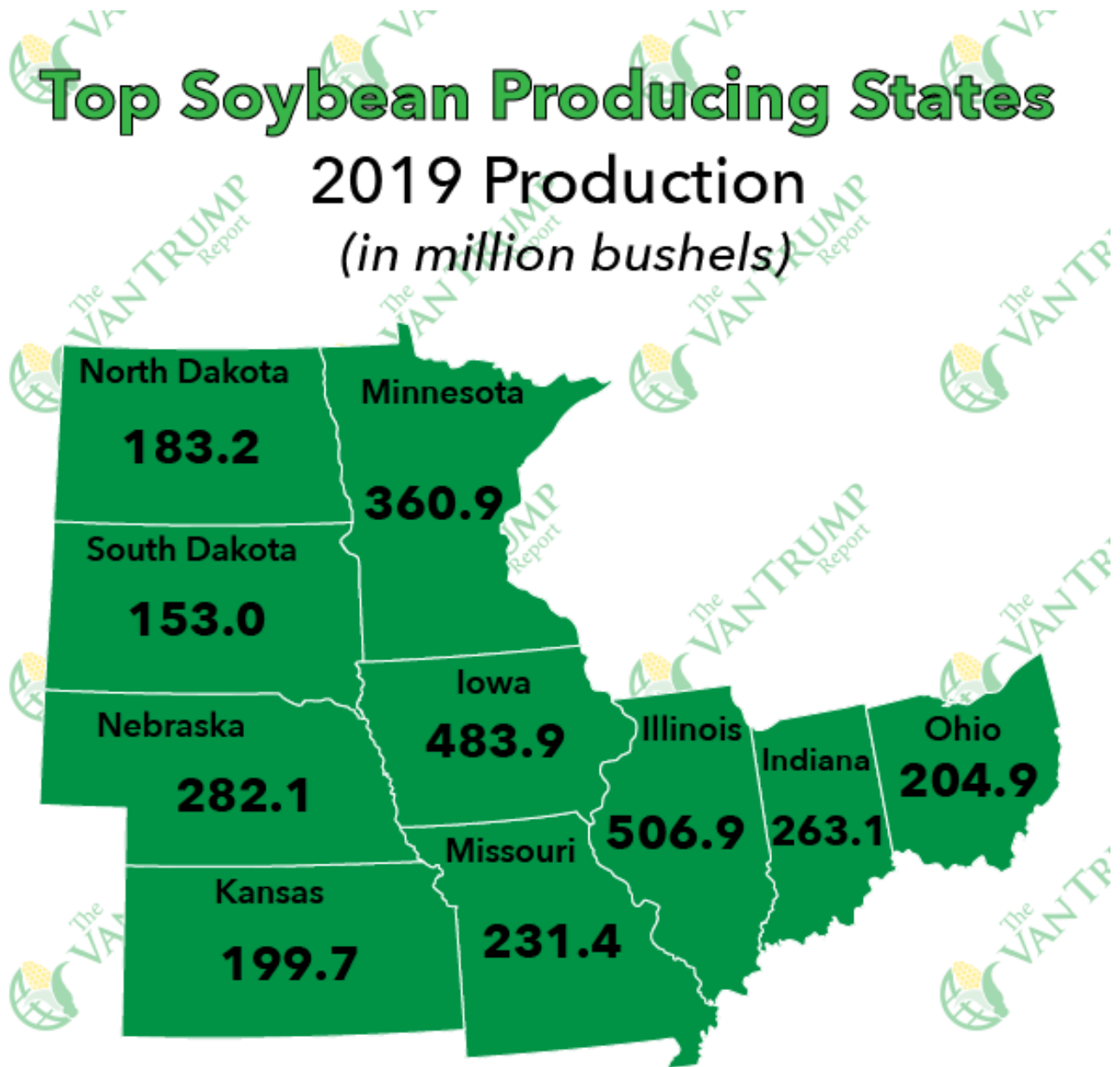
Top Corn Producing States 2019 Production (in million bushels)



Source: USDA, NASS, December, 2019

Soybean bears are pointing to Chinese buyers continuing to book more cargoes of Brazilian soybeans from late-February forward. The fear is Chinese importers are about full in regards to supply for late-Dec-Jan-Feb. Meaning Chinese buyers are starting to book shipments further out and Brazil is clearly more competitive. That brings about a lot of questions regarding the "Phase 1" trade agreement and

