

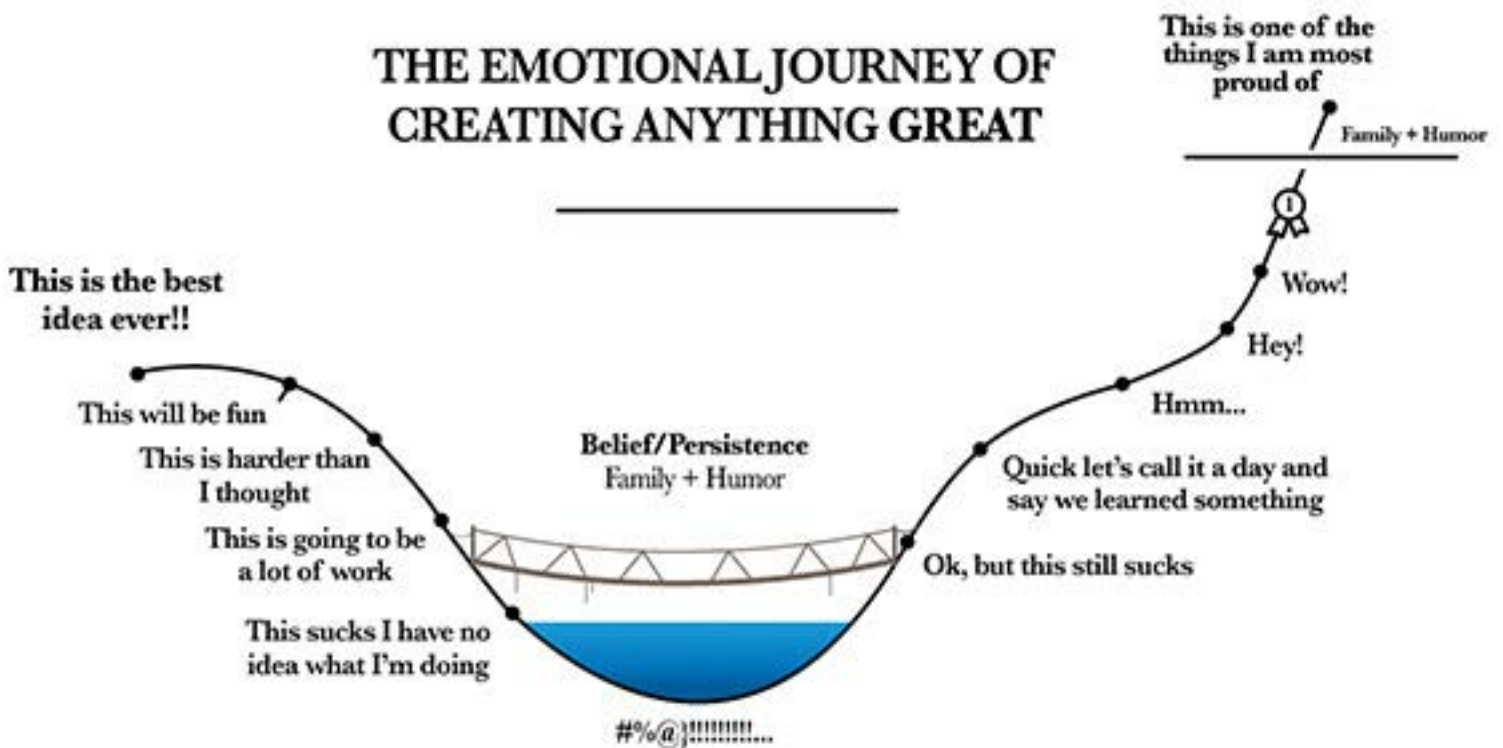


*"You're not rich until you have something that money can't buy."* - **Garth Brooks**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2017**

**Morning Summary:** Stock indexes stem the recent slide, though some insiders are concerned a sell-off could resume if the GOP's health care bill doesn't pass a roll call vote in the House today. The plan still faces objections from some Conservatives who have dubbed the legislation "Obamacare Light" and claim it does not go far enough to roll back the original legislation. The Freedom Caucus, a conservative group of Republicans, says more than 25 of its members were opposed. From what I understand the measure can only afford to lose about 20 Republican votes in order to pass. Democrats seem united in their opposition to the bill, so there is little hope that Republicans could get any of those members to move across the aisle. There is still the possibility that the House could postpone the vote if they don't feel they have the support needed, giving them a chance to recruit a few more holdouts. Remember the recent stock market pullback largely came from worries that a delay in passing health care reform will push tax reform and other Trump objectives further out on the horizon than what investors have been anticipating. Today also brings the confirmation hearing for Sonny Perdue, Trump's pick for Secretary of Agriculture. His nomination was formalized 73 days ago and the lengthy delay in giving him a hearing has greatly agitated the President and congressional Republicans, though some on the Senate Ag Committee claim they had been waiting on required paperwork, which was supposedly just filed last week. Also on the calendar today, Fed Chair Janet Yellen will deliver the opening keynote at the Federal Reserve System Community Development Research Conference in Washington. Additional Fed comments will come later in the day from Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari and Dallas Fed President Robert Kaplan. Economic data for the day includes New Home Sales and Kansas City Fed Manufacturing. I continue to keep a close eye on the overly crowded long U.S. dollar trade, which is down about -4% from the beginning of the year. Crude oil is down over -13% from the beginning of the year. Both of which bring into question the latest overall direction of money-flow???

# THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF CREATING ANYTHING GREAT



## THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY IS INEVITABLE AND NECESSARY

**Trump Team Members Were Under Surveillance After The Election:** *House Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) told reporters Wednesday that President Trump's transition team, possibly including Trump himself, were under U.S. government surveillance following November's presidential election. Nunes said the monitoring appeared to be done legally as a result of what's called "incidental collection," but noted he was concerned because it was not related to the FBI's investigation into Russia's meddling in the election. Incidental collection can occur when a person inside the United States communicates with a foreign target of U.S. surveillance. In such cases, the identities of U.S. citizens are supposed to be kept secret — but can be "unmasked" by intelligence officials under certain circumstances. Nunes said that the information he had seen seemed to indicate the individuals were indeed unmasked and identified in U.S. intelligence reports that were subsequently disseminated across the intelligence community. The information was reportedly obtained from anonymous sources that Nunes claims "thought that we should know." Nunes and his committee are apparently seeking more information from the FBI, CIA and NSA. The Intelligence panel is set to hold a public hearing next Tuesday with members of the Obama administration, including former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former CIA Director John Brennan and former acting Attorney General Sally Yates, who was fired by Trump in January after refusing to defend his first travel ban executive order in court. FBI Director James Comey appeared before the panel on Monday and confirmed that the FBI launched a counterintelligence investigation in July into Russia's election meddling, including possible coordination with the Trump campaign. (Source: Politico, Fox)*

**What We Know About The Suspected Terror Attack In London:** *At least four people were killed when a suspected terrorist steered his car into pedestrians on London's Westminster Bridge yesterday. At least one woman was killed by the vehicle and others were left with "catastrophic injuries," according to police. The driver then rammed*

