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GOOD MORNING: The Van Trump Report 1-6-20

1 message

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

Mon, Jan 6, 2020 at 5:30 AM

Reply-To: Jordan <reply-fec6107472640d7c-1142_HTML-68584704-100003450-8@vantrumpreport-email.com>

To: josh@farmdirection.com



"I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions." –
Stephen Covey

Monday, January 6, 2020[Printable Copy](#) or [Audio Version](#)

Morning Summary: Stock bulls may be a bit hesitant this week as the media hypes headlines surrounding the fallout from the U.S. killing of an Iranian general, the resumed impeachment effort, and Harvey Weinstein's sex-crimes trial. Leaders in Iraq are now talking about ousting American forces in the area as they respond to the U.S. killing in Baghdad of Iran's Major General Qasem Soleimani. Iran has vowed to retaliate for the killing raising fears of wider conflict across the region. Over the weekend, rockets landed near two Iraqi bases where U.S. forces are stationed, causing no casualties but serving as a reminder of the increasingly hostile climate for Americans. From what I understand, the U.S. has around 5,000 troops in Iraq as part of an international coalition that was invited by the country's former prime minister after Islamic State (ISIS) overran around one third of the country in 2014. Two years have passed since Iraq claimed victory over Islamic State but the military coalition has remained to help prevent a resurgence of ISIS and to help train Iraqi security forces. The worry is that leaders in Iraq are getting

heavy heat and pressure from leaders out of Iran to oust the U.S. troops. If this plays out and U.S. troops are asked to leave Iraq it could mean a big resurgence of the Islamic State and push the country decisively into the Iranian camp, ultimately tilting the balance of power in the Middle East. Military leaders are calling the situation extremely "fluid" and as investors this certainly something to be paying close attention. The worst-case scenario rarely occurs, but the region's reputation as a perennial "hot spot" means it will be a heavily weighted headline with the algo's and quants. Remember, uncertainty can cause fear in the market. If the funds start to become more uncertain and ultimately more fearful it could create a more "risk-off" type reaction. Large traders are also keeping a close eye on how the U.S. consumer is reacting. Word on the street is that Google searches for "war" have ticked higher and with big money managers already somewhat squeamish this deep into a massive bull run they could have an itchy trigger finger or be quick to run towards the exit sign if they sense fear amongst consumers that could lead to weakness in the U.S. economy. There's also talk that the Middle East headlines could also push global investors towards a larger allocation in the U.S. dollar which could create more earnings headwinds for U.S. corporations and more difficulty for U.S. exporters. This would also generate bearish headwinds for U.S. commodity markets. Keep an eye on US consumer confidence. Google searches for "war" have ticked up, and this late in an economic cycle confidence can become fragile. Bottom-line, regardless of your opinion or political views, there are now many more moving parts in play directly associated with the recent turmoil in the Middle East. As all great investors and traders have commented, "when the facts change, we change". Expect heavier rotation of money and asset reallocation as investors readjust to a perceived increase in risk.

Looking ahead to this week, U.S. economic data is in the spotlight with the main attraction being the jobs report on Friday. Analysts expect around +160,000 jobs were added in December compared to November's gain of +266,000. Keep in mind that about +54,000 of November's gains were due to the end of the General Motor's strike. Expect manufacturing payrolls to come under particular scrutiny following data last week that showed a bigger-than-expected contraction in the sector. There is concern that this weakness could begin to hit overall U.S. job growth. Today's only economic release will be the PMI Services Index. Also keep in mind, both chambers of Congress are back in session this week which will once again bring the impeachment against President Trump into the spotlight. The House, which returns Tuesday, needs to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate before a trial date can be set but House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has delayed this step, insisting the Senate agree to Democrats' parameters for a trial first. As far as investors are concerned, the main thing this latest squabble impacts is the USMCA (new NAFTA) as the Senate has said they will not vote on the deal until after impeachment is wrapped up. It's not too big a deal at the moment as Canada's legislature still needs to pass the treaty as well, but they aren't back to work until the end of January.

Ram Pickup Muscles Past Chevy Silverado for the First Time: *The Ram Pickup outsold the Chevy Silverado in 2019, upsetting the traditional truck-sales finishing order—and not by a small margin. Ram sold a total of 633,694 trucks in 2019, a whopping +58,094 units ahead of the Chevy Silverado's 575,600 units. Compared to last year, these numbers represent an +18% increase for the Ram truck lineup, and a -2% decrease for the Silverado lineup. Sales of these trucks will not come close to topping the Ford F-series, though. Ford releases year-end sales today but had already racked up 662,574 sales through the third quarter, so we can presume it will extend its lead by a wide margin once Ford announces fourth-quarter and year-end numbers. (Source: Car and Driver)*

U.S. on Track for One of the Worst Flu Seasons in Decades: *This flu season is shaping up to be one of the worst in decades, according to the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases. While it's impossible to predict how the flu will play out, the season so far is on track to be one of the deadliest in more than four decades, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least 2,900 people in the US are estimated to have died of the flu already this season, according to data released Friday by the CDC. That's +800 more deaths than estimated the previous week. CDC estimates there have been at least 6.4 million flu illnesses and 55,000 hospitalizations since the season began in October. This season so far has been particularly deadly for children, with 27 deaths reported through December 28. That's the highest number of deaths at this point in the season since the CDC started keeping track 17 years ago. Even though the flu season is well underway, the worst could still be ahead, so the CDC advises everyone older than 6 months to get a flu shot. Read more from [CNN](#).*

January is the Most Popular Month for Divorce: *After surviving the holidays, many people are preparing to serve their spouse with divorce papers. January typically has a surge in divorce filings as people look for a fresh start on their life. Divorce filings surge in January as people decide to start their New Year with a clean slate, helped by a stressful holiday period and, perhaps, even more stressful in-laws, experts say, with family lawyers reporting a rise of nearly one-third in business in the New Year. There were 15.7 divorces for every 1,000 married women in 2018, according to National Center for Family & Marriage Research. That's down from a high point in 1979, when there were almost 23 divorces for every 1,000 marriages, the researchers said. Overall rates are declining, but surprisingly an increasing number of older Americans are splitting up. Increased longevity and a refusal to be unhappy anymore are some of the reasons for the "gray divorce" surge, some observers say.*

Here's What Typically Happens to Financial Markets After Major

Middle East Crisis Events: Oil prices tend to see sustained gains following Middle East crisis events, while stocks eventually churn higher as safe haven assets gold and Treasuries fade from their initial pops, according to historical analysis. On Friday, crude prices jumped roughly 3% and safe haven assets rose as well, with bonds and the U.S. dollar moving higher. At the same time, U.S. equities slipped. If financial markets follow historical precedent, many of those changes will reverse in the coming months. CNBC used hedge fund analytics tool Kensho to analyze financial markets after 20 crisis events in the Middle East over the last three decades, including the attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia last September. The analysis found that crude prices see a positive change more than 80% of the time in the month following major events. Gold and stocks followed as the next most successful asset classes. Read more from [CNBC](#).