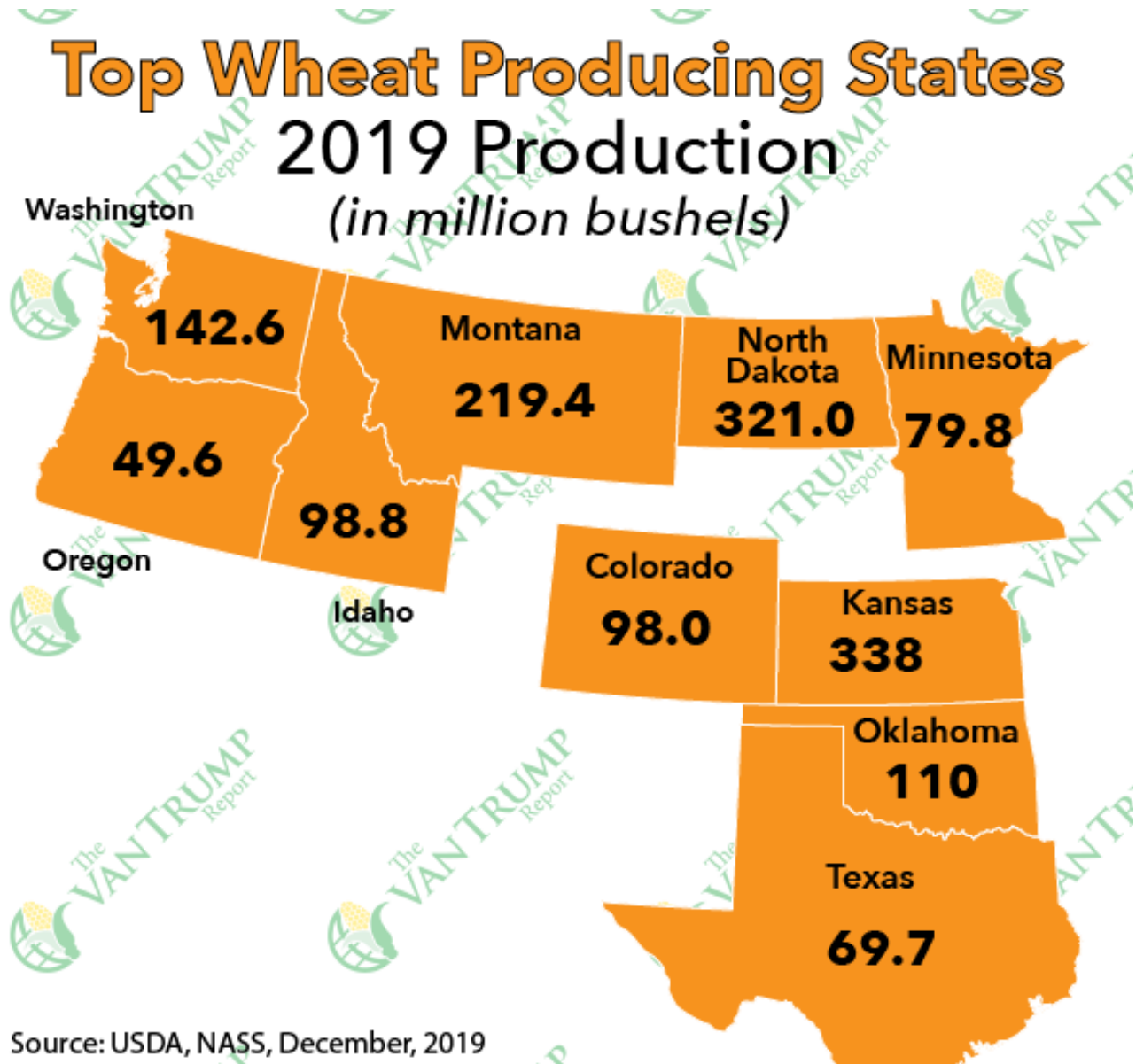
what type of commitment China is willing to make? Will they be buying regardless of competitiveness? It doesn't sound like that from their previous rhetoric, but nobody seems entirely certain. Let's also keep in mind, Argentine weather is improving and they will soon have 75% of their crop planted. From what I'm hearing, about 50% to 55% of their planted acres are in "Good-to-Excellent" condition which is drastically better than last year's crop at this stage. As a producer, I've decided to make some sales. I've sold some more old-crop at \$9.60 vs. the JUL20 contract and reowned buying the JUL20 \$9.60 calls and selling (2) \$10.20 calls to help finance at even-money. I've also sold some new-crop at +\$9.60 vs. the NOV20 and reowning buying the NOV20 \$9.60 and selling (2) \$10.60's to finance for between a nickel and a dime. This provides me a +\$9.50 floor and allows me to sleep at night. Certainly, \$9.50 is not a great number, but if the Chinese deal were to fall apart and the weather cooperates it could be much worse. The downside to the SafetyNet is the fact it caps my upside on these bushels at around \$10.50. I'm certainly not saying this is the play for you and your operation, but I hope it makes you think about finding a way to protect some of your downside risks into 2020. As a spec, I've banked profits on all my positions and I'm now flat this market and sitting on the sideline hoping to gain a more clear vision in the New Year!



Source: USDA, NASS December, 2019

Wheat bulls are talking about improved U.S. weekly wheat exports. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem like enough headline to get new bullish money involved. The EU raised its 2019-20 wheat crop estimate by +400,000 MTs to 147.2 MMT, and an almost +15% improvement from last year's crop. They also bumped their export estimate higher by +2 MMTs. I should also note, reports circulating are showing a fairly strong Ukraine crop. As a producer, I've taken the opportunity to reward this rally and make some additional old crop and new crop SRW sales. I now have 30% of our estimated new crop SRW priced and reowned. As a spec, I continue to hold a small bullish position in Minneapolis spring wheat. I may consider a bullish position in HRW and SRW but would need to see a pullback in price or more clear demand from the Chinese. I will continue to monitor global

weather, macro fund money-flow, and Chinese trade headlines. Dry conditions here in the U.S. are a concern but several forecasters are calling for improved moisture in the extended forecasts. If the moisture doesn't play out then we could be talking a different story. I still think U.S. acres are going to be lower than the USDA is currently anticipating. Again, I like the bullish story, just not enough to risk more money in the HRW and SRW market at this juncture.





> Corn Lobby Unhappy with 2020 Biofuel Rule: *The Trump administration finalized U.S. biofuel blending requirements for 2020 on Thursday, leaving a key part of the rule unchanged from an earlier proposal that the corn lobby had criticized as inadequate to help struggling farmers. The finalized rule increases the volume for blending requirements to 20.09 billion gallons in 2020, up from 19.92 billion gallons in 2019. The mandate included 15 billion gallons of conventional biofuels like ethanol, unchanged from 2019. The point of contention involves a plan the EPA introduced in the rule to compensate the biofuel industry for the agency's expanded use of exemptions from requirements given to oil refiners. The rule finalizes the methodology based on the 2016-2018 annual average of DOE recommendations. The biofuel industry wanted the adjustments to be based on actual volumes waived, since the EPA routinely waives higher volumes than the DOE recommends. Read more from Reuters. Biofuel advocates, including Iowa Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, claim the finalized plan does not reflect an unofficial agreement they reached with the administration this fall. Read more from [Reuters](#).*

> USDA, USTR Seek Experts for Agricultural Trade Advisory Committees: *The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) are accepting applications for new members to serve on seven agricultural trade advisory committees. Members of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) advise USDA and USTR on operating existing U.S. trade agreements, on negotiating new agreements, and on other trade policy*

matters. Members of six Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees (ATACs) provide technical advice and guidance on international trade issues that affect both domestic and foreign production in specific commodity sectors. The full announcement is available [HERE](#).

> Egypt's Wheat Inspectors to Resume Cargo Checks at Origin Ports:

Egypt, the world's largest wheat buyer, will allow traveling delegations of its agricultural inspectors to resume checks of wheat cargoes purchased during state tenders at the port of origin. Government quarantine inspectors had in the past travelled the world on fully-funded trips, at the expense of supply companies aiming to secure smooth passage for their wheat. That arrangement ended in 2016 when Egypt banned traveling delegations, handing inspections instead to private companies abroad. Traders said at the time that after the trips were cancelled, some agricultural inspectors began rejecting cargoes at Egyptian ports on arbitrary and unpredictable grounds. The head of agricultural quarantine told Reuters on Wednesday that the return of the inspectors will happen at the request of the companies. Concerned traders, however, believe that it will not be optional, and say they will have more clarity when the next state tender for wheat is announced. (Source: Reuters)

> Mosaic to Cut Fertilizer Production as Weather Dampens Demand:

Mosaic said on Thursday it will reduce fertilizer production until market conditions improve, as a difficult harvest season in North America has led to reduced fertilizer usage. "A third consecutive disappointing application season in North America has led to continuing high inventories and price weakness," Mosaic Chief Executive Officer Joc O'Rourke said. The company plans to cut phosphate production at its Central Florida facilities by 150,000 metric tons per month, and has already reduced it by 500,000 metric tons in the first half of the year. The next year could also be tough for the fertilizer maker, mainly due to lower price expectations for phosphate, JPMorgan analysts said in a recent note. (Source: Reuters)

> Lawyer in \$289 Million Roundup Lawsuit Arrested on Extortion Charges:

Timothy Litzenburg, a Virginia lawyer involved in litigation over the health risks of Monsanto's Roundup weed killer product, has been arrested on charges of trying to extort an unnamed company into a \$200 million consulting fee with his legal firm. Litzenburg represented a former school groundskeeper who won a \$289 million lawsuit last year against agribusiness giant Monsanto over Roundup (The settlement was later reduced to \$78 million.) Federal officials allege Litzenburg contacted two unnamed companies in October and said they had a potentially large liability for making a harmful chemical used in their household product for killing weeds. Litzenburg threatened to find people who he would advise to sue the companies for exposing them to the chemical. Litzenburg told the companies lawyers that he would cease searching for potential plaintiffs in exchange for a multi-million-dollar consulting agreement, the complaint claims. Read more [HERE](#).