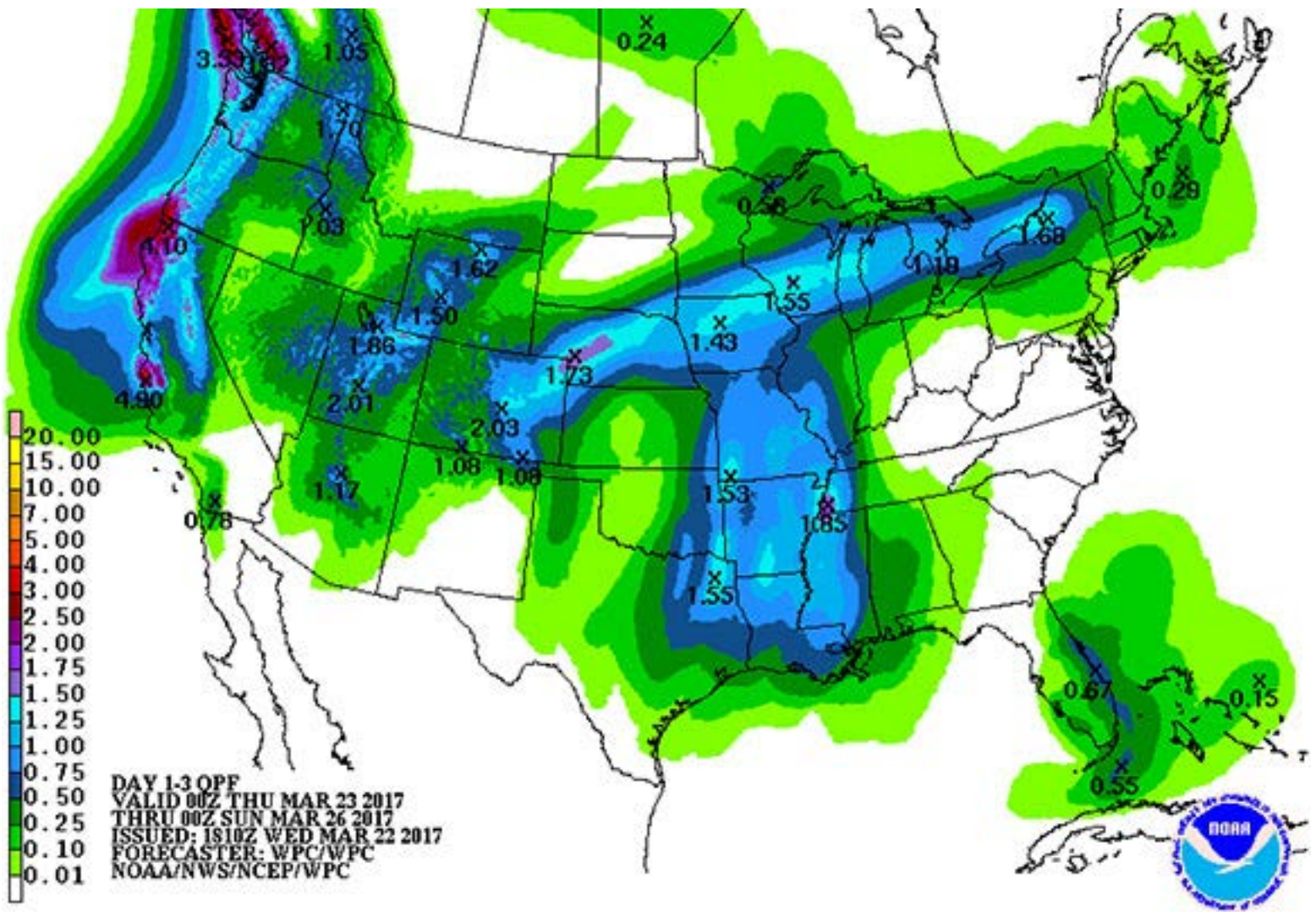
his car into the Parliament gates and fatally stabbed a police officer as he tried to enter the building. The Parliament was immediately suspended and placed on lockdown. The death toll included the suspect. One police officer was killed and at least twenty people were injured, including three other officers. Officials have declared the incident a terrorist attack, which they believe was carried out by one man who was eventually shot dead by police outside the entrance to Parliament. The attack was particularly troublesome to Europeans as it occurred on the one-year anniversary of suicide bombings in Brussels, Belgium, last year that killed 32 people and wounded hundreds. There is no evidence that the London attack was related. U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May described the attack as "appalling" and "sick and depraved" in a press conference. May said the chosen location for the attack was "no accident" and that Britain's threat level will remain at "severe," where it has been for some time. White House press secretary Sean Spicer said that President Donald Trump had spoken to Prime Minister May and the State Department had offered any assistance that the U.K. may require.

**Four Largest U.S. Banks Top \$1 Trillion:** The four biggest U.S. banks were worth the most on record versus China's "Big Four" this month, as JPMorgan Chase & Co., Wells Fargo & Co., Bank of America Corp. and Citigroup Inc. rallied 30 percent since Donald Trump was elected president. The American quartet's combined market value closed above \$1 trillion for the first time last month, a milestone Industrial & Commercial Bank Ltd., China Construction Bank Corp., Bank of China Ltd. and Agricultural Bank of China Ltd. surpassed in 2015. The four Chinese banks, the world's most profitable, were worth about the same as the U.S. foursome as recently as June. (Source: Bloomberg)



**Weather** continues to focus on forecasts for rain on the southern Plains and additional favorable conditions across South America. Over the next week, rain prospects remain high for the southern Plains, which will help ease winter wheat dryness concerns. Accompanying the precipitation will be cooler temperatures, which will also help in easing stress to wheat. Speaking of wheat stress, the Kansas wheat crop, nearly one-quarter (24%) of it is rated in poor to very poor conditions as of March 19 with 10% already jointed. Much of the Midwest will also see rain coverage through the weekend. We look for rain to fall on the dryer regions of the Corn Belt, including southeastern Iowa, Missouri and southern Illinois. This precipitation will be of great benefit in easing dryness ahead of spring planting. Looking ahead, showery weather in the West will continue to spread eastward, with a storm system expected to develop by Thursday across the central and southern Plains. The storm will drift into the Midwest during the weekend and weaken, while a second system will arrive across the southern half of the Plains. Periods of showery weather will also continue across the West. Thunderstorms could be severe at times from the central and southern Plains into the South. Elsewhere, warmth will gradually return to the eastern half of the U.S., except for lingering cold weather in the Northeast. Forecasts out of Brazil continue to look favorable for second crop corn development as moderate to heavy rain is in store for central growing regions through the coming weekend. As for Argentina, weather continues to be favorable for harvest in the northern and central crop areas. Meanwhile, southern crop areas will see heavy rain bringing beneficial soil moisture for double crop soybeans.

**Rain Coming For Parched Plains:** *Hot, dry weather over the past few months is having an impact on winter wheat crop ratings throughout major wheat producing states. Kansas saw their good to excellent rating fall by 2 points this week to 36%, while Oklahoma's rating dropped by 2 points to 40% and Texas by 1 point to 34%. However, a weather change is coming that will bring several opportunities for beneficial rain in the Southern Plains. Interestingly, meteorologists are saying this pattern change is consistent with a return to an El Nino signature pattern across the U.S. This means a return to wet weather in California and -- in turn -- means more opportunities for rainfall in the southern Plains as weather disturbances push eastward across the central U.S. Map below gives expected rainfall over the next 3 days, Thursday - Sunday March 26.*

