



"You've got to get up every morning with determination if you're going to go to bed with satisfaction." - **George Lorimer**

FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2017

Morning Summary: Stock bounce back on solid earnings reports with the Nasdaq posting another new record closing high. Markets could experience some added volatility today as the trade anticipates this weekend's elections in France. The country holds the first round of its Presidential election this Sunday, which has the potential to create some major volatility in the markets. Polls show the four-way race remains extremely tight, two candidates are pro-Eurozone and viewed as market friendly, while the other two are viewed as anti-European Union and having the ability to shake up the trade. If anti-E.U. candidates were to win, fears about an E.U. breakup would be greatly elevated. Far-right anti-E.U. nationalist Marine Le Pen has actually been doing very well in the polls, indicating she has a realistic shot at making it into the final runoff vote scheduled for May 7th. I suspect Washington will again become a focal point as the Senate comes back to work Monday and the House returns on Tuesday. First and foremost, Congress needs to pass a spending bill before the current resolution expires on April 28 which if triggered would bring about a government shutdown. The White House and Republican leaders are also talking about trying to tackle Obamacare again. Conservatives are currently negotiating with mainstream Republicans on changes, but there is still no available text. White House officials are optimistic it will be ready today or "some time this weekend." If not, it's unlikely the bill will make it to a vote next week. That could mean tax reform gets pushed out even further. I should note that Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said yesterday the Trump administration will unveil their tax reform plan "very soon." The taxes issue is important for stocks as part of the so-called Trump rally has been based on lower corporate taxes. Corporate earnings scheduled for release today include General Electric, Honeywell, Nextera Energy and Schlumberger. Next week corporate earnings really heat up, with key releases scheduled from Amazon, Amgen, AT&T, Baker-Hughes, Biogen, Boeing, Bristol-Myers, Capital One, Caterpillar, Celgene, Chevron, CME Group, Coca Cola, Colgate Palmolive, Comcast, Discover, Dow Chemical, Exxon, Ford, General Motors, Google, Halliburton, Hershey, Intel, Johnson Controls, McDonalds, Microsoft, Novartis, PayPal, Pepsico, Phillips 66, Procter & Gamble, Southwest Airlines, Starbucks, T-Mobile, Texas Instruments, Union Pacific, UPS, Valero and Whirlpool, just to name a few. As for economic data today the only releases are Flash PMI and Existing Home Sale. Economic data next week will include Chicago Fed Activity and Dallas Fed Manufacturing on Monday; the S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller Home Price Index, New Home Sales, Consumer Confidence and Richmond Fed Manufacturing on Tuesday; Durable Goods Orders, International Trade in Goods and Pending Home Sales and Kansas City Fed Manufacturing on Thursday; the first estimate for first-quarter GDP, Employment Cost Index, Chicago PMI and Consumer Sentiment on Friday.

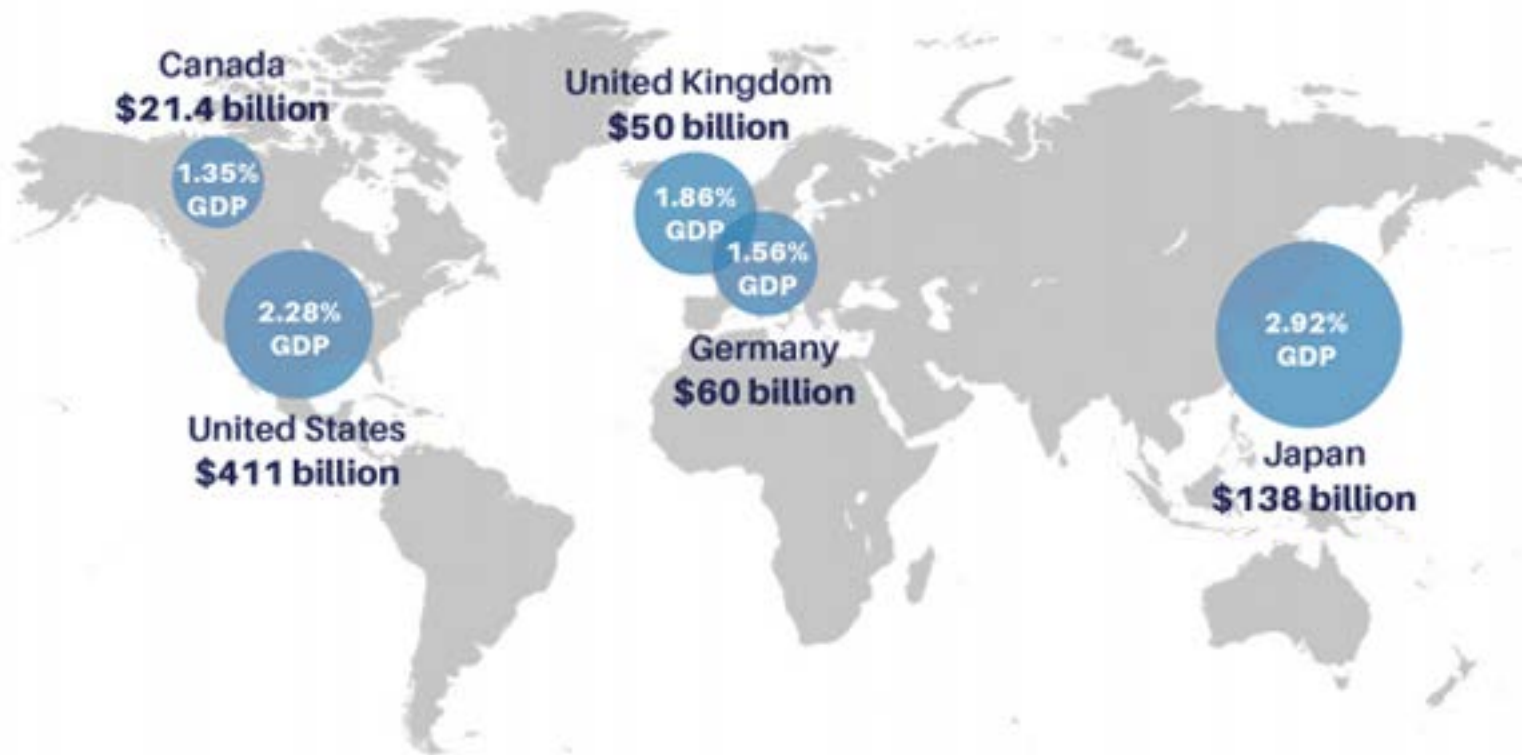
U.S. Farmers, Who Once Fed the World, Are Overtaken by New Powers: *Jesse Newman and Jacob Bunge wrote an article for the Wall Street Journal that has been*