Oil, stocks are winners following Middle East crises

Market reactions to 20 Middle East crisis events over the past three decades, according to a CNBC analysis using Kensho

Bought one day before crisis, sold one month after

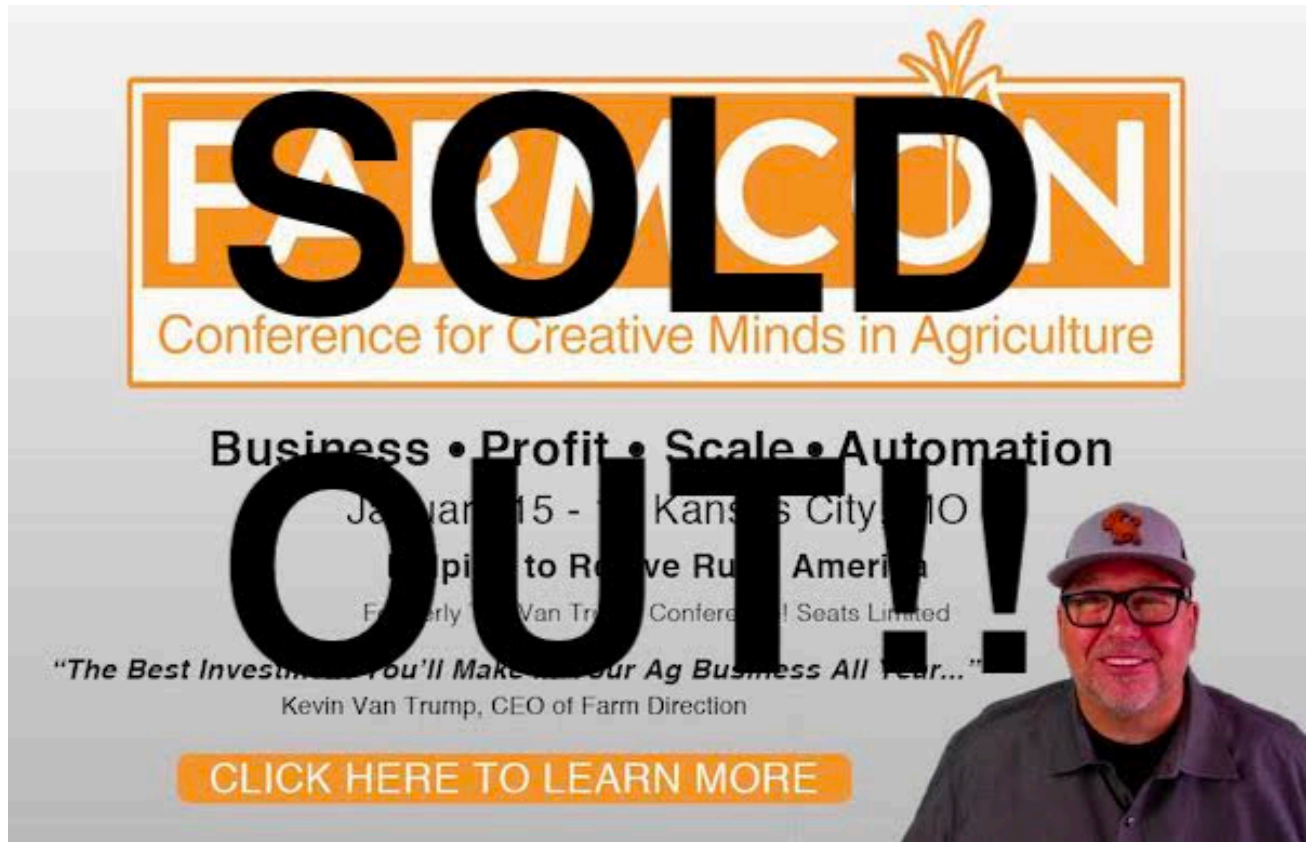
Commodity	Trades Positive	Avg. Return
Oil (WTI)	84%	5.9%
Gold	70%	1.5%
S&P 500	65%	0.9%
US Dollar Index	55%	0.1%
10-Year T-Note	50%	-0.3%

Bought one day before crisis, sold three months after

Commodity	Trades Positive	Avg. Return
Oil (WTI)	74%	9.1%
S&P 500	75%	2.8%
Gold	50%	0.0%
US Dollar Index	50%	-0.3%
10-Year T-Note	45%	-0.8%

SOURCE: Kensho, CNBC analysis





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The S&P 500 closed at an all-time high 35 times this year and 242 times this decade (2nd most after 1990s).

S&P 500 All-Time Highs by Decade...

1930-39: 0

1940-49: 0

1950-59: 141

1960-69: 224

1970-79: 35

1980-89: 190

1990-99: 310


2000-09: 13

2010-19: 242

S&P 500: Number of All-Time Highs (1929 - 2019)

Note: Closing Prices, as of 12/31/19

Year	# ATH	Year	# ATH	Year	# ATH	Year	# ATH	Year	# ATH
1929	45	1947	0	1965	37	1983	30	2001	0
1930	0	1948	0	1966	9	1984	0	2002	0
1931	0	1949	0	1967	14	1985	43	2003	0
1932	0	1950	0	1968	34	1986	31	2004	0
1933	0	1951	0	1969	0	1987	47	2005	0
1934	0	1952	0	1970	0	1988	0	2006	0
1935	0	1953	0	1971	0	1989	13	2007	9
1936	0	1954	27	1972	32	1990	6	2008	0
1937	0	1955	49	1973	3	1991	22	2009	0
1938	0	1956	14	1974	0	1992	18	2010	0
1939	0	1957	0	1975	0	1993	16	2011	0
1940	0	1958	24	1976	0	1994	5	2012	0
1941	0	1959	27	1977	0	1995	77	2013	45
1942	0	1960	0	1978	0	1996	39	2014	53
1943	0	1961	53	1979	0	1997	45	2015	10
1944	0	1962	0	1980	24	1998	47	2016	18
1945	0	1963	12	1981	0	1999	35	2017	62
1946	0	1964	65	1982	2	2000	4	2018	19

					2019	35
 COMPOUND				@CharlieBilello		



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@charliebilello

2019 Total Returns...

Bitcoin: +90%

Nasdaq 100 **\$QQQ**: +39%

Oil **\$USO**: +33%

S&P 500 **\$SPY**: +31%

REITs **\$VNQ**: +29%

Small Caps **\$IWM**: +25%

EAFE **\$EFA**: +22%

EM **\$EEM**: +18%

Gold **\$GLD**: +18%

Investment Grade **\$LQD**: +17%

High Yield **\$HYG**: +14%

US Bonds **\$AGG**: +8%

US Dollar **\$UUP**: +4%

Cash **\$BIL**: +2%



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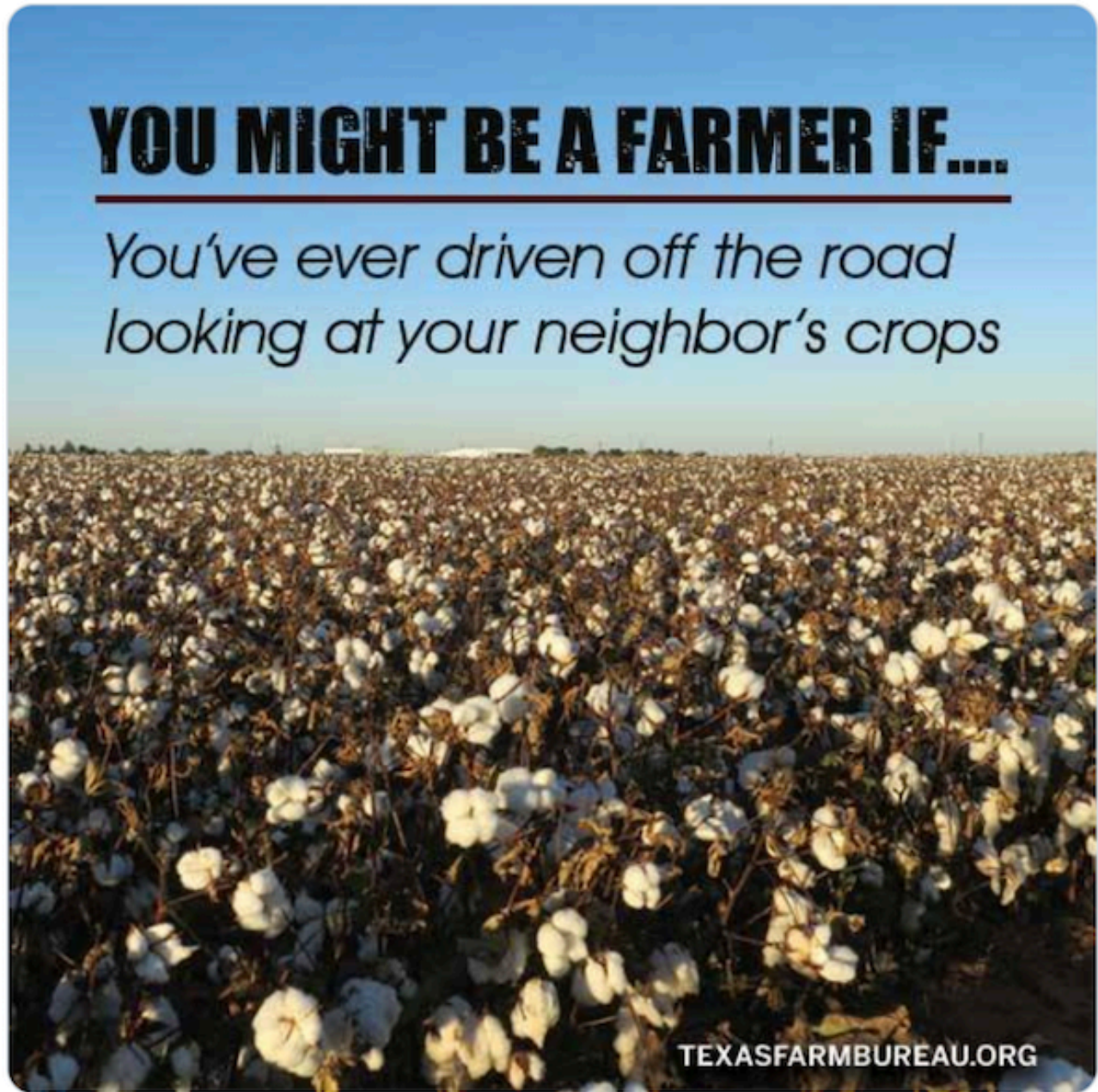