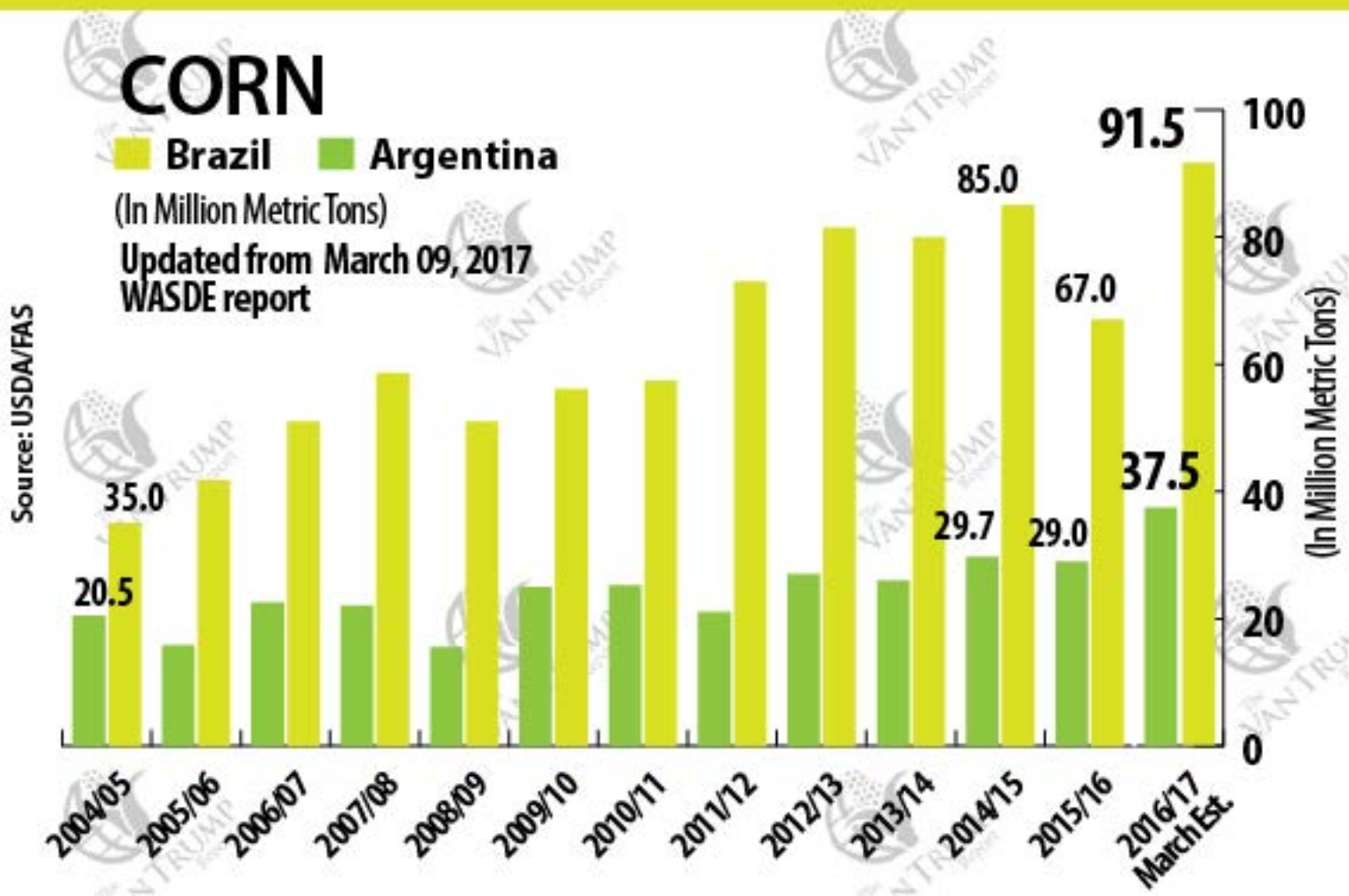


**Corn** prices have fallen by around -10 cents from Mondays high as the bears continue to talk about record production out of South America and cooperative U.S. weather allowing for early fieldwork and potentially more corn acres than some had originally thought. The bears are also pointing to continued headlines out of Brazil regarding the recent meat scandal and the fact more countries are banning meat exports from the nation. Remember, Brazil was forecast to be the worlds largest beef exporter this year and now China and the EU have already banned their imports and other countries are following suit. I should also note there are also starting to be band placed on poultry coming out of Brazil as well. When you connect the dots you can assume less demand for Brazilian meat equals less demand for feed, which in turns means more available corn and soybeans for export. Lets keep in mind the USDA was already forecasting record corn exports out of South America, thought to already be +20 MMTs more than the previous year, now we maybe adding even more supply to the pipeline on less livestock demand and better production than previously forecast. On the flip side, the bulls can counter the argument to some degree by saying this increases the demand for U.S. meat exports and in turn could raise feed usage estimates. I think there's a lot of unknowns in regard to the Brazilian scandal so continue to monitor the headlines. From a technical perspective the market is also feeling some pressure as the old-crop MAY17 contract closed at it's lowest level of the year. Several insiders are now wondering is more deep-rooted psychological support will hold at \$3.50 per bushel? Nearby psychological support in the new-crop DEC17 contract still appears to be right around \$3.75 per bushel. The next couple of fundamental hurdles will obviously

be the USDA's March 31st Prospective Planting report, where most sources seem to be looking for a U.S. corn planted acreage number somewhere between 90 and 92 million. Not only will there be a lot of attention on U.S. weather but weather for Brazil's second-crop corn will be extremely important, as the crop moves into the more critical pollination phase in the next few weeks.

**Brazil Meat Exports Plunge:** *As companies and the government scramble to contain the damage, several top foreign buyers announced suspensions and increased inspections. Exports plunged to just \$74,000 on Tuesday, compared with the daily average of \$63 million, according to Brazil's Trade Ministry, a drop of 99.9 percent. Read more at Bloomberg.*

## South American CORN Production



**Soybean** bears continue to swing the bat as prices tumble to near three month lows. There's really nothing fresh or new in the headlines.. the South American has grown surprisingly larger than most had forecast; the nearby Chinese crush margins have back-pedaled bringing into question demand growth in the days and weeks ahead; and U.S. producers are rapidly preparing to plant the largest crop in our nations history. Throw on top the fact the macro "re-flation" trade has started to unwind a bit and we have very

little money flowing into the bullish side of the market. I feel like this could all change in the blink of an eye as the funds could quickly jump back on the global growth bandwagon and a weather sorry could be right around the next corner. Hence the reason I have a hard time navigating the short-side of the trade as spec. I clearly understand the bearish fundamentals, but it's what I don't understand about the "unknowns" that scare me. As a spec I will be looking to be a buyer on a continued break in price. As a spec I'm content with my current sales and keeping all hedges in place. From a technical perspective the old-crop MAY17 contract is looking for deeper support in and around the \$9.50 area, while the new-crop NOV17 contract is looking at stronger support in and around the \$9.75 area.

**Wheat** bears continue to talk about improved weather conditions in the forecast for a large portion of the U.S. crop, especially some of the more dry HRW wheat areas who have been experiencing some of the greatest complications. From my perspective the verdict on overall rainfall is still out. I suspect we will all be much smarter next week once we see exactly where the rain is located and how much is actually measured. In my opinion there's still a lot of work left to be done in regards to U.S. rainfall totals, so I'm certainly not comfortable in waiving the "all clear" flag. Globally, U.S. wheat has become much more competitive and is starting to gain more outside interest. Saudi Arabia stepped in as a U.S. buyer yesterday, but there's still not a lot in the headlines in regard to overall bullish demand that will shake the bears. In fact I heard yesterday our hopes of supplying Turkey with wheat may have been pushed to the wayside as we join the list with Russia, and Romania as unelectable origins. Technically I could argue there's still another -10 to -15 cents of downside pressure coming our direction before we start to level off. Not because we are fundamentally overvalued or globally overpriced, but rather simply because the funds can and will try to apply the pressure. I remain a longer-term bull and extremely patient.