getting a lot of circulation inside the Ag space. Brazil overtook the U.S. as the world's biggest soybean exporter in 2012-13, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It's projected to be the second-largest corn exporter, on the heels of the U.S., this season. As of the last crop year, Russia now beats America in shipments of wheat. America's share of global corn, soybean and wheat exports has shrunk by more than half since the mid-1970s, the USDA says. In soybeans, the most exported U.S. crop, U.S. supplies make up about 40% of world exports, down from more than 70% three decades ago. Over all, U.S. farmland has shrunk by 12%, or 46 million acres, since 1982, partly due to urban development. In contrast, in Brazil, about 150 million more acres in the cerrado could eventually come under the plow, as farmers convert more pasture into fields for crops, according to the USDA. Read more [HERE](#)

Venezuela Is In Total Chaos: Protesters in Venezuela have renewed nationwide anti-government rallies to pressure President Nicolas Maduro to step down, a day after three people were killed in similar demonstrations dubbed by the opposition as the "mother of all marches". Anti-government demonstrators accuse Maduro of eroding democracy, moving toward dictatorship and plunging the economy into chaos. Government supporters, who also took to the streets on Wednesday at the urging of the president, dismiss the opposition marches as violent efforts to overthrow Maduro with the backing of ideological adversaries in the United States. The country is witnessing a deepening economic crisis characterised by triple-digit inflation and shortages of food and basic consumer goods. The country's economy shrank by -18% in 2016 -- its third consecutive year of recession. Unemployment is currently set to surpass 25%. The government, short on cash, just this week seized General Motors' plant, which GM described as an "illegal judicial seizure of its assets." It was not immediately clear why authorities seized the GM plant. With violent protests expected to continue, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday urged all sides in Venezuela to take steps to ease tensions.

How Lack Of Sleep Is Hurting Our Country: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the U.S. (CDC) has now declared insufficient sleep to be a public health problem. And the US isn't alone in battling it. A lack of sleep is an increasing problem across western economies. This is the finding of new study entitled Why Sleep Matters – The Economic Cost of Insufficient Sleep. The study was conducted by the Rand Corporation, a non-profit global policy think tank. Insufficient sleep can have a dangerous effect on your health – increasing mortality risks - but can also have a negative impact on academic achievement and personal productivity levels. This means that a lack of sleep and its consequences do not just affect healthcare systems, it can affect entire economies. Those who sleep less than six hours a day report a 2.4% higher productivity loss than workers who sleep for the recommended seven to nine hours. This means that theoretically, an employee who gets too little sleeps loses around six working days per year more than a worker who gets sufficient sleep. Extrapolated on a country basis, the US loses about 1.23 million working days due to lack of sleep, followed by Japan with which loses around 600,000 working days on average, and the UK and Germany where the theoretical losses amount to just over 200,000 days. Out of the five nations surveyed, Canada loses the least working time, at less than 80,000 days. The map below shows how these losses impact economies around the world. (Source: World Economic Forum)