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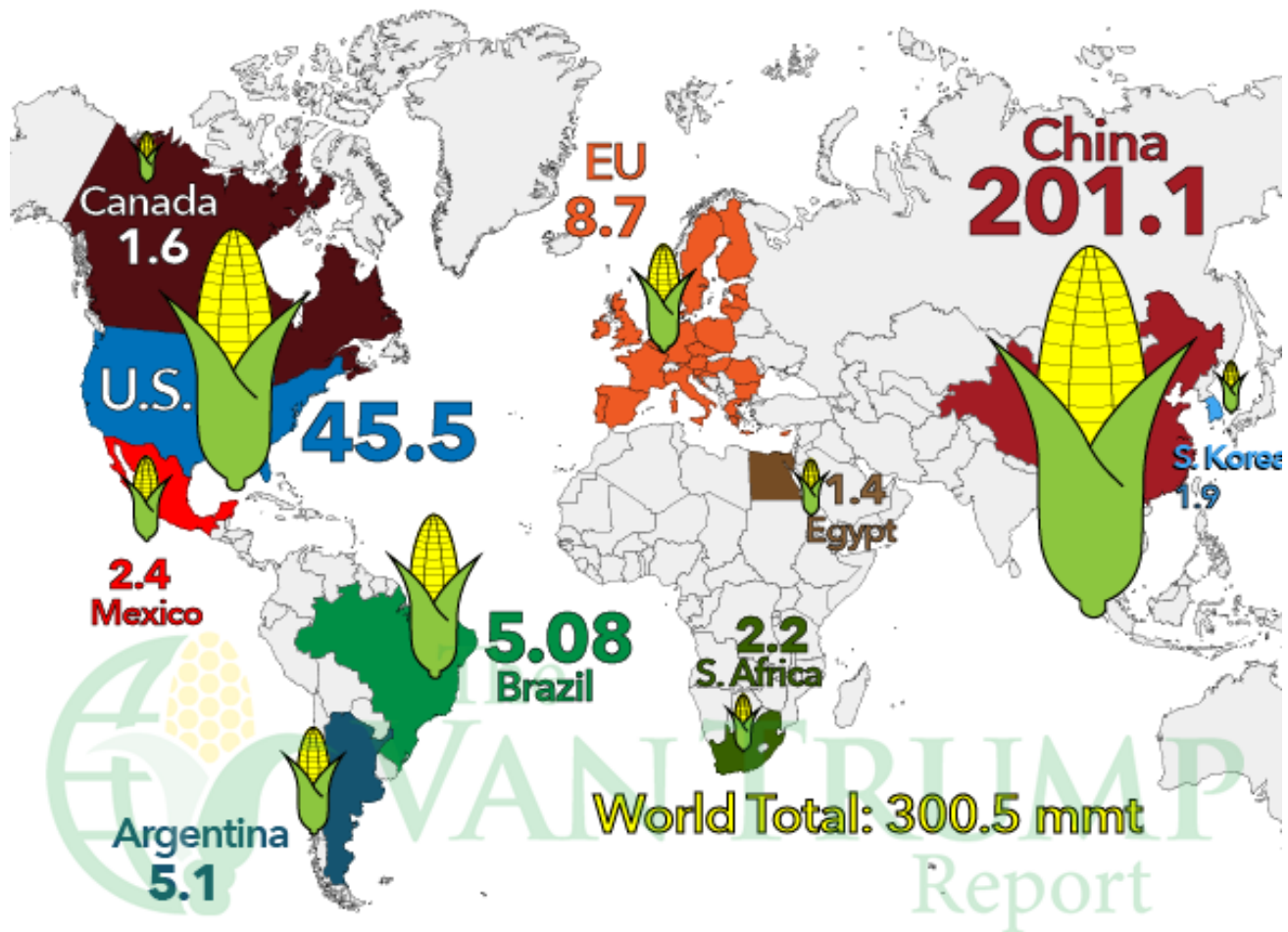


Corn bulls are hoping the highly anticipated USDA's January Crop Report scheduled for release this Friday will put the rally back on track. Bears worry that the turmoil in the Middle East and the recent U.S. killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani might spill over into all asset classes and create a more generalized "risk-off" mentality. Bulls are hoping these Middle Eastern headlines will fade away as quickly as they appeared. Keep in mind, when global investors get nervous they tend to place bigger allocations into the U.S. dollar. More buy-side interest creates a stronger U.S. dollar which ultimately creates a bearish undertone in the commodity markets. Hopefully, President Trump's scheduled January 15th signing of the "Phase 1" trade deal with China will help ease the market's concerns. As for South American weather, most sources inside the trade will argue that Argentine weather has improved enough to this point that it's not really impacting the market. There's some argument that rainfall could become more important and in greater demand later in January but at the moment not much of a story. There's also some argument that southern and northeastern Brazil will need a few additional drinks so we will continue to pay close attention. I'm looking for headlines involving Iran and Friday's USDA report to be most all of the talk this week. As a producer, I've made some recent sales and have hedges in place so I'm not all that worried. As a spec, I'm flat the market and waiting until after Fridays

USDA data is released to make my next move. I'm hoping the trade overdoes its reaction one way or the other. I would like to be a longer-term bull but worry there could be a limited number of bullish headlines between mid-January and mid-March so I'm staying patient...