> CDC Probes Outbreak of Illnesses Linked to Pet Store Puppies: *More than two dozen people have been sickened by bacteria linked to pet store puppies, with the germs resistant to first-line antibiotics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has announced. The agency is investigating the outbreak of Campylobacter jejuni in 13 states, with 30 cases reported as of Tuesday. Four people had to be hospitalized, but no one has died. 88 percent of those infected reported contact with a puppy and of those, most said it was in a pet store. A dozen cases were linked to Petland, the national chain, including five people who were Petland employees. Read more from [NBC](#).*

> Understanding the Importance of Tradeoffs, the Currency of Decision Making: *The disregard of tradeoffs and opportunity costs play out in the same pattern again and again in our lives. We try to do everything and end up accomplishing nothing. If you're young, you think you can go all out in your career, have fulfilling relationships, travel on a regular basis, keep up with reading and social media, go without sleep, take out unnecessary credit card debt, and start a family at the same time. The end result is always a total meltdown. Even if you are twenty or thirty years past this point, you are not immune. Every day we are faced with choices on how to invest our time, and we all can be guilty of the same thing: Taking on too much without properly understanding the costs. The problem is a misunderstanding of the importance of tradeoffs. Every decision we make carries an opportunity cost. If we don't budget wisely, we end up wasting time and energy on things that don't matter. Farnam Street offers some advice on how to do it right. Check it out [HERE](#).*

> Cheaper Gas Prices Expected for Winter, Though Not as Cheap as Last Year: *The end of the year historically ushers in some of the cheapest gas prices of the year. This was true in 2018 when the national gas price average was recorded at \$2.26 on December 31. However, the national gas price average won't go that low this month. AAA forecasts that gas prices will edge lower than they are today with the national average falling between \$2.40-\$2.45, which will be 15-20 cents more than last December. "Gas prices are more expensive year-over-year in part due to higher crude prices this winter over last," says Jeanette Casselano, AAA spokesperson. Motorists west of the Mississippi are positioned to see some of the most significant gas price savings. You can find AAA's outlook for winter by region [HERE](#).*

> Two Farm Films to Check out Over the Holiday Break: *Two documentaries chronicling two separate - and very different - farms were released this year that might have flown under your radar. The first is "[Farmsteaders](#)", which aired on PBS this September. The film gives viewers an intimate look at the daily grind on a dairy farm in Ohio. The second is "[The Biggest Little Farm](#)," depicting chef Molly Chester and her filmmaker husband John Chester, who left their life in the city to*

farm 200 acres of land north of Los Angeles. The starkest difference between the two is how they depict the economic realities of farming, with the financial strain of farming a central theme in "Farmsteaders", and "The Biggest Little Farm" largely brushing past economics altogether. Both have lessons to share, though, and I'd recommend giving them a watch if you've not seen them yet. "Farmsteaders" is available to stream on the PBS app and "The Biggest Little Farm" is on Hulu.

> Don't Miss the Ursid Meteor Shower this Weekend: *The annual Ursid meteor shower runs from about December 17 to 26 each year. It typically peaks around the Winter solstice, which comes is tomorrow, December 21. The shower's peak is probably the morning of December 22, but any of the next few mornings should yield some Ursids. For the best viewing, astronomers recommend looking at the sky in the morning on the 22nd, after midnight and as late as possible before sunrise. The meteor-shower radiant, which the meteors will appear to be flying away from, is near the bowl of the Little Dipper (Ursa Minor, near the celestial North Pole), and the radiant will climb higher in the sky in the pre-dawn hours. The Ursids produce a handful of meteors or shooting stars every hour, usually in the range of five to 10 per hour. A nearly moonless sky should mean good viewing for stargazers this weekend. (Source: [Space.com](https://www.space.com/36911-ursid-meteor-shower-2019-12))*

> The Twelve Days of Christmas Cost a Little More this Year: *For 36 years, PNC Financial has calculated the prices of the twelve gifts from the classic carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The result is the PNC Christmas Price Index, a unique and whimsical holiday tradition aimed at making learning about the economy fun. It is similar to the U.S. Consumer Price Index, which measures the changing prices of goods and services like housing, food, clothing, transportation and more that reflect the spending habits of the average American. According to PNC, the Geese and the Gold would have stretched True Love's budget if it weren't for those two darling doves who dropped in price. This year a modest increase of +0.2% makes the twelve gifts a feather's weight higher than 2018, but a +95% increase from the first Christmas Price Index in 1984. The total value of the Christmas Price Index comes to \$38,993.59, a negligible \$67.56 more than last year. The "core" value, which removes the most unpredictable gift from the index - the Swans-a-Swimming - is \$25,868.59. The true cost of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" - the cumulative cost of all the gifts when you count each repetition in the song (364 gifts) - works out to a whopping \$170,298.03 this year! More details are available [HERE](#).*



PNC's 36th annual look at what True Loves will spend on the gifts from the holiday classic, "The 12 Days of Christmas."

PARTRIDGE



\$210.17
-4.5%

TURTLE DOVES



\$300.00
-20.0%

FRENCH HENS



\$181.50
0.0%

CALLING BIRDS



\$599.96
0.0%

GOLDEN RINGS



\$825.00
+10.0%

GEESSE A-LAYING



\$420.00
+7.7%

SWANS A-SWIMMING



\$13,125.00
0.0%

MAIDS A-MILKING



\$58.00
0.0%

LADIES DANCING



\$7,552.84
0.0%

LOORDS A-LEAPING



\$10,000.00
0.0%

PIPER'S PIPING



\$2,748.87
+0.8%

DRUMMERS DRUMMING



\$2,972.25
+0.8%

CHECK THE LIST.