> **Ethanol Production Week Ending March 17:** *Weekly ethanol production for the week averaged 1.044 million barrels per day, down -0.10% from last week but up +4.92% compared to last year. Stocks fell to 22.595 million barrels, down -0.75% from last week but up +0.34% from last year. Total corn usage is estimated at 109.62 million bushels.*

> **Soybean Growers In Mato Grosso Slow Sales Pace:** *Many Brazilian farmers feel they missed an opportunity several months ago to sell their soybeans at a much better price than what is currently being offered. As a result, they have now slowed down their selling in the hope of better prices in the future. The Mato Grosso Institute of Agricultural Economics (Imea) recently stated that farmer sales of soybeans in Mato Grosso during the month of February were the slowest since Imea started tracking the commercialization of soybeans in the state in 2009. By the end of February, farmers in Mato Grosso had sold*

61% of their anticipated soybean production, which was up only 3% for the month. The current sales pace is 4% behind last year's pace. The average sale price during February was R\$ 58.55 per sack (approximately \$8.58 per bushel), which was the lowest thus far this growing season. Imea is expecting prices to stay range bound at least in the near term and they expect farmers to continue to be slow sellers at least for another month. (Source: [Soybean & Corn Advisor](#))

**> Egyptian Wheat Imports Seen Rising:** Egyptian wheat imports will rise next season, after the government streamlined its customs regulation to provide greater clarification, the USDA's Cairo bureau said in a new report. Egyptian wheat imports are forecast at 11.5 million metric tons, up +500,000 metric tons year-on-year. The new regulation follows a fraught season for wheat imports, which were disrupted by a shortage of foreign currency to pay for shipments, the sharp devaluation of the Egyptian currency in order to meet IMF stipulations, and a prolonged saga over acceptable levels of ergot fungus infections. The new rules put a single body, the General Organization for Export and Import Control, in charge of inspection wheat cargoes both at origin and arrival. Egypt's wheat consumption is seen rising by +1.5% in 2017-18, to 20.00 million metric tons. This rise is due to population growth and the presence of some 5 million refugees from Iraq, Syria, and other nearby countries. With consumption higher, and production stagnant at 8.10m tonnes, stocks were seen falling by some -26%, to 25.57 million metric tons.

**> Frozen Beef In Limbo As China Bans Brazilian Meat:** China's decision to halt imports of Brazil's meat until authorities are sure it's safe has some Chinese importers worried. Shanghai Yadongsheng Import-Export Ltd., for example, trades \$200 million of meat annually, part of the global supply chain that keeps China fed. The company has approximately 270 tons of frozen Brazilian beef on a ship headed toward China, but if the situation isn't resolved soon, it will all have to be destroyed. What's more, if a cargo is blocked by customs, it could be stuck in a special bonded warehouse for cold storage, with the supplier racking up fees that could end up costing more than the meat. The crisis arose after Brazilian authorities announced on March 17 they're investigating evidence food producers bribed government officials to approve the sale of spoiled meat. It takes a month or more for meat from Brazil to reach Asian ports, so cargoes already loaded are now in limbo. China, including Hong Kong, is the biggest export market for Brazilian meat, buying about a third of the \$5.5 billion of beef shipped from Latin America's largest economy last year. Brazil's Ag Minister warned yesterday that the country's meat industry could lose as much as -10% market share as a result of fallout over the scandal. (Source: Bloomberg)

**> Cattle On Feed Expected To Show Increase:** Friday afternoon's USDA Cattle on Feed Report is expected to show all U.S. cattle on feed as of March 1 at 10.775 million head, or 100.1% of last year; February cattle placements are estimated at 98.9% of last year, with Feb marketings at 103.3% of last February. (Source: FCStone)

**> Groups Announce Cover Crop Research Initiative:** The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation are set to announce today a \$6.6 million research initiative aimed at promoting soil health through the adoption of cover crops. The initiative will bring together representatives from the seed industry, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, a producer network and multiple land-grant universities. The focus



*of the initiative will be to identify cover crop germplasm with the greatest potential to improve soil health across a broad geographic area. Germplasm improvement will focus on species within three groups: small grains (wheat, rye, oat and triticale), annual legumes (hairy vetch, winter peas and clovers), and brassicas (turnips, radishes, kale and mustards). The project is not limited to traditional breeding and evaluation. Engaging both producers and industry, researchers will also seek to identify and introduce key traits that can improve crop performance and soil enhancement. Additionally, scientists at the Noble Foundation will utilize advanced breeding techniques – which have traditionally been limited in application to high-value, row-crops – to bring new and value-added characteristics to cover crops. Researchers from this project will share results with the public through national meetings and peer-reviewed publications. Certain outcomes, including molecular markers, will be made available through publication and publicly accessible databases. (Source: KTICRadio)*

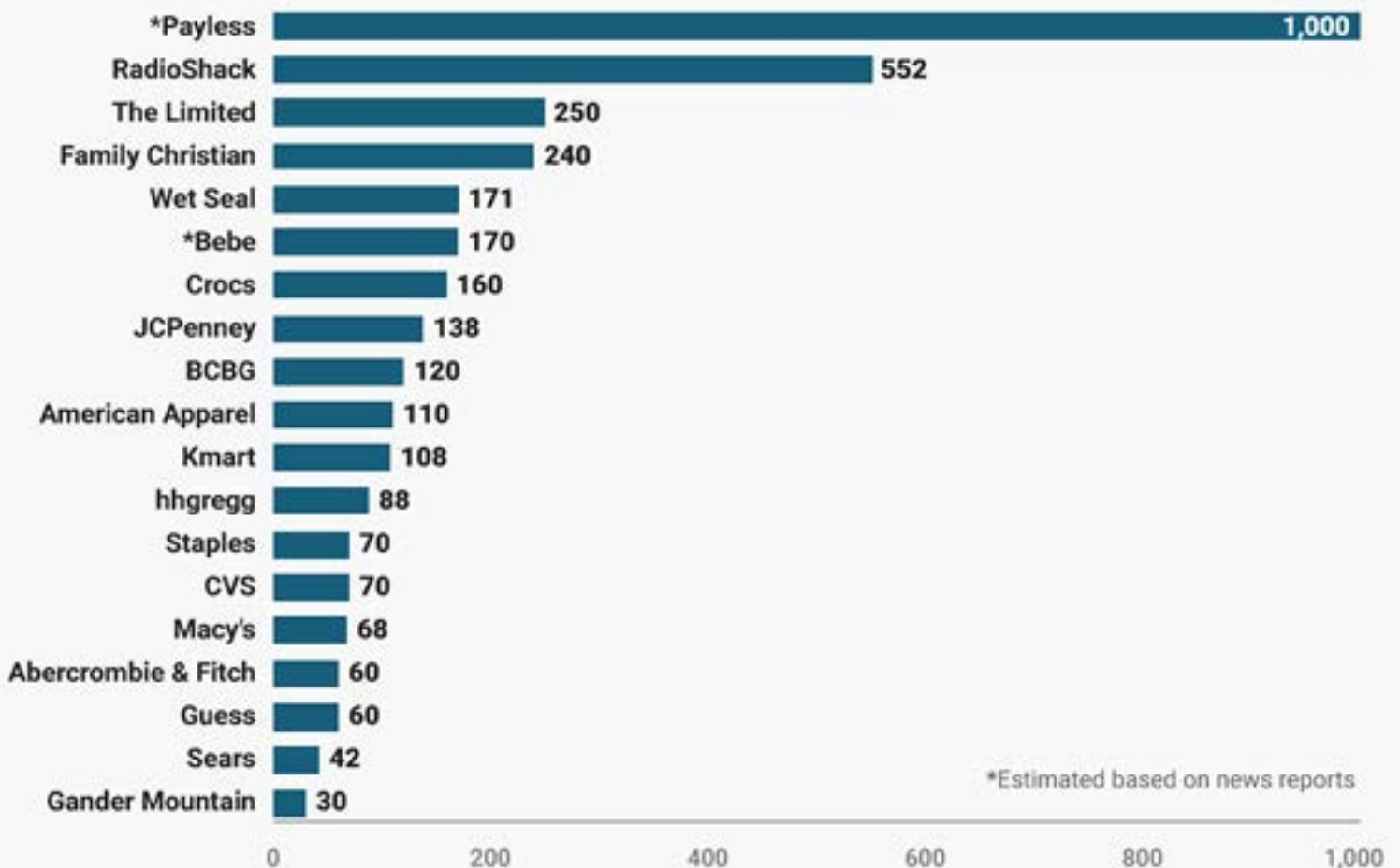
**> Goldman Sachs Keeps Top Spot in Commodities Revenue in 2016:** *Goldman Sachs Group Inc. kept its top spot in commodities last year, bringing in more revenue than other banks even as earnings from the industry slumped. JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Citigroup Inc. were ranked second and third respectively, according to a report from Coalition Development Ltd., a London-based analytics company. Overall, major banks' commodities revenue sank to an 11-year low in 2016, Coalition said. Poor performance in oil were partially offset by improvement in the U.S. power and gas markets. Banks' commodities revenues have slumped from their peak in 2008. More regulatory scrutiny, curbs on proprietary trading and reduced investment by their hedge-fund clients and other large traders have hurt profits. That forced some lenders to reduce or cut their exposure to commodities completely. Australian and Canadian banks, which aren't included in Coalition's analysis, are expanding in commodities, taking up business left by other lenders, according to Amrit Shahani, research director at Coalition. (Source: Bloomberg)*