Global Ending Stocks

Corn 2019/20 *(in million metric tons)*

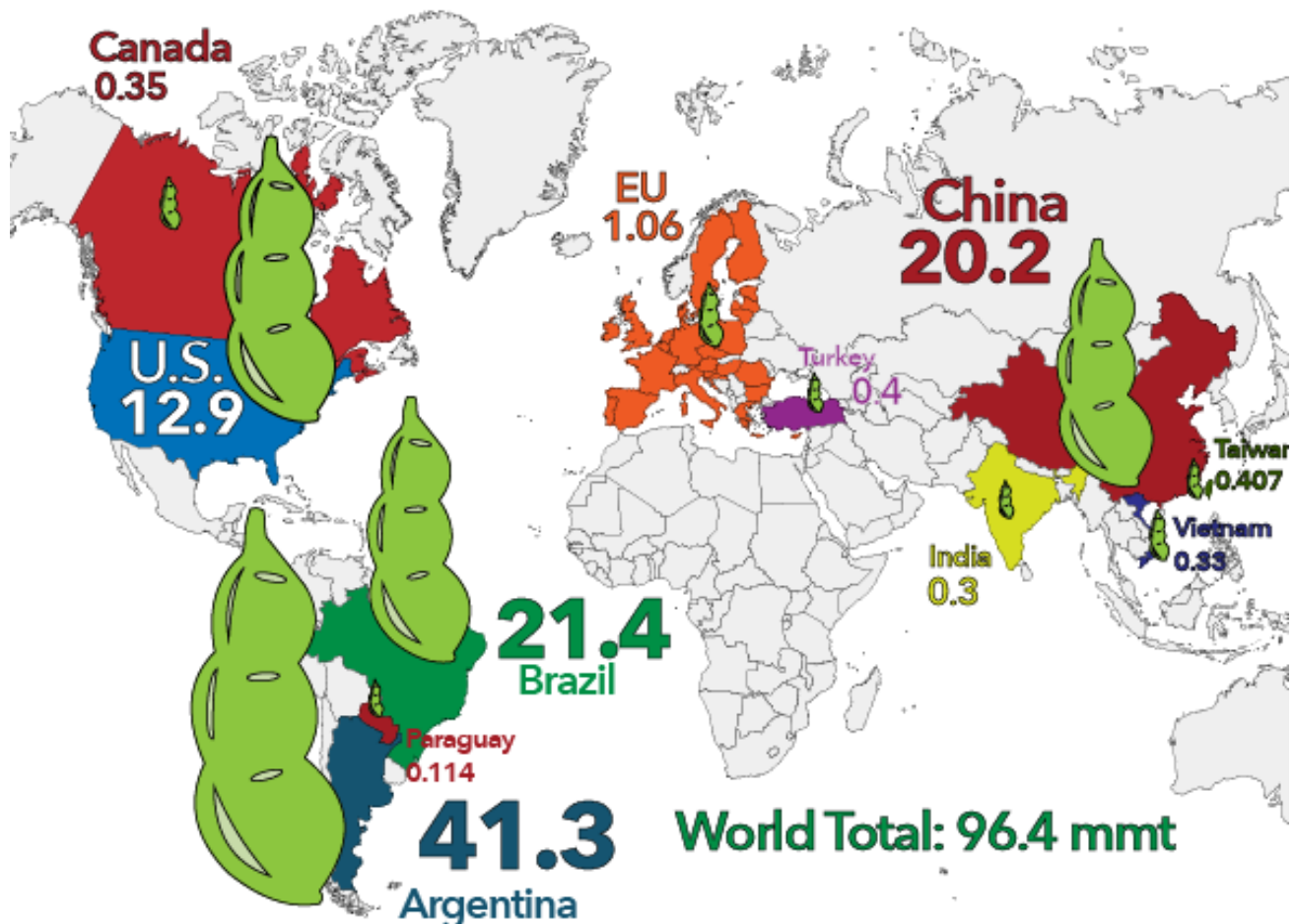


Source: USDA, PS&D, January, 2020

Soybean traders are contemplating very similar headlines to corn, i.e. rising tensions in the Middle East, Friday's upcoming USDA report, next week signing of the "Phase 1" Chinese trade deal, overall Chinese demand, South American weather and politics. How the turmoil and rising tensions in the Middle East play out is anyone's guess? If the headlines create enough uncertainty it could cause a ripple-like "risk-off" effect. The other fear is that it strengthens the U.S. dollar and creates additional headwinds for U.S. exporters. South American weather is currently a non-event. Several sources inside the trade are thinking Brazil could

harvest another record crop, while Argentine crop conditions have arguably improved. The USDA report is a bit of a wild-card with bulls thinking U.S. production will be trimmed but it will have little impact on global supply. The other major wild-card is Chinese demand and what details are unveiled in the official "Phase 1" trade agreement? As a producer, I reduced a bit of price risk on the recent rally and would entertain reducing a bit more should we catch another leg higher in the next two-weeks. As a spec, I've banked profits on all bullish positions and remain patiently on the sideline.

Global Ending Stocks Soybeans 2019/20 *(in million metric tons)*



Source: USDA, PS&D, January 2020

Wheat bulls continue to talk about fewer U.S. acres and weakening winter wheat crop-conditions. There's also optimism amongst bulls that Chinese buying interest will pickup once "Phase 1" of the trade deal is made official. Bears continue to

doubt overall strength in U.S. demand, with many inside the trade now suggesting multi-month weakness in the U.S. dollar has ended. Bottom-line, if the dollar starts to show signs of strengthening it will make it more difficult for the bulls to argue stronger U.S. wheat demand. I've also been hearing more talk amongst the bears that a large chunk of global wheat buying has been somewhat front-end loaded. Meaning demand headlines might slow down as we move deeper into the new year. Similar to the corn and soybean markets, as a spec, I elected to bank profits on my bullish positions and move to the sideline. As a producer, I elected to make some cash sales and reduce more overall long-term risk. I might be leaving the bullish party way too early but I worry about overstaying my welcome with a burdensome global balance sheet still in the mix.

Global Ending Stocks

Wheat 2019/20 *(in million metric tons)*



Source: USDA, PS&D, January, 2020



> 2020 Starts off with Dryness Concerns in Parts of South America:

Michael Cordonnier of Soybean & Corn Advisor notes that weather starting off 2020 in South America is a bit of a mixed bag. In many areas of central Brazil, the weather has been good, but that is not the case in northeastern Brazil and in far southern Brazil where dry weather is an ongoing concern. In Brazil's two largest soybean producing states of Mato Grosso and Parana, the weather has generally been beneficial and farmers are expecting average to better than average soybean yields. Northeastern Brazil did receive some rain over the past week, but it was not enough to fully recharge the soil moisture. Some farmers in the region had suspended soybean planting while they waited for additional moisture. Dryness is also a concern in many areas of Rio Grande do Sul in far southern Brazil. Some areas of the state has been basically dry during the entire month of December. The weather in Argentina has improved over the last several weeks, but it is still dryer than normal in parts of southern Argentina. The driest areas of Argentina are southwest Buenos Aires province and La Pampa province. Read more [HERE](#).

> Bunge Sells Stake in U.S. Ethanol Plant as Biofuels Industry Struggles:

Bunge Ltd ended its 13-year ownership interest in an Iowa ethanol plant, the company announced last week, following industry struggles with thin margins and overproduction. Southwest Iowa Renewable Energy, or SIRE, repurchased Bunge's stake in the facility on Dec. 31, according to a statement. Bunge had a 25% ownership interest in SIRE, which operates the ethanol plant near a Bunge oilseed processing facility in Council Bluffs, Iowa, according to an annual report Bunge

filed last year with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The plant's other owners are primarily agricultural producers in southwest Iowa, the filing said. SIRE is permitted to produce 140 million gallons per year and Bunge will continue to buy all of its ethanol under a revised commercial agreement, according to the statement. Read more from [Reuters](#).

> ChemChina and Sinochem Merge Agricultural Assets: *ChemChina and Sinochem are consolidating their agricultural assets into a new holding company to be called Syngenta Group, ChemChina unit Syngenta said on Sunday. Chen Lichtenstein, current president and CEO of ADAMA, will be nominated CFO of the newly formed Syngenta Group. He will be based in Basel, Switzerland, the Swiss group that ChemChina acquired in 2017 for \$43 billion said in a statement. (Source: Reuters)*

> Extractors Were Stock Winners in Tough 2019 for Cannabis Stocks: *If you wanted to beat the 2019 slump in pot stocks, picks and shovels were the way to go. Of the 100 companies in the BI Global Cannabis Competitive Peers index, Canadian extractors Valens Co. and MediPharm Labs Corp. were two of the top performers last year with gains of +127% and +122% respectively. (Australia's hemp-focused Ecofibre Ltd. was the only stock that did better, returning +166% since its debut in March.) The BI index, by comparison, fell -50% over the same period. Valens and MediPharm were initially the victims of a misconception that they weren't as valuable as cannabis cultivators, said Charles Taerk, chief executive officer of Faircourt Asset Management, which acts as an adviser to the cannabis-focused Ninepoint Alternative Health Fund. Both companies have contracts with large producers to extract cannabis oils that are then used in products like vapes, edibles, beverages and topicals. They also make white-label versions of those products for companies that don't make their own in-house. They also reported net income in the third quarter, a rare feat in the cannabis space. Valens earned C\$5.9 million on revenue of C\$16.5 million and MediPharm reported net income before tax of C\$5.4 million on revenue of C\$43.4 million. (Source: Bloomberg)*