Get the details behind the numbers at [PNC.com/ChristmasPriceIndex](https://pnc.com/christmaspriceindex)



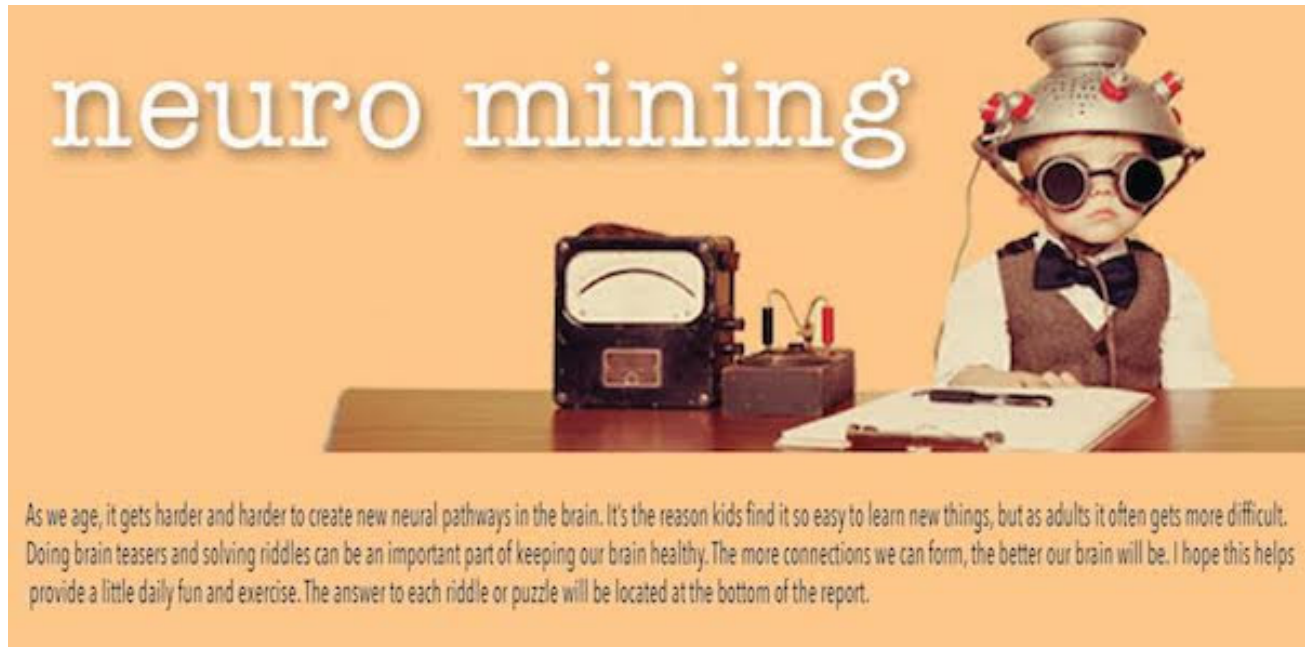


Central Kansas - *This is our 3rd really good year of corn and our second in a row of excellent corn. If we hadn't gotten a few fields stripped up by hail, which isn't terribly uncommon around here, we would have an entire farm average of over 180 bushels per acre. I was running some numbers today and with 2 medium size fields beat to hell we still average 168 bushels across 740 acres. Last year we were right in the same neighborhood. For us, a good year of corn is 120-130 bushels. If I can get my entire farm to average 120 I'm going to farm another year. This fall we actually went a little heavier wheat, which was late planted. If the wheat doesn't emerge then we will roll right back into corn. I would estimate that maybe half our wheat didn't emerge before it got cold. The wheat in this particular county was excellent but it wasn't as good as guys South of us wanted I'm told.*

Central Arkansas - *We own some river bottom ground and the spring rains forced us out of half our acres for the year. We got by with PP coverage but it was disappointing not to bring home a crop. All the corn acres were taken out of play a few of the beans. Some years we have done rice but with no storage that can be a rough game. Having to put your rice in a pool with other producers and then waiting up to a year to get your money out isn't penciling too well for guys I know. Our cattle will keep us busy this winter and we are considering investing in some strip till equipment. My son is pushing me hard to acquire it but he doesn't have to write the check. We already do some no till and we do try to stay off the fields in the spring if possible. I haven't heard any reports that banks aren't renewing farmers in the area, so it looks like we will all be farming again next year!*

Northeastern Wisconsin - *Our year was nothing special as our dry land corn produced 20% less than normal at 150 bpa. I should be happy though, I did get it out of the ground. A lot of guys are out today battling the melting snow. It can be quite the challenge for the corn to stay standing up as snow melts and I've seen a lot of guys struggle to get it out. We did pay a pretty penny to get it dried down from 25 to 13.5, but with no on-farm storage, there isn't much option. I paid 40 cents a bushel, but my brother once took a load and got hammered at 80 cents. Not that long ago I was a dairy farmer and all we did was throw the high moisture corn in the bin and feed the cows. I truly appreciate what the row croppers have to deal with more than I did. Just recently, we were approached by two separate*

renewable energy companies who wanted options on our some acres as they work out their plan. I'm getting some answers before I dive in but how do you say no to \$700-\$800 an acre profit when your used to \$150 on a good year. Just make sure you read any contracts really well before signing as they may have the option to give you 30 days notice before renewal and just walk away.



TODAY'S RIDDLE: What does Santa do in his garden?



Tomorrow is the First Day Of Winter

Despite some of us already battling extreme winter conditions, tomorrow marks the first day of Winter, with the Winter Solstice occurring at 10:19 p.m. CST on December 21. The first day of winter is also known as being the shortest day of the year for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere - it's the longest day of the year for those in the Southern Hemisphere. This year, we will only see 8 hours and 35 minutes of daylight, leaving us in the dark for about 15 hours, 25 minutes. But in the days to follow, daylight will slowly but surely start to increase. The word solstice derives from the Latin word solstitium, which translates to "sun standing." This is because at the moment of solstice, the sun's position in the sky relative to

the horizon at noon, which increases and decreases throughout the year, appears to pause in the days surrounding the solstice. 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 standstill. 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. For many ancient civilizations that lived their daily lives in much closer association with nature than we do today, winter solstice was a hugely important point each year. Celebrations of the lighter days to come have been common throughout history with feasts, festivals and holidays, as well as various tributes. Below are a few of the most popular, along with some other interesting facts about winter: (Sources: Live Science, Time-Science Magazine, Almanac.com)

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.*

Saturnalia: *The festival of Saturnalia was an ancient Roman solstice celebration dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture and time. 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.*

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.*

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.