**> Pepsi Says It Will No Longer Offer 2-Liters Or 12-Packs In Philly:** *Philadelphians will soon no longer be able to purchase 2-liters or 12-packs of Pepsi soda products at local stores, according to grocers. Managers of two independent Philly grocery stores confirmed they'd received letters from Pepsi saying the company would no longer distribute 2-liters or 12-packs to Philadelphia stores, as of March 20. The measure, according to the letter, went into effect March 20, but it's likely 2-liters and 12-packs will remain available for a few days or weeks until supply runs out. The letter covers not only the regular soda products like Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Sierra Mist, and Mug root beer, but also "any taxed sweetened beverages" owned by Pepsi. That would include Gatorade, Tropicana, Lipton Iced Tea and others. Pepsi declined an interview request but responded with a spokesperson's statement saying the change was due to the sugary beverages tax and that it wanted to offer "products and package sizes working families are more able to afford." This is the second big change Pepsi has made since the soda tax was enacted Jan. 1. It announced earlier this month plans to lay off 80-100 workers at area distribution plants. (Source: CBSPhilly)*

**> Retail Is Experiencing Its Biggest Wave Of Store Closures In Decades:** *A retail apocalypse is spreading across America, with more than 3,500 stores expected to close in the next couple of months. Department stores like JCPenney, Macy's, Sears, and Kmart are among the companies shutting down stores, along with middle-of-the-mall chains like Crocs, BCBG, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Guess. Some retailers are exiting the brick-and-*

mortar business altogether and trying to shift to an all-online model. Others are aggressively paring down their store counts to unload unprofitable locations and try to staunch losses. According to many analysts, the retail apocalypse has been a long time coming in the US, where stores per capita far outnumber that of any other country. Visits to shopping malls declined by 50% between 2010 and 2013, according to the real-estate research firm Cushman & Wakefield. And people are now devoting bigger shares of their wallets to restaurants, travel, and technology than ever before, while spending less on apparel and accessories. When an anchor store like Sears or Macy's closes, it often triggers a downward spiral in performance for shopping malls. The nation's worst-performing malls — those classified in the industry as C- and D-rated — will be hit the hardest by the store closures. The real-estate research firm Green Street Advisors estimates that about 30% of all malls fall under those classifications. That means that nearly a third of shopping malls are at risk of dying off as a result of store closures. (Source: Business Insider)

## NUMBER OF RETAIL STORES CLOSING IN EARLY 2017



SOURCE: Company data

BUSINESS INSIDER



**Southwest Iowa** - *We are doing some field work and putting down a little anhydrous. There are a lot of areas around us that seem to be a little wet but we are in good shape. The ground is dry enough, with everything going on very nice, into very fit dirt. I think that you will see most producers stick with their same rotation up here. With the good dirt we have here, corn is king and most guys do not like producing beans. We had extra bushels to market last year from the great production with very good yields. I have sold some more old crop corn the last few weeks. We do not have any ethanol plants around but have some poultry producers around that have been bidding things up, with a positive basis most of the time. Hopefully, we can get the wheels turning by April 20th to start planting. We will typically do all the corn first then move to our beans. It seems we have been on the wetter side of things and I would feel better if we were in more of a drying trend, to make sure we get things in on time.*

**Central South Dakota** - *The last 3" of snow we received a few days ago has melted. Our winter snowfall was very good for cover on our winter wheat. We shouldn't have any winter kill issues except a few low areas where things puddled up and froze. We wait now for mid-April to start planting our Spring wheat followed by corn, soybeans and sunflowers. We are generally not in hurry on the sunflowers as they can go in the ground the last week of June and still be harvested before corn sometimes. A lot of guys up here grow sunflowers that are used for birdseed, oil or dehulled. You will also see a lot of the confection seeds - the ones you eat and spit - up here as well. We are taking some Spring wheat acres out of play for more soybean acres this season. At this point we have sold a whopping zero percent of our old crop grains. We are waiting on prices to work for us or until my wife tells me to empty the bins.*

**Northeast Missouri** - *There is a lot of guys putting down anhydrous this week. We are a little dry but the dirt is pretty fit and working nicely. The winter has been pretty mild and our biggest snow was way back in December. We strip till all of our acres which has worked out well for us, allowing the soil to warm up quicker. We are supposed to start a wetter cycle later this week, which is fine because we can use the moisture. This time of year I prefer to be on the dry side allowing us to get everything planted on time. We will have some corn on corn acres this year but not adding any bean acres that I know of. We may have a few more fields of corn this year. We are limited a little bit because we grow a lot of seed beans and we really can't do bean on beans. I think that our area will see more bean acres but I think that it will be one year and done going back to corn next year. We haven't traveled to many places as of late but I did not see many corn on corn acres that had been ripped and gas going on. I think that leaves guys more flexibility to plant either crop. Last year ended up being better than expected with higher yields and some above estimated prices on a good portion of my sales. Even with a very dry June we ended up*

*making between 240bpa and 260bpa on many of our corn acres. We have seen inputs come down on a few different line items, which always helps. My agronomist always says the first corn in the ground is the best. I feel over the last few years if the ground is fit you better be running, knowing that you can always replant but if you miss the planting window you may not get the crop in the ground.*



**China's Food Safety Plan Includes Alignment With International Standards:** *China has outlined steps it plans to take to ensure food safety, including aligning its standards with international standards and launching a risk alert system, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) said in a March report. The nation outlined four key objectives in regard to food safety in its 13th Five-Year Plan on Food Safety that was released on Feb. 21. China also will develop/revise a variety of regulations on food labeling, food safety incident investigation, information disclosure, whole-process traceability, etc., and plan to actively participate in the formulation of international rules and standards and join global efforts in response to food safety incidents. More details are available [HERE](#).*

**U.S. Grain Industry Can Continue To Lead In Feeding World:** *U.S. agriculture can continue to feed a growing world and meet consumer demand for healthy, nutritious foods by leveraging new technologies, expanding research and development, attracting top talent and working with governments to shore up critical infrastructure. This was the message Archer Daniels Midland Co. (ADM) chairman and chief executive officer Juan Luciano brought to the National Grain & Feed Assn. in a recent keynote address. Luciano said his confidence stemmed from the central role U.S. agriculture has played in improving the human condition in recent decades. "Led by the U.S., the world has been able not only to feed a population that has increased by 5 billion since 1950 but also to feed the world a better diet," he said. Luciano proceeded to suggest several ways the industry could help feed a global population of 9.6 billion people by 2050 and serve not just as a supplier of consumer goods but also as a provider of nutrition and health. Read more from [Feedstuffs](#).*