> Illinois Sells \$3.2 Million Worth of Marijuana on First Day of Legalization: *Illinois said \$3.2 million worth of legal marijuana was sold on Tuesday, the first day the drug could legally be purchased for recreational use in the state, as a new law went into effect that could also clear the records of hundreds of thousands of people with arrest records. Illinois' Department of Financial and Professional Regulation reported that the cash was generated from over 77,000 transactions. Illinois is the eleventh state (plus D.C.) to legalize cannabis in the U.S., and Bloomberg reported that the state expects to eventually fetch between \$2 billion and \$4 billion in annual sales. Illinois is the country's sixth most populated state, according to Bloomberg, and bordered by states where marijuana is still illegal. Illinois' legalization effort could push those states to follow*

suit with their own laws. According to analysts, illicit sales of marijuana in Illinois are expected to outpace legal sales through 2024. (Source: Forbes)

> What to Expect from CES 2020: *The Consumer Electronics Show starts tomorrow in Las Vegas, Nevada. The annual event gives the tech world a chance to preview future products and reveal the trends that will shape the year ahead in tech. Of course, some of the products that make headlines at CES are sneak peeks at real products, while others are more like concept cars that may never come to market. But CES also gives us a bigger picture of how the tectonic plates are moving in the tech industry, and the new ways technology is going to improve, encroach on, and transform our lives. Over the past month, the CNET team has been diving deep on a lot of the stuff that's coming at CES 2020, so they've got a good sense of trends that will dominate this year's show. Check it out [HERE](#).*

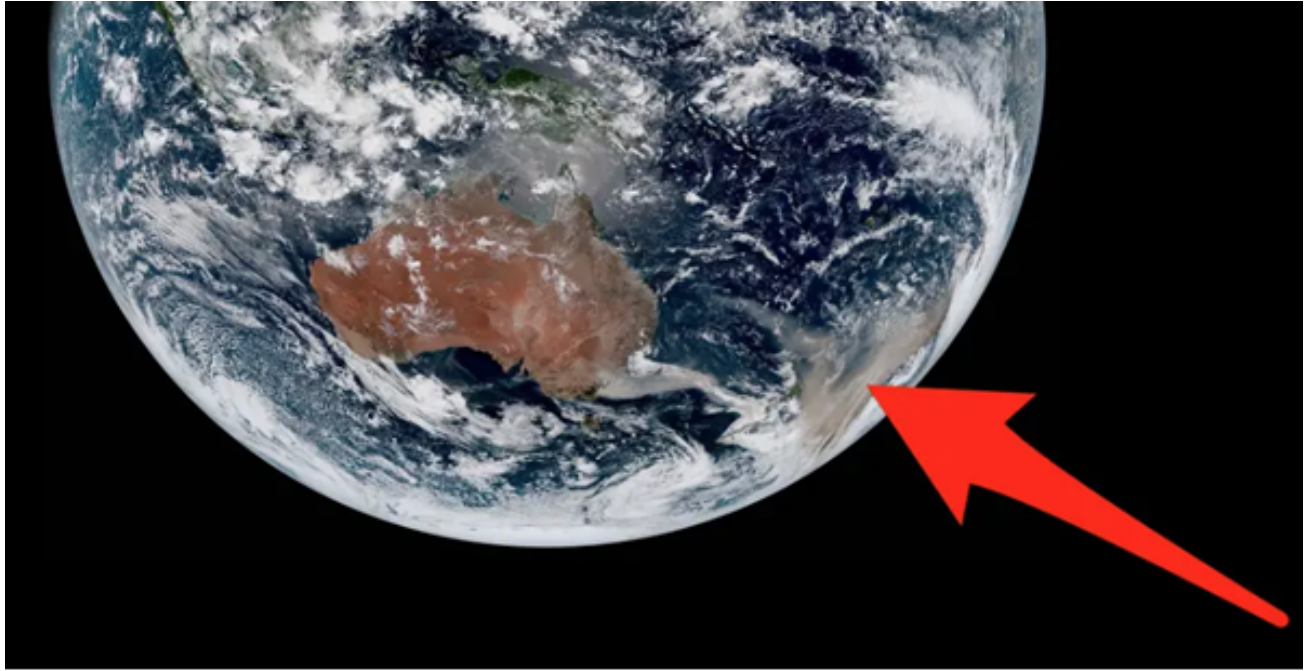
> U-Haul Will No Longer Hire Nicotine Users in 21 States: *U-Haul will not hire people who use nicotine products in 21 states beginning Feb. 1 in an attempt "to establish one of the healthiest corporate cultures in the U.S. and Canada," according to a statement. The new policy will not apply to current employees. The other 29 states not affected have laws in effect that protect smokers from being discriminated against by employers for nicotine use. Read more from [ABC News](#).*

> Processed Foods are a Much Bigger Health Problem Than We Thought: *The case against processed food just keeps getting stronger. But, amazingly, we still don't understand exactly why it's so bad for us. Recent studies show the more ultraprocessed foods a person ate, the more likely they were to get sick and even die. In one study, they were more likely to suffer from cardiovascular problems. Another linked an ultraprocessed diet to a higher risk of death from all causes. The list of bad outcomes goes on, but the question of "why" is still unanswered. A new theory is it has to do with our gut biome. More [HERE](#).*

> A 30-Second Trick That Can Make Anyone More Creative: *If you're designing a new product or marketing campaign, what's the better source of creativity: Your brain or your heart? That's a question posed by researchers in a new study published in the Journal of Consumer Research. Their conclusion? It's your heart. It's more important to think about how your audience or users feel than how they might act. And once you know that, you can actually change your own thinking to be more creative. Read more [HERE](#).*

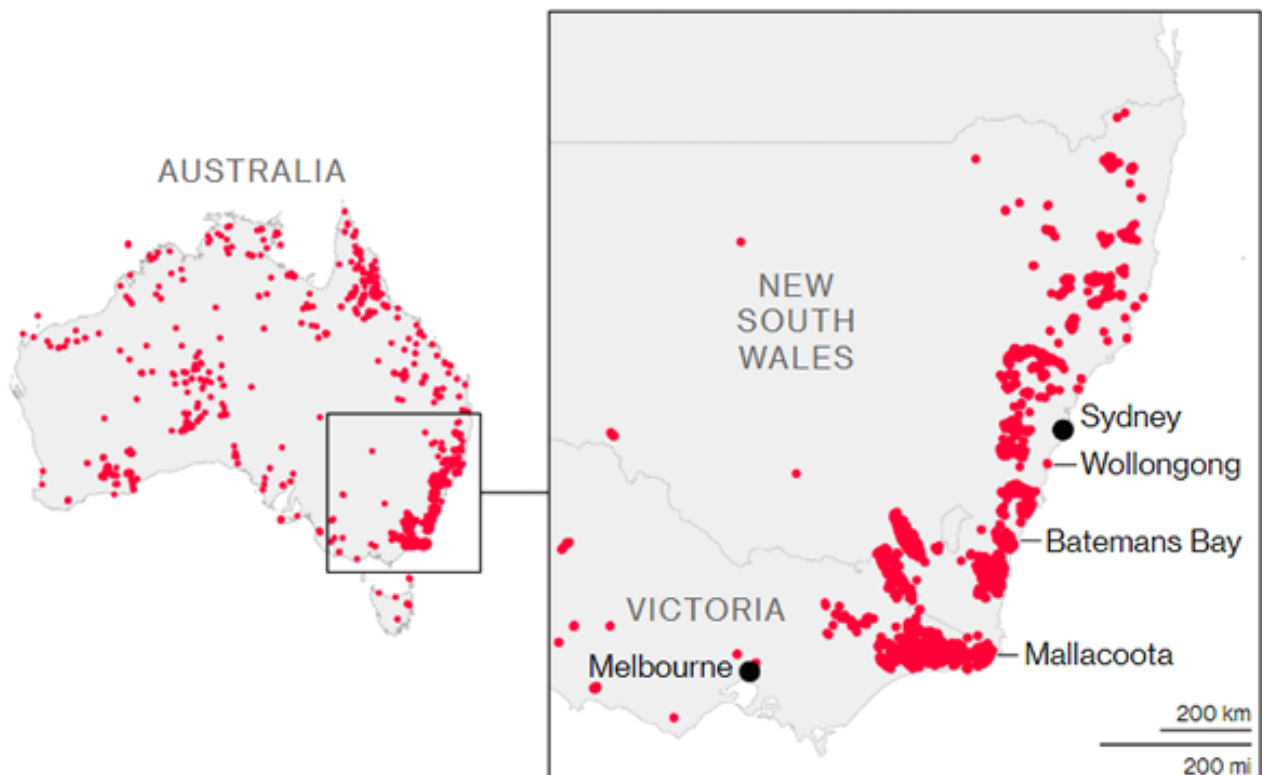
> Stunning Satellite Images Reveal the Shocking Extent of Australia's Bushfire Crisis: *Australia's raging bushfires are so bad that satellites thousands of miles above Earth can easily spot their flames and smoke from space. The fires likely started naturally, though experts think human-caused climate disruption has exacerbated hot arid conditions that fuel the growth of such blazes. Current estimates suggest eastern Australia's bushfire crisis has scorched more than 14*