Dong Zhi: *This thousands-of-years-old festival held in China is celebrated with family gatherings and a big meal, including rice balls called tang yuan. Thought to mark the end of the harvest season, the holiday also has roots in the Chinese concept of yin and yang: After the solstice, the abundance of darkness in winter will begin to be balanced with the light of the sun.*

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. The megalith's exact purpose, however, appears to be lost to history. 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. Archaeological research suggests winter solstice festivals happened at Stonehenge—and modern revelers have taken up the tradition, gathering at dawn the day after the longest night to witness the magical occurrence of the sun rising through the stones. When the sun sets on the winter solstice, its rays align with what is known as the central Altar stone and the Slaughter stone.*

Shalako: *For the Zuni, one of the Native American Pueblo peoples in western New Mexico, the winter solstice signifies the beginning of the year, and is marked with a ceremonial dance called Shalako. After fasting, prayer, and observing the rising and setting of the sun for several days before the solstice, the Pekwin, or "Sun Priest" traditionally announces the exact moment of itiwanna, the rebirth of the sun, with a long, mournful call. With that signal, the rejoicing and dancing begin, as 12 kachina clowns in elaborate masks dance along with the Shalako themselves—12-foot-high effigies with bird heads, seen as messengers from the gods. After four days of dancing, new dancers are chosen for the following year, and the yearly cycle begins again.*

Soyal: *Like the Zuni, the Hopi of northern Arizona are believed to be among the descendants of the mysterious Anasazi people, ancient Native Americans who flourished beginning in 200 B.C. As the Anasazi left no written records, we can only speculate about their winter solstice rites, but the placement of stones and structures in their ruins, such as New Mexico's Chaco Canyon, indicate they certainly took a keen interest in the sun's movement. In the Hopi solstice celebration of Soyal today, the Sun Chief takes on the duties of the Zuni Pekwin, announcing the setting of the sun on the solstice. An all-*

night ceremony then begins, including kindling fires, dancing and sometimes gift-giving.

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.*

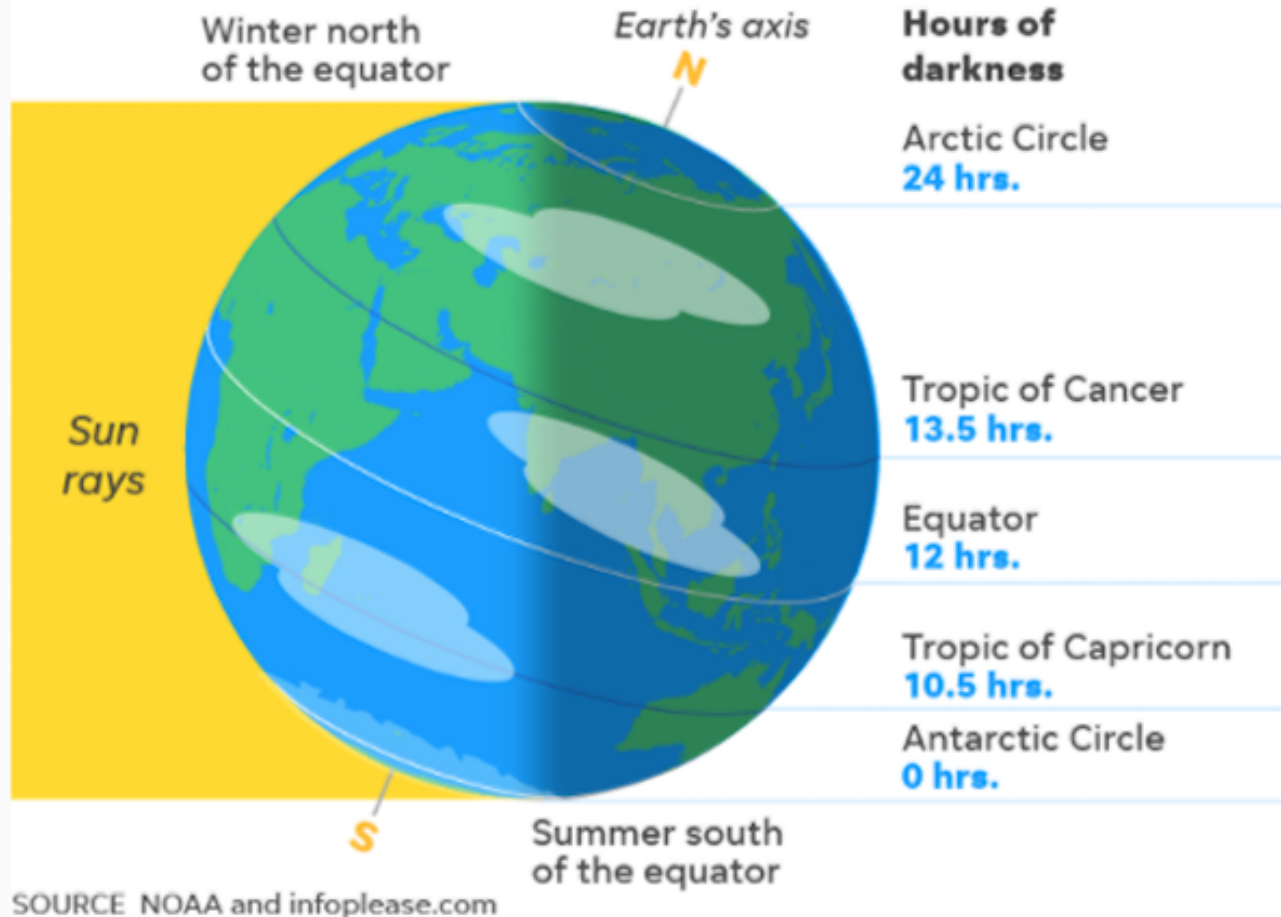
Maeshowe: *Built-in Orkney, Scotland, around 2800 B.C., Maeshowe is a burial ground that appears as a grassy mound rising about 24 feet above a grassy field. The inside of the mound contains a maze of chambers and passageways that become illuminated by sunlight during the winter solstice.*

Solstice from Space: *On the winter solstice of 1968, the Apollo 8 mission, the first crewed mission to reach and orbit the Moon, was launched. Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders became the first humans to view Earth from such a great distance, beginning their journey away from our planet on the darkest evening of the year. Three days later, they plunged behind the Moon, rendering both the Sun and the Earth invisible for a few hours. When the Sun and then the Earth rose over the limb of the Moon, they captured the breathtaking sight in the picture below.*