**Why American Farmers Are Hacking Their Tractors With Ukrainian Firmware:** *To avoid the draconian locks that John Deere puts on the tractors they buy, farmers throughout America's heartland have started hacking their equipment with firmware that's cracked in Eastern Europe and traded on invite-only, paid online forums. Tractor hacking is growing increasingly popular... Read more at [Motherboard](#)*

**The Best Free Investing Tools On The Web:** *One of the great things about the Internet is that it's broken down many of the barriers to information that existed in the past. Investors can now become more informed than ever before if they know where to look*

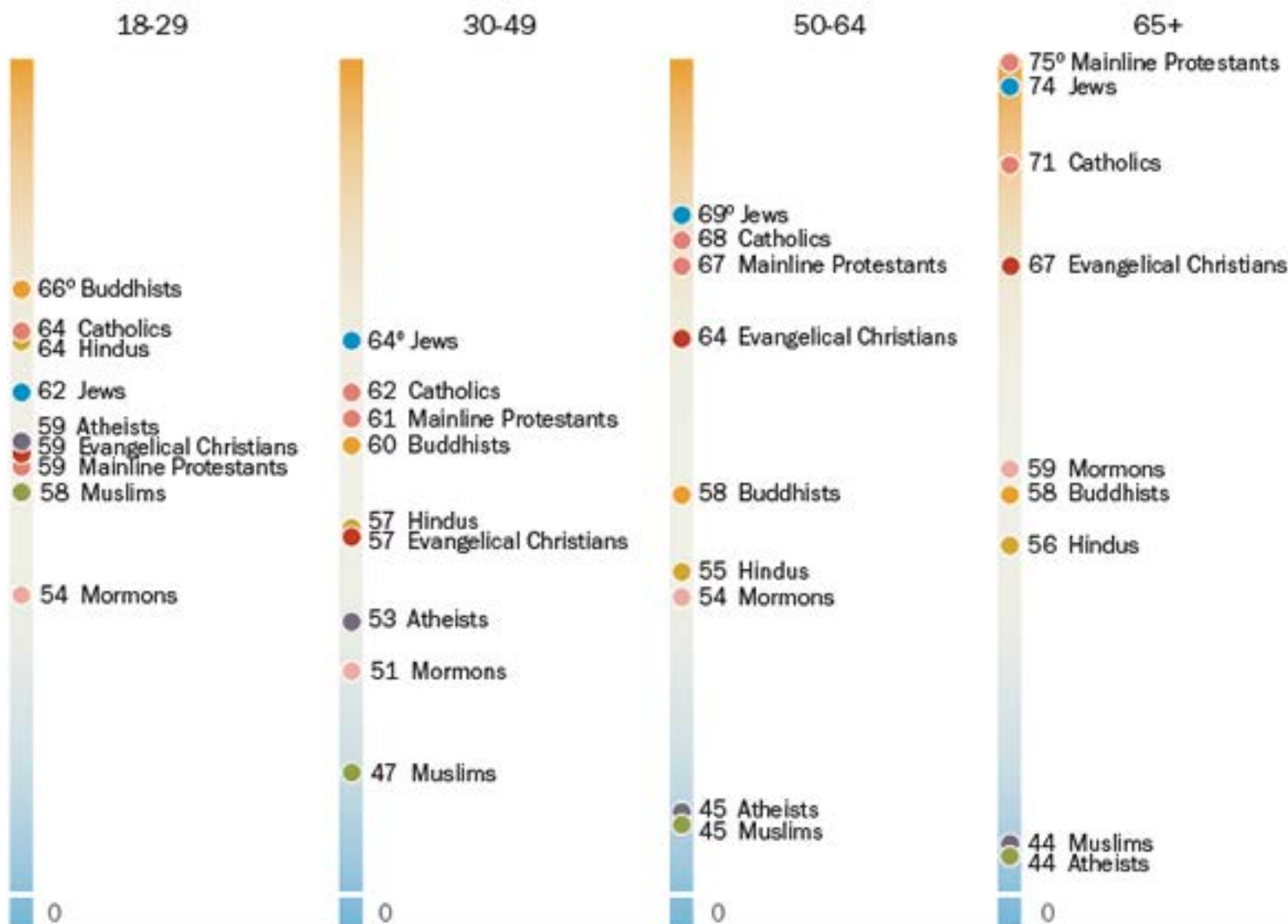
and who to trust. You no longer have to go through the gatekeepers to access relevant financial market information. This has leveled the playing field for the individual investor. With an abundance of information available, the winners and losers will be determined by those who are able to better process, filter and analyze the firehose of information that's being put out there these days. [Ben Carlson of A Wealth of Common Sense](#) offers a list of online investing tools that he has found helpful over the years.

**Maybe the Economy Isn't the Reason Why So Many American Men Aren't Working:** In 1957, 97 percent of men in America ages 25 to 54 were either working or looking for work. Today, only 89 percent are. Italy is the only OECD country with a lower labor-force participation rate for men in their prime years. Just why there are so many men who aren't working is a matter of debate. In a 2016 report, President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers examined the declining labor-force participation rate and suggested that a drop-off in good jobs for low-skilled men was part of the explanation. Conservative scholars have a different view. In his 2016 book, *Men Without Work*, Nicholas Eberstadt of the American Enterprise Institute put forward two arguments: First, that as social welfare programs have gotten more generous, they've lured men away from trying to find a job, and, second, that a large share of the men who are not working are ones with criminal records who have not been able to find a job, and have thus given up. In all likelihood, men's labor-force participation is declining because of a combination of the reasons mentioned above. But there's another theory that deserves mentioning, especially because it fits with recent research about the declining health outcomes among American men. That theory suggests that American men are dropping out of the workforce because they are suffering from serious health conditions that make it difficult for them to work. As their health deteriorates, they're getting on pain medications, which then make it even more difficult to re-enter the workforce. Read more [HERE](#).

**Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups:** On the heels of a contentious election year in which partisan politics increasingly divided Americans, a new Pew Research Center survey finds that when it comes to religion, Americans generally express more positive feelings toward various religious groups today than they did just a few years ago. Asked to rate a variety of groups on a "feeling thermometer" ranging from 0 to 100, U.S. adults give nearly all groups warmer ratings than they did in a June 2014 Pew Research Center survey. While Americans still feel coolest toward Muslims and atheists, mean ratings for these two groups increased from a somewhat chilly 40 and 41 degrees, respectively, to more neutral ratings of 48 and 50. Jews and Catholics continue to be among the groups that receive the warmest ratings – even warmer than in 2014. Evangelical Christians, rated relatively warmly at 61 degrees, are the only group for which the mean rating did not change since the question was last asked in 2014. The increase in mean ratings is broad based. Warmer feelings are expressed by people in all the major religious groups analyzed, as well as by both Democrats and Republicans, men and women, and younger and older adults. The full report is available from [Pew Research](#).

# Ratings of religious groups vary more widely among older than younger Americans

Mean thermometer ratings among Americans ages ...



Note: Based on respondents who received version of "feeling thermometer" question that used slider; see topline for more detail.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 9-23, 2017.