million acres of land, killed about half a billion animals, and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The photo above — which shows plumes of smoke about half the area of Europe darkening skies as far as New Zealand in a yellow haze — was taken last Thursday by the Japan Meteorological Agency's Himawari-8 satellite. View more photos, animations, and illustrations of the crisis on Earth as seen from outer space [HERE](#).



Deadly Wildfires Are Raging Across Australia

New South Wales and Victoria have been the hardest hit



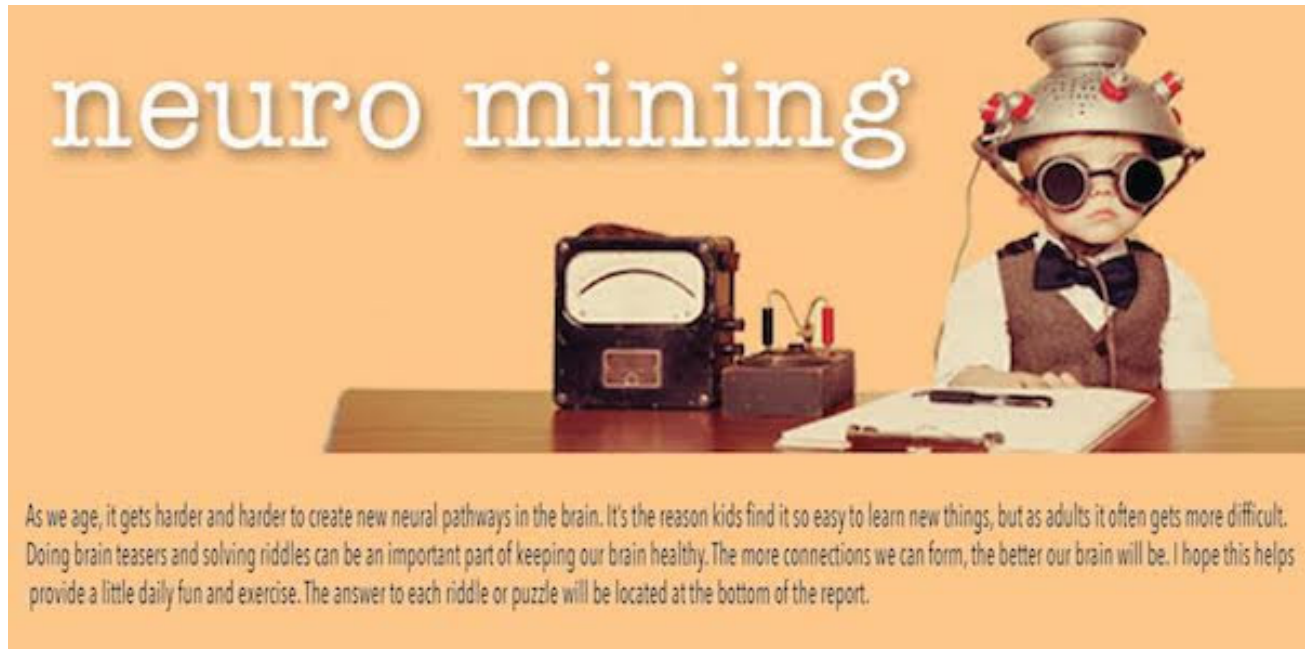
Source: Fire Information for Resource Management System
Note: Data as of Jan. 2



Western Wisconsin - *We are happy to be done with the 2019 harvest. We finished our last field about 5 days before Christmas so that made for a better than expected holiday. The last fields seemed to be the worst. I don't know if that was because they were later planted or they just hadn't stood as well as the earlier harvested corn. Don't get me wrong, the yields were inconsistent all the way through harvest but when it was all said and done, we average right over our APH. All in all it was a tough year but it all came out okay at the end.*

North central Kansas - *Very little wheat was planted in our county but what did get planted has pretty spotty stands. We seem to be getting more warm days than normal for this time of year. Normally we stay pretty close to freezing the next few months. We really have no rain or snow on the horizon which I can say is good for the cattle. Most days this month are going to be above freezing so we should see a little bit of growth on the wheat especially if we can catch rain. The warmer weather has put pounds on the cattle a little faster this winter. I have a feeling we are going to be heading into a dry year but it's just a hunch.*

Northern North Dakota - *We are getting a nice amount of snow this year. It seems to snow about every other day if not every third. The wind has caused a lot of it to drift. The standing corn is holding up well. What we don't want to see is a lot of heating and cooling which is what can weaken the stalk. I'm hearing guys are going to try and get out there early February, snow permitting. The ground will be frozen enough to hold the machinery above ground which surprisingly it wasn't in December.*



TODAY'S RIDDLE: You can easily touch me, but not see me. You can throw me out, but not away. What am I?



She Came Home to Help but Stayed to Build a Business

Fourth-generation farmer, Cory Carman didn't intend to follow in her grandmother's footsteps and become a rancher, but after returning home to the family's remote property in eastern Oregon with her Stanford degree, she soon changed her mind. Carman always thought of the ranch as a retirement project but realized that if she didn't step in now, it may soon be too late. With that, Carman assessed and determined that no longer could the business or the land survive doing it the same way her ancestors had.

Changing protocols that have served the industry for years, including treating the grasses the cattle ate with chemical fertilizers and pesticides, weaning calves at about nine months old, and selling them at auction, was a priority in the new design as Carman determined those systems were unsustainable. The bottom line for Carman was that it was getting too hard to support her herd as the prairie grasses continued to recede each year. Interestingly, Carman had done a work-

study project on grass-fed beef in college, and though she found only 50 ranches at the time were attempting the process, she convinced her family to give a try.

It's important to note that if your operation needs a change of trajectory, any short-term worries or gains must be set aside for the long-term goal of staying in business. It can be very challenging to see down the road when you're trying to pay next month's bills, but it's mission-critical to not wait until the options are limited or your moves are forced by the markets.

Carman's plan revolved around holistic management of the resources available and included constantly moving the cattle and paying careful attention to the rate of growth of the animals and grasses. Within her system the steers select the forages they need to grow and gain weight, the grasses get clipped, trampled down and fertilized with manure, resulting in fields that better retain water, resist drought, contain abundant organic matter, and become highly productive without the addition of fertilizer.

It would be an understatement to say that Carman's relatives were initially disappointed by her move to shift away from what the family had been doing for years, but fifteen years later, the proof is in the beef Carman sells. Initially, they were selling beef in shares, where customers would commit to buying a half, quarter, or eighth of a carcass, and according to Carman, the business was starting to stabilize and grow, but the family was still kind of scraping by.

Eventually, Carman created two LLCs and took on investors in 2017 to expand her reach. With the new capital, the Carman Ranch was able to work with larger wholesale accounts such as New Seasons Market, a chain of West Coast grocery stores, and now a core group of six like-minded producers with ranches from Oregon to Nevada who supply meat year-round to stores across the country. As the company grows, Carman likes to point out that her purpose was to first build a more healthy soil with the ancillary layers of values following behind.