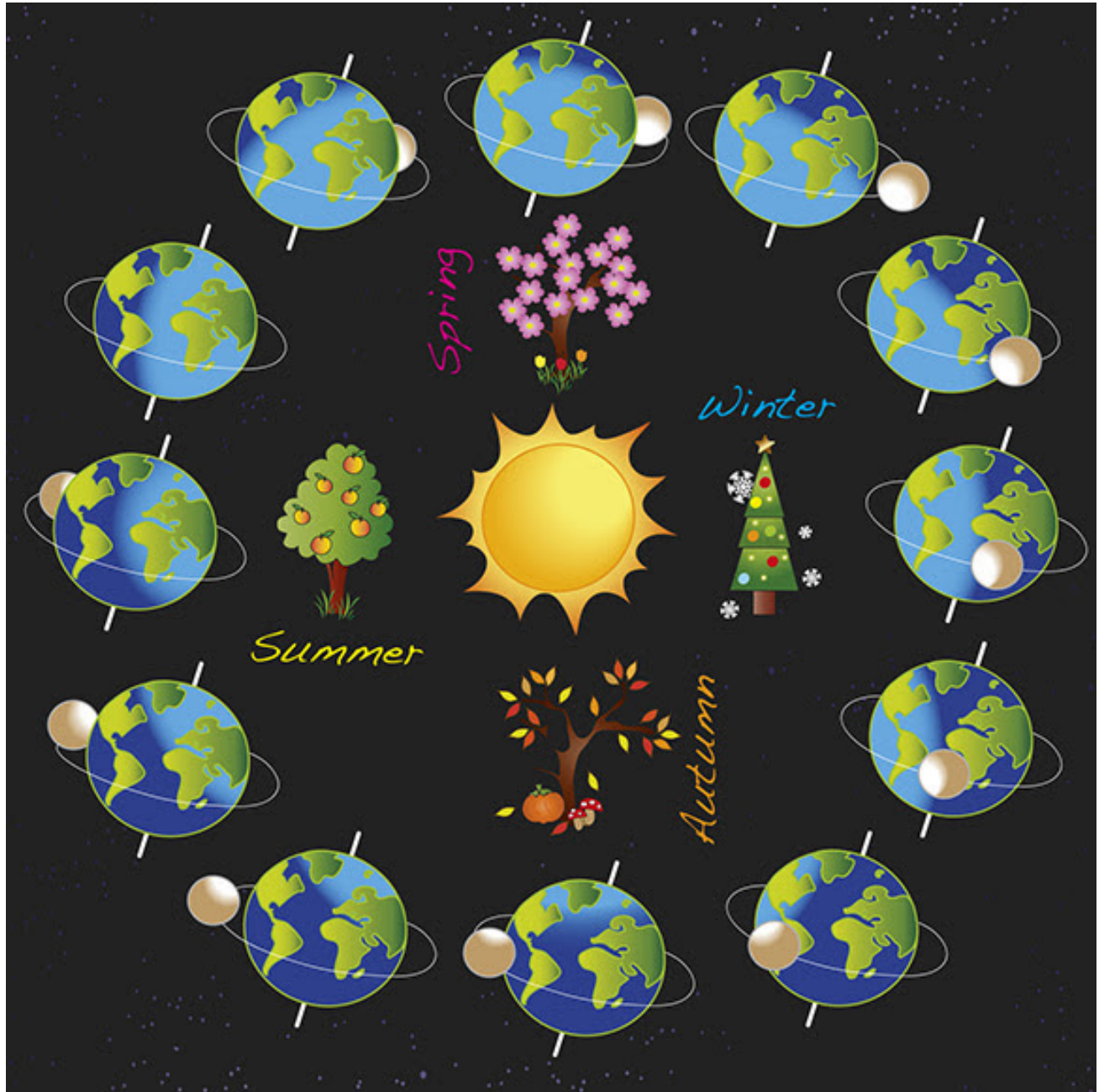


The longest night of the year

The Northern Hemisphere winter begins Thursday at 11:28 a.m. ET with the winter solstice. This is the precise moment at which the Northern Hemisphere is tilted farthest from the sun. The low sun angle and lack of daylight account for the season's cold.









College Football Bowl Games Preview

College Bowl Games are right around the corner and I'll definitely be watching some over the holidays this year. Keep in mind, the College Football Playoff isn't until December 28th, but the 2019-20 college football bowl season is in full swing. Below is a preview to every bowl this holiday season including lines from Vegas. In addition, we had some fun in the office picking games, my picks are highlighted below in yellow. Remember, my picks are against the spread.

Friday, December 20th

Bahamas Bowl: *Charlotte (7-5) vs. Buffalo (7-5) / Buffalo by 4.5 / O-U 55.5*

Frisco Bowl: *Utah State (7-5) vs. Kent State (6-6) / Utah State by 8 / O-U 67*

Saturday, December 21st

New Mexico Bowl: *C. Michigan (8-5) vs. San Diego State (9-3) / San Diego State by 4.5 / O-U 40.5*

Cure Bowl: *Georgia Southern (7-5) vs. Liberty (7-5) / Georgia Southern by 6 / O-U 55.5*

Boca Raton Bowl: *FAU (10-3) vs. SMU (10-2) / SMU by 3 / O-U 55.5*

Camellia Bowl: *FIU (6-6) vs. Arkansas State (7-5) / Arkansas State by 3 / O-U 62*

Las Vegas Bowl: *Boise State (12-1) vs. Washington (7-5) / Washington by 3 / O-U 49.5*

New Orleans Bowl: *UAB (9-4) vs. Appalachian State (12-1) / Appalachian State by 17.5 / O-U 44.5*

Monday, December 23rd

Gasparilla Bowl: *Marshall (8-4) vs. UCF (9-3) / Central Florida by 17.5 / Over-Under 59*

Tuesday, December 24th

Hawai'i Bowl: *BYU (7-5) vs. Hawaii (9-5) / BYU by 2 / O-U 63*

Thursday, December 26th

Independence Bowl: *La. Tech (9-3) vs. Miami (FL) (6-6) / Miami by 7.5 / O-U 49.5*

Quick Lane Bowl: *Pittsburgh (7-5) vs. E. Michigan (6-6) / Pittsburgh by 9.5 / O-U 50*

Friday, December 27th

Military Bowl: *N. Carolina (6-6) vs. Temple (8-4) / North Carolina by 6 / O-U 54*

Pinstripe Bowl: *Michigan State (6-6) vs. Wake Forest (8-4) / Michigan State by 3.5 / Over-Under 50.5*

Texas Bowl: *Texas A&M (7-5) vs. Oklahoma State (8-4) / Texas A&M by*

4 / Over-Under 54

Holiday Bowl: Iowa (9-3) vs. USC (8-4) / Iowa by 2.5 / O-U 52

Cheez-It Bowl: Wash. State (6-6) vs. Air Force (10-2) / Air Force by 3 / Over-Under 66.5

Saturday, December 28th

Camping World: Iowa State (7-5) vs. Notre Dame (10-2) / Notre Dame by 3.5 / O-U 56

Cotton Bowl Classic: Penn State (10-2) vs. Memphis (12-1) / Penn State by 7.5 / O-U 61.5

Peach Bowl (College Football Playoff semifinal): (1) LSU (13-0) vs. (4) Oklahoma (12-1) / LSU by 11 / O-U 76

Fiesta Bowl (College Football Playoff semifinal): (2) Ohio State (13-0) vs. (3) Clemson (13-0) / Clemson by 1 / O-U 63

Monday, December 30th

First Responder Bowl: W. Michigan (7-5) vs. W. Kentucky (8-4) / W. Kentucky by 2 / O-U 53.5

Music City Bowl: Louisville (7-5) vs. Mississippi State (6-6) / Mississippi State by 3.5 / O-U 63.5

Redbox Bowl: Illinois (6-6) vs. California (7-5) / California by 4 / O-U 44

Orange Bowl: Virginia (9-4) vs. Florida (10-2) / Florida by 13.5 / Over-Under 51

Tuesday, December 31st

Belk Bowl: Kentucky (7-5) vs. Virginia Tech (8-4) / Virginia Tech by 3 / O-U 45

Sun Bowl: *Arizona State (7-5) vs. Florida State (6-6) / Arizona State by 4.5 / O-U 55.5*