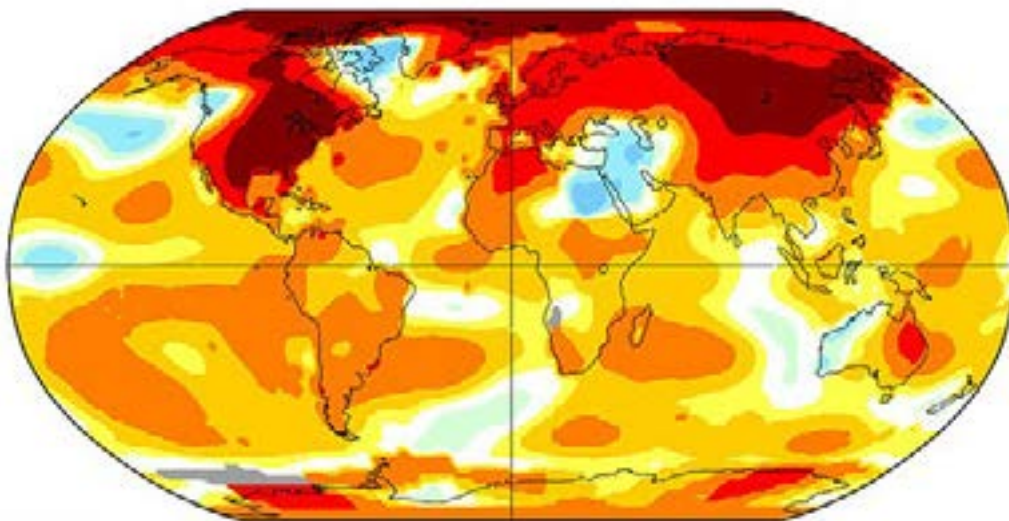
"Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



## Earth Just Experienced Its Second-Warmest February Ever Recorded

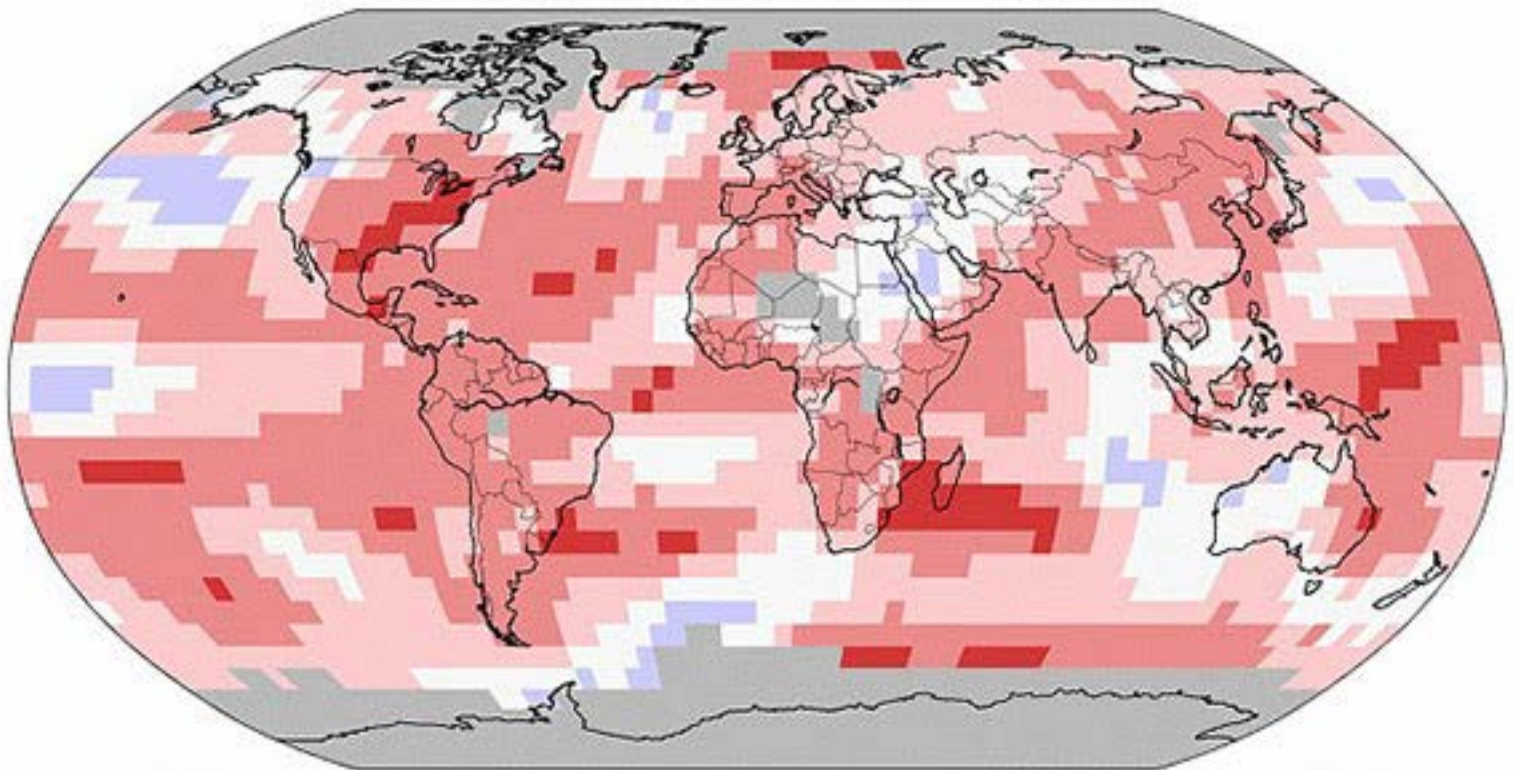
Data is out... and February 2017 was the second-warmest February in 137 years of modern record-keeping according to a monthly analysis of global temperatures by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York. Global temperatures in February were +1.76 Degrees F above the 20th century average of 53.9 Degrees F. Warmer than average weather was reported across the globe, including in Australia, the U.S. and Europe. Africa experienced its tenth warmest February since 1910, while Asia experienced its eighth warmest February on record. One of the clear hotspots on the globe was once again the Arctic, as was the case in January and last year, which was the hottest year on record. Temperatures there were about +7 Degrees F above average during February in that area. Those high temperatures have kept Arctic sea ice at record low levels. The Arctic looks to see a record low winter maximum sea ice area for the third year in a row. If you remember back to 2016, the continual monthly heat records that were broken were fueled in part by a strong El Nino event, which tends to warm global temperatures. The second-place finish of this February makes that contribution clearer, as El Nino dissipated last summer and was even followed by a mild La Nina, which tends to cool global temperatures. According to the NOAA, 16 of the 17 hottest years on record have occurred in the 21st century (the exception being the strong El Nino year of 1998). If you'd like a few more crazy statistics about the recent warming trend, chew on these: the five warmest years have all occurred since 2010, according to NOAA, and every year during the past 40 have been warmer than the 20th century average. While 2017 is unlikely to break 2016's record, it is still likely to rank among the hottest years, according to a recent forecast by [U.K. Met Office projections](#). Climate scientists emphasize that whether a given month is a fraction of a degree warmer or cooler than a previous month isn't as important as the long-term, overall trend we've seen develop. Lets hope the scientists that oppose global warming are correct in thinking this is a cycle, and that we will soon cycle in the opposite and cooler direction. Time will tell... (Source: [NOAA](#))