Once again, we learn the only constant in life is "change". Those of us in the world of agriculture seem to be traditionalist at heart so often embracing change goes against our core set of values. This is a personal battle we will all have to address if we want to see future success for our children and grandchildren that want to follow in our footsteps. We have to find a way to be open to their new ideas and new perspectives! (Source: civileats, thefeed)





Top 10 Emerging Technologies

Together with the World Economic Forum, Scientific American put together an international Steering Group of leading technology experts and engaged in an intense process to identify this year's "Top 10 Emerging Technologies." Their final list of world-changing technologies that are poised to "rattle the status quo" covers a broad range of disciplines but all fit a number of criteria: Do the suggested technologies have the potential to provide major benefits to societies and economies? Could they alter established ways of doing things? Are they still in early stages of development but attracting a lot of interest from research labs, companies or investors? Are they likely to make significant inroads in the next several years? Below is a summary of their findings, which offers a peek at the future as well as some potential spaces to be scouting for investment opportunities. The full report is available [HERE](#).

ENVIRONMENT

Bioplastics could solve a major pollution problem: *In 2014 alone, the industry generated 311 million metric tons of plastic, an amount expected to triple by 2050, according to the World Economic Forum. Yet less than 15 percent of it gets recycled. Biodegradable plastics can ease these problems. The options currently available—mostly made from corn, sugarcane, or waste fats and oils—generally lack the mechanical strength and visual characteristics of the standard kinds, however. Recent breakthroughs in producing plastics from cellulose or lignin (the dry matter in plants) promise to overcome those drawbacks.*

Smarter fertilizers can reduce environmental contamination: *To feed the world's growing population, farmers need to increase crop yields. Applying more fertilizer could help. But standard versions work inefficiently and often harm the environment. Fortunately, products that are more*

ecologically sound—controlled-release fertilizers—are available and becoming increasingly smart. A class known as slow-release fertilizers has been sold for some time but newer formulations include substances that slow nutrient delivery still further, by retarding the conversion of starting materials, such as urea, to nutrients. Recently fertilizers that more fully fit the description "controlled release" have been developed—made possible by sophisticated materials and manufacturing techniques that can tune the shells so that they alter nutrient-release rates in desired ways as the soil's temperature, acidity or moisture changes. By combining different types of tuned capsules, manufacturers can make fertilizers that have profiles tailored to the needs of specific crops or growing conditions.

ENGINEERING

Tiny lenses will enable the design of miniature optical devices: *As phones, computers and other electronics have grown ever smaller, their optical components have stubbornly refused to shrink. Engineers have recently figured out much of the physics behind much smaller, lighter alternatives known as metalenses. These lenses could allow for greater miniaturization of microscopes and other laboratory tools, as well as of consumer products, such as cameras, virtual-reality headsets and optical sensors for the Internet of Things. And they could enhance the functionality of optical fibers. In addition to reducing size, metalenses should ultimately lower the cost of optical components because the diminutive lenses can be manufactured with the same equipment already used in the semiconductor industry. In the next few years, the tiny lenses will probably make their way into smaller, easier-to-manufacture sensors, diagnostic tools such as endoscopic imaging devices, and optical fibers.*

Social robots play nicely with others: *In industry and medicine, robots routinely build, break down and inspect things; they also assist in surgery and dispense prescription drugs in pharmacies. However, the researchers say we can expect social robots to become more sophisticated and prevalent in the next few years. The field seems to have reached a tipping point, with bots having greater interactive capabilities and performing more useful tasks than ever before. Like most robots, social robots use artificial intelligence to decide how to act on information received through cameras and other sensors. Advances in AI have enabled designers to greatly increase robot's ability to respond in ways that seem lifelike, as well as adapt to people's needs by learning from feedback, rewards and criticisms. In consequence, social robots are filling an ever-expanding variety of roles with particular appeal for assisting the world's growing elderly population. Worldwide sales of consumer robots reached an estimated \$5.6 billion in 2018, and the market is expected to grow to \$19 billion by the end of 2025, with more than*

65 million robots sold a year.



MEDICAL and BIOTECH

Special class of proteins offers promise for cancer and Alzheimer's:
Decades ago scientists identified a particular class of proteins driving illnesses from cancer to neurodegenerative disease. These "intrinsically disordered proteins" (IDPs) looked different from the proteins with rigid structures that were more familiar in cells. When IDPs do not function properly, disease can ensue, but researchers have not been able to create treatments to eliminate or regulate malfunctioning IDPs. However, that picture is starting to change as scientists identify compounds that inhibit these proteins, and some have emerged as bona fide drug candidates. In 2017, researchers demonstrated it was possible to aim at and hit the changeable interface of an IDP called NUPR1, which is involved in a form of pancreatic cancer. Additional molecules have been identified that work on IDPs such as beta-amyloid, implicated in diseases such as Alzheimer's. This list will continue to grow, especially as the role that IDPs play in crucial cell parts known as membraneless organelles becomes clearer. The industry is also betting on the therapeutic potential of IDPs. It is increasingly likely that in the next three to five years these once "undruggable" proteins will end up in the crosshairs of pharmaceutical development.

DNA data storage is closer than you think: *Every minute in 2018, Google conducted 3.88 million searches, and people watched 4.33 million videos on YouTube, sent 159,362,760 e-mails, tweeted 473,000 times and posted 49,000 photos on Instagram, according to software company Domo. By 2020 an estimated 1.7 megabytes of data will be created per second per person globally, which translates to about 418 zettabytes in a single year (418 billion one-terabyte hard drives' worth of information). In short, we are about to have a serious data-storage problem that will only become more severe over time. An alternative to hard drives is progressing: DNA-based data storage. DNA can accurately stow massive amounts of data at a density far exceeding that of electronic devices. Among the challenges to making DNA data storage commonplace are the costs and speed of reading and writing DNA, which need to drop even further if the approach is to compete with electronic storage. Even if DNA does not become a ubiquitous storage material, it will almost certainly be used for generating information at entirely new scales and preserving certain types of data over the long term.*



COMPUTING

Collaborative telepresence could render distance (relatively) meaningless: *Imagine a group of people in different parts of the world smoothly interacting as if they were physically together, down to being able*

to feel one another's touch. The components that will enable such "collaborative telepresence" could transform how we work and play together, rendering physical location irrelevant. Medical providers, for instance, will be able to work remotely with patients as if they were in the same room. And friends and families will be able to enjoy shared experiences. Progress in several realms has made this prospect feasible. Augmented-reality (AR) and virtual-reality (VR) technologies are already becoming capable and affordable enough for widespread adoption. Telecom companies are rolling out 5G networks fast enough to handle masses of data from advanced sensor arrays without lag times. Although collaborative telepresence is still very much emerging, all the pieces are in place for it to become transformative within three to five years. Microsoft and other companies are already investing in technologies that are expected to underpin a multibillion-dollar industry by 2025. And the XPRIZE Foundation has launched the \$10-million ANA Avatar XPRIZE competition (sponsored by All Nippon Airways) to kick-start technologies that will "transport a human's sense, actions, and presence to a remote location in real time, leading to a more connected world."



PUBLIC HEALTH

Advanced food tracking and packaging will save lives and cut waste: *About 600 million people suffer food poisoning every year, according to the World Health Organization, and 420,000 die. When an outbreak occurs, investigators can spend days or weeks tracking its source. Together a pair of technologies could reduce both food poisoning and food waste. The first, an*

innovative application of blockchain technology (better known for managing virtual currency), is beginning to solve the traceability problem. Enhanced food packaging, meanwhile, is providing new ways to determine whether foods have been stored at proper temperatures and whether they might have begun to go bad with sensors that reveal the gaseous by-products of spoilage. Beyond preventing sickness, such sensors can reduce waste by showing that a food is safe to eat. Cost remains a roadblock to the ubiquitous use of sensors. Still, the food industry's need to ensure food safety and limit waste is propelling this technology and blockchain forward.