Liberty Bowl: *Kansas State (8-4) vs. Navy (9-2) / Kansas State by 2 / Over-Under 51.5*

Arizona Bowl: *Wyoming (7-5) vs. Georgia State (7-5) / Wyoming by 7 / O-U 50*

Alamo Bowl: *Texas (7-5) vs. Utah (11-2) / Utah by 6.5 / Over-Under 53.5*

Wednesday, January 1st

Citrus Bowl: *Michigan (9-3) vs. Alabama (10-2) / Alabama by 7 / O-U 54.5*

Outback Bowl: *Minnesota (10-2) vs. Auburn (9-3) / Auburn by 8 / O-U 49*

Rose Bowl: *Wisconsin (10-3) vs. Oregon (11-2) / Wisconsin by 3 / O-U 49.5*

Sugar Bowl: *Baylor (11-2) vs. Georgia (11-2) / Georgia by 8.5 / O-U 42.5*

BCS National Championship in New Orleans Monday, January 13th

Winner from Peach Bowl vs. Winner from Fiesta Bowl



2020 College Football Playoff National Championship Odds

Team	↕	Odds
LSU		+150
Clemson		+190
Ohio State		+230
Oklahoma		+1400





A Christmas Gift!

With this being the week ahead of Christmas, I like to share and pass along some of our favorite holiday stories. Some of the stories this week are ones I've shared in the past some are new. It seems we always get a few requests to resend or repost the better ones. I just hope this helps bring a smile or gives us a better appreciation and perspective of the little things in life! I wish you and your family great happiness this holiday season.

The Gold Wrapping Paper

Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year, a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier

overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

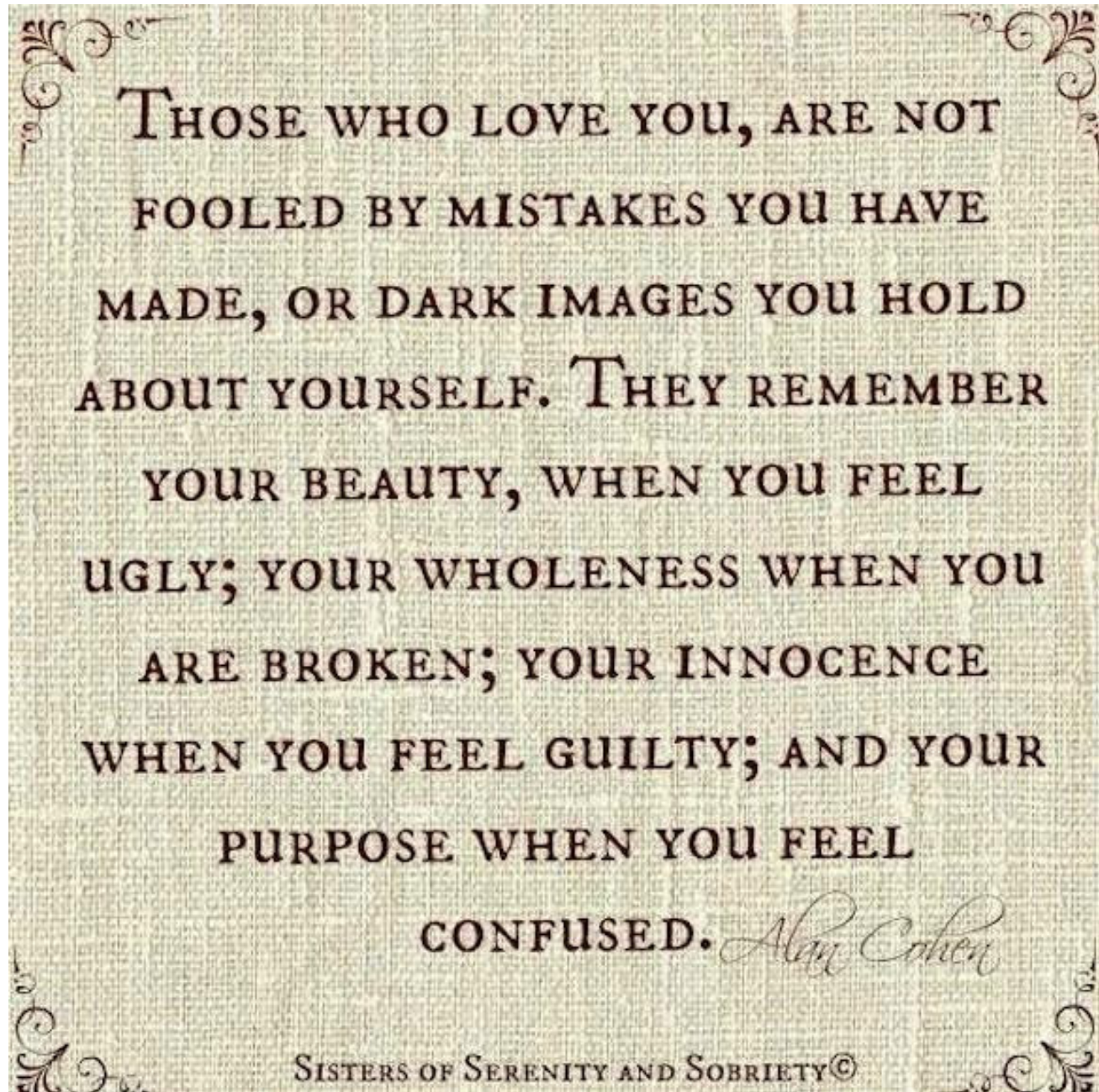
The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

Remember, God has given us the gift of unconditional love as well by sacrificing his son so that we have forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in heaven.





The Important Things In Life

This Christmas video always makes me stop and remember the important things in life. It's sad to see so many running around chasing huge monetary dreams while the togetherness of family is often sacrificed. I also hate to see and hear stories of families being torn apart by small senseless arguments or differences of opinions that blow-up and become something much larger. Just remember, there are no do-overs in life... Take the high road and make the sacrifice. Safe travels!