# Land & Ocean Temperature Percentiles Feb 2017

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information

Data Source: GHCN-M version 3.3.0 & ERSST version 4.0.0



Record Coldest

Much Cooler than Average

Cooler than Average

Near Average

Warmer than Average

Much Warmer than Average

Record Warmest



Sun Mar 12 07:33:00 EDT 2017

## UPS Tests New Delivery Drone, Could Save Company \$50 Million a Year

United Parcel Service believes it can save up to \$50 million a year if they can cut down miles traveled by one a day in each of the 100,000 company vehicles. Attempting to achieve their goal UPS is testing unmanned aerial vehicles. The world's largest courier took a step closer to that future recently when they launched the HorseFly drone from the roof of a UPS truck about a quarter-mile from a blueberry farm outside Tampa, Florida. The drone dropped off a package at a home on the property, and returned to the truck, which had moved off down the street about 2,000 feet. The test shows how UPS is looking to drones to help cut costs and ease delivery in hard-to-reach places. Deploying the aircraft in rural areas -- where the distance between stops drives up fuel and labor costs -- is one of the more promising applications. The drone can carry a package up to 10 pounds, allowing UPS to handle a wide range of residential deliveries. For the test, the Horsefly had to stay within the line of sight of a pilot, per current FAA regulations. It also flew on a pre-programmed route for the test. But in a real-world operation, UPS's proprietary routing software, called the On-Road Integrated Optimization and Navigation, or ORION system, could be used to determine routes for drones to fly. No drivers will be piloting drones. Just push a button to launch and recall them as needed. As for the HorseFly drone itself, the 9.5 pound drone features a carbon fiber construction, is powered by a proprietary lithium



18650 battery pack, and capable of a 30 minute flight time at a top speed of 45 mph. As inevitable as I assume these technological advancements are, there are plenty of people concerned about drones working overhead for safety reasons. During a second, unofficial demonstration of the HorseFly for UPS, some sort of interference, possibly from the broadcast reporters' cameras caused an issue with the drone's compass. The drone aborted its launch, tried to land on top of the UPS truck, fell to the side and was nearly crushed by the closing lid of the vehicle. According to a recent survey by the U.S. Postal Service, drone malfunctions remain a serious concern for U.S. citizens, who generally want drone deliveries, but are worried about serious - possibly deadly - mishaps. I suspect the current U.S. regulations which don't allow flights over people or beyond the sight of a drone operator will soon be updated to accommodate the fast moving drone industry. FAA guidelines for operation over crowds were supposed to be released by the end of last year but were delayed by security concerns. (Source: [Bloomberg](#))





### **Clint Harp's Big Gamble On Himself Paid Off Handsomely!**

Clint Harp has been a staple on HGTV's hit show "Fixer Upper" since the beginning. His part in the show has turned him into a celebrity and even lead to a deal for his very own television series. His seeming 'luck' at having his wildest dreams come true all stemmed from a huge leap of faith in himself. Just six years ago, Harp was in medical sales, but his real passion was building furniture. In the beginning of 2011, his desire to pursue that passion led to him quitting his six-figure job in Houston and dive in feet first. As he explains, "The only way it was going to happen is if I completely went for it." He had two kids at the time and his wife, Kelly Harp, was a stay-at-home mom. He recalls conversations the two had where they were discussing things like bankruptcy and trying to figure out how to stretch their savings. The summer of that same year, the family moved to a small apartment in Waco so Kelly could pursue her graduate degree. Clint continued with his efforts to launch his furniture business, which was tough in an apartment. The Harps also added a third child, which added to the financial pangs they were really starting to feel. One night over dinner, friends mentioned Chip Gaines, a builder from Waco who owned Magnolia Homes. As Harp was was looking to start picking up work building furniture, he thought of a connection Gaines might know where he could rent a woodworking shop. He gave Gaines a call in December, but never heard back. A few months later, the family pulled into a gas station following an afternoon at the park. Harp recalls that he was unsure if they could even afford to fill up the tank and thinking to himself, "What did I do?" It was then that he saw a Magnolia Homes truck pull in. He approached the driver and asked if he knew owner Chip Gaines. Turns out, the driver was Gaines, and when Harp explained what he wanted to do, Gaines invited him to hang out that afternoon. The two drove around discussing Harp's idea, and a few nights later the Harps went to the Gaines' house for dinner. There,

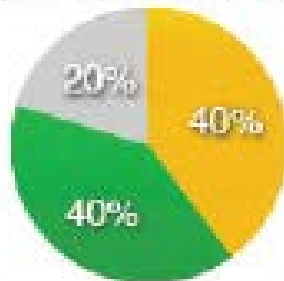
the Harps met Chip Gaines' wife, Joanna, who was selling some home-decor pieces out of her home and looking to add more, including furniture. Harp ended up renting shop space on the cheap from Habitat for Humanity, a charity he's been involved with for many years. Finally, he had someone to build furniture for, and he was feeling positive about the future of his enterprise. The good fortune was just beginning though. Within a few months, the Gaineses were approached by High Noon Entertainment about developing a television show. Harp says the whole thing seemed insane. "I met Chip at a gas station in February or March of 2012 and by October or November, we're filming a pilot for HGTV," he says. His regular gig as Joanna Gaines's go-to furniture maker on the show has allowed him and Kelly to open up their own store, buy the shop building and commercial-grade tools and even add some employees. What's more, the couple's own series, "Wood Work," aired on the DIY Network earlier this month. Clint typically uses recycled and reclaimed wood from old structures, fallen trees, and scrap piles to build his pieces. "There is the beauty of this idea, of something being left for dead and brought back to life," Clint told the Austin American-Statesman. "I felt that way about myself. For me, I'm kind of reclaimed as well." (Sources: Austin American-Statesman, Country Living)



# CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS

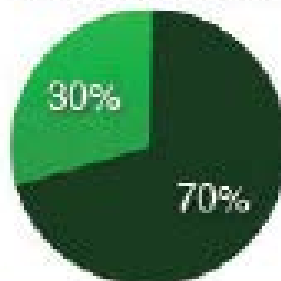
## CORN 2016 CROP

40% SOLD  
40% HEDGED  
20% Cash Remaining



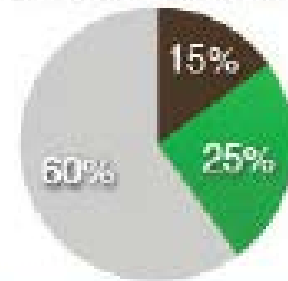
## SOYBEANS 2016 CROP

70% SOLD  
30% HEDGED  
0% Cash Remaining



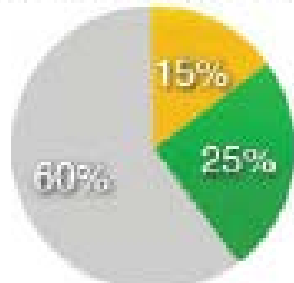
## WHEAT 2016 CROP

15% SOLD  
25% HEDGED  
60% Cash Remaining



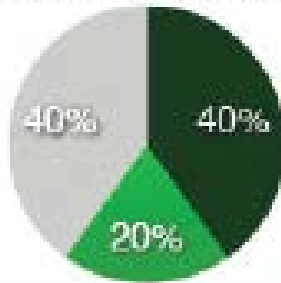
## CORN 2017 CROP

15% SOLD  
25% HEDGED  
60% UNPROTECTED



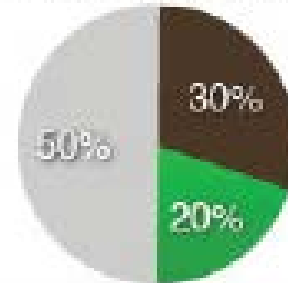
## SOYBEANS 2017 CROP

40% SOLD  
20% HEDGED  
40% UNPROTECTED



## WHEAT 2017 CROP

30% SOLD  
20% HEDGED  
50% UNPROTECTED



## CORN 2018 CROP

0% SOLD  
0% HEDGED  
100% UNPROTECTED



## SOYBEANS 2018 CROP

0% SOLD  
0% HEDGED  
100% UNPROTECTED



## WHEAT 2018 CROP

0% SOLD  
10% HEDGED  
90% UNPROTECTED