ENERGY

Safer nuclear reactors are on the way: *Controlling carbon in the atmosphere will require a mix of energy technologies—potentially including nuclear reactors, which emit no carbon but are seen as risky because of a few major accidents. However, that risk could be greatly reduced. Manufacturers such as Westinghouse Electric Company and Framatome are hastening the development of so-called accident-tolerant fuels that are less likely to overheat than ones in use today, particularly zirconium alloy, which can produce hydrogen when it reacts with water. Manufacturers are experimenting with "fourth generation" models that use liquid sodium or molten salt instead of water to transfer heat from fission, removing the possibility of dangerous hydrogen production. Although nuclear power has stalled in the U.S. and is being phased out in Germany and elsewhere, Russia and China are building aggressively. These markets could be lucrative for the manufacturers of these new fuels. In the U.S., lack of political commitment to a permanent, deep geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel has long put a brake on expanding the industry. Sentiment may be changing though - more than a dozen U.S. legislators recently proposed measures to restart licensing for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository in Nevada.*

Utility-scale energy storage will enable a renewable grid: *In the past decade electricity generated by renewables in the U.S. has doubled, primarily from wind and solar installations. But the intermittent nature of those sources means that electric utilities need a way to keep energy in their back pocket for when the sun is not shining and the winds are calm. That need is increasing interest in energy-storage technology—in particular, lithium-ion batteries, which are finally poised to be more than just a bit player in the grid. Lithium-ion batteries will likely be the dominant technology for the next five to 10 years, according to experts, and continuing improvements will result in batteries that can store four to eight hours of energy. But getting to the point where renewables and energy storage can handle the baseline load of electricity generation will take energy storage at longer timescales, which will mean moving beyond lithium-ion batteries. Potential candidates range*

from other high-tech options, such as flow batteries, which pump liquid electrolytes, and hydrogen fuel cells, to simpler concepts, such as pumped-storage hydropower and what is called gravity storage. It is uncertain whether and how much the costs of energy storage will continue to decline. Yet the accumulating pledges by governments—including at the state and local level in the U.S.—to achieve carbon-free electricity production will provide a continued push to bring more and more storage online.



The Importance of Believing in Someone!

I've often been criticized that I don't always hire the right people or the most qualified. In fact, I've had a couple of executive HR psychologists tell me I look for the "wounded dogs" in life, the people who might be struggling a bit to find their way. I've thought about this through the years and I would have to agree with their expert analogy. But I also believe there are more important things in life than simply doing what makes the most sense on paper.

I want to believe I'm helping to make a small difference in someone's life. I want to help people believe in themselves. Sometimes they just need simple words of encouragement, other times they need tough love and to be pushed or challenged.

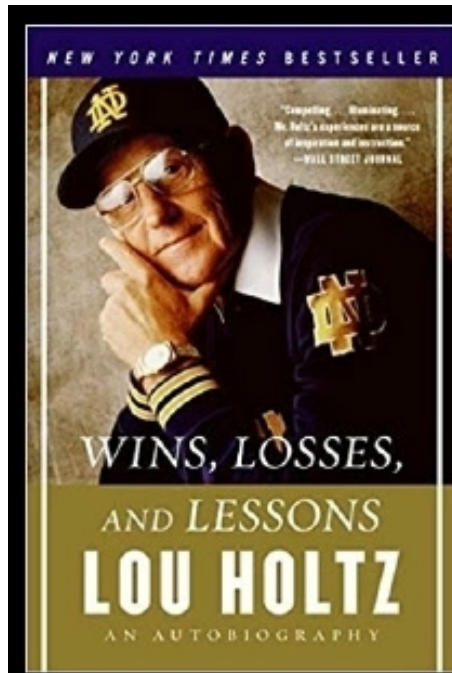
Yes, I've been burnt many times trying to help those who ultimately didn't want to help themselves. But they always come back in life and tell me they were appreciative of my efforts. I suspect like many things in life the timing was just not right. Regardless, I continue to have a soft spot in my heart for the proverbial "wounded dog".

Bottom line, I've found there are a ton of kids and even adults who have never heard anyone say, "I believe in you." I challenge all of my wealthy friends, traders and business executives to take a chance on someone in 2020 that doesn't fit the norm. I've found the reward to be worth every bit of the risk... Below is a recent Goalcast video featuring millionaire angel investor Dan Martell. As a teenager, Dan struggled growing up in a challenging environment. By the time he was only 17, he had been to jail twice for gun and drug-related charges. Click [HERE](#)









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Corn 2018 Crop

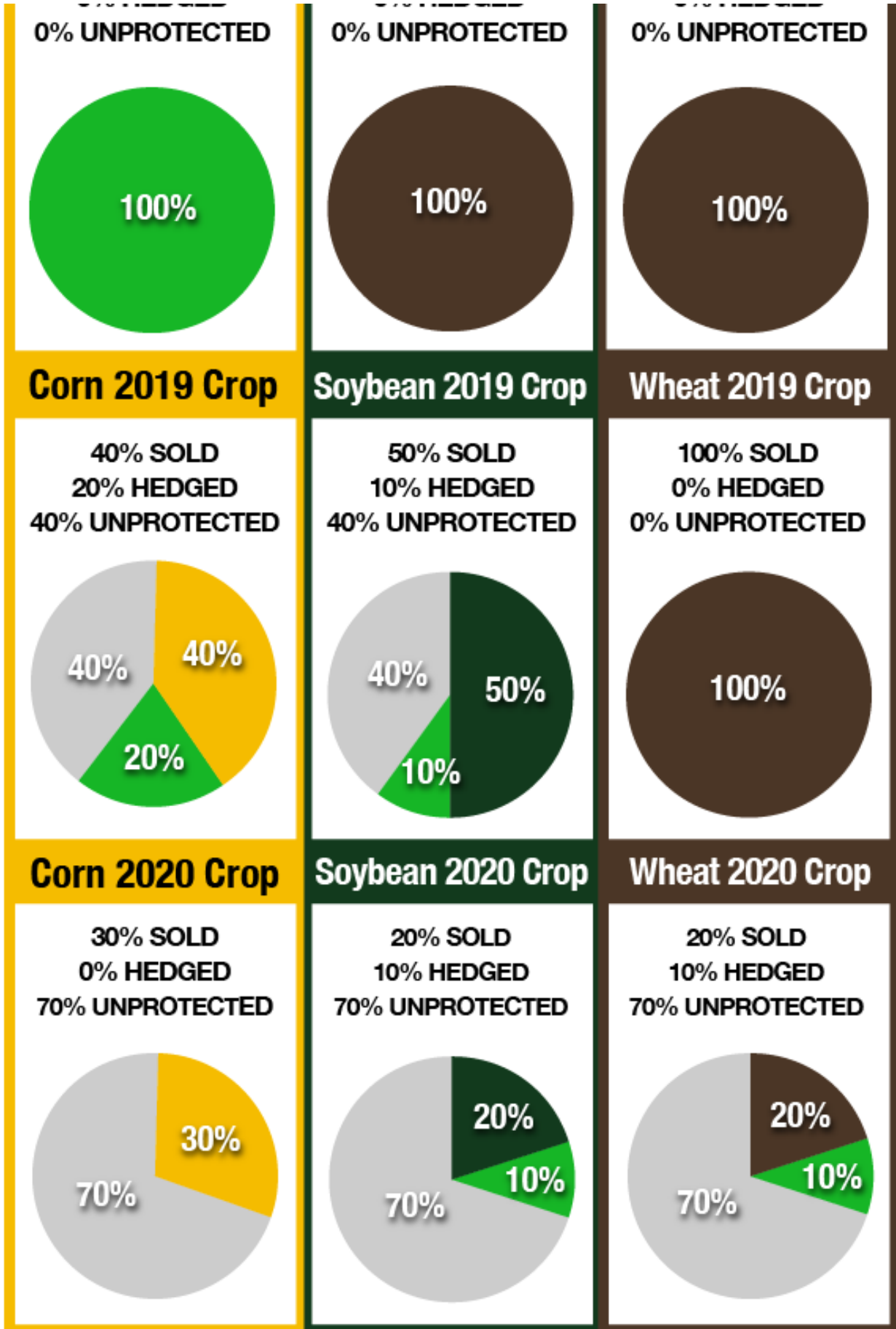
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