Click [HERE](#)

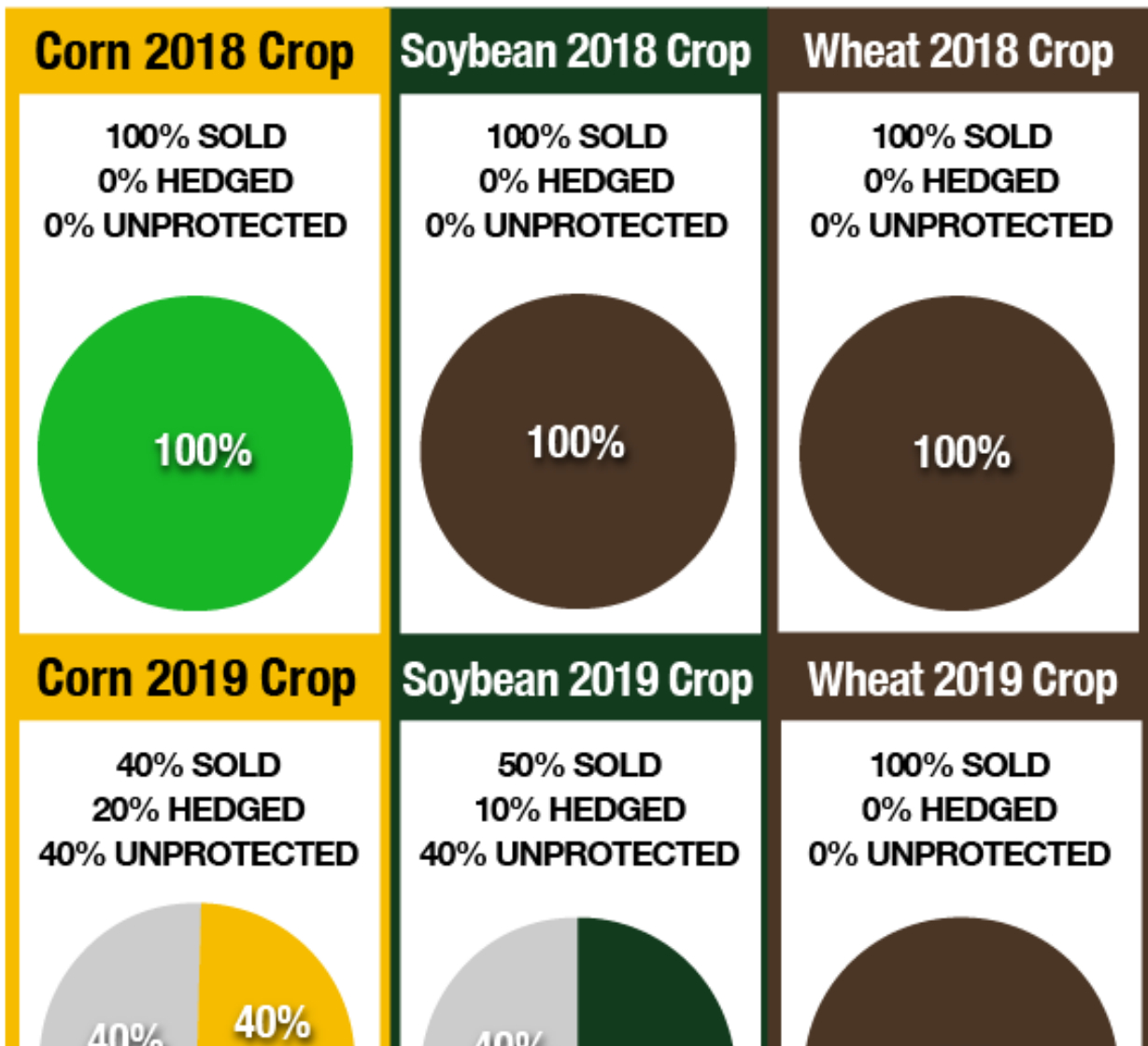


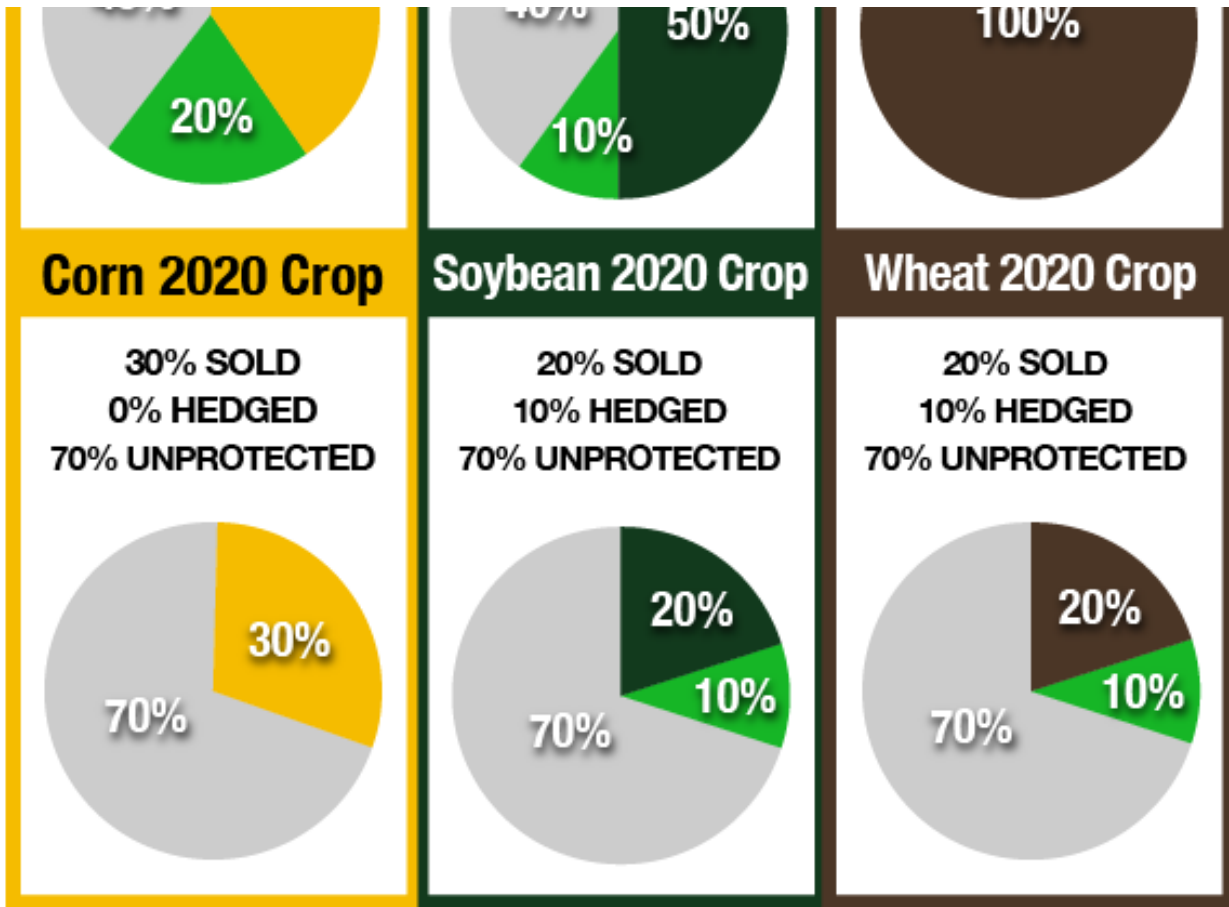
ANSWER to riddle: Ho Ho Ho!



CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS

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