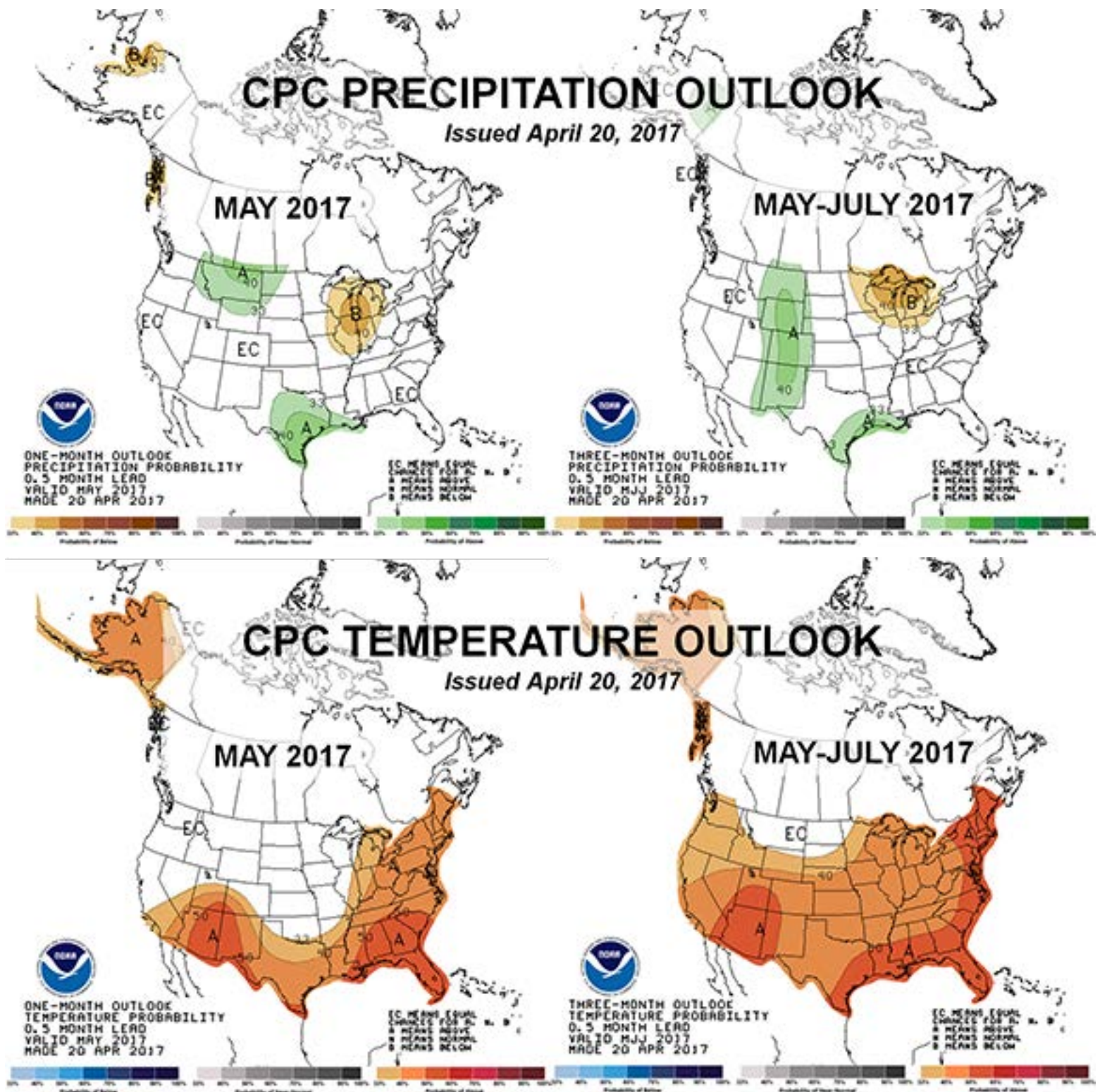
Figure ES.1: Economic costs of insufficient sleep across five OECD countries



Notes: RAND Europe analysis

Weather forecasts for the rest of the week indicate more rain and cool weather on tap for the Midwest. The Corn Belt will see warm weather from Illinois to Ohio contrasted with chilly conditions farther north and west. Additionally, significant rain is preventing fieldwork across the northern Corn Belt, including Michigan. Showers and thunderstorms are developing across the middle Mississippi Valley, in the vicinity of a cold front. This pattern, along with generally cool weather will disrupt and delay corn planting and early growth of already planted corn. On the southern Plains, periods of rain remain in the forecast through the weekend, offering additional soil moisture for winter wheat. Temperatures will be cooler, but not cold enough to bring a frost threat. Northern Plains crop areas have very few chances for meaningful fieldwork through the weekend week due to periodic rain along with already-wet soils. In the South, warm, dry weather favors fieldwork and crop development. Impacts of mid-March freezes remain apparent in Southeastern crops such as blueberries and peaches. A series of disturbances will maintain unsettled, showery conditions across large parts of the U.S. For the remainder of today, significant rain will spread from the Great Lakes region into the Northeast, while showers and locally severe thunderstorms will stretch from the lower Great Lakes States to the southern Plains. Late in the week, a storm system emerging from the West will produce heavy showers from the southern Plains into the Southeast. Cool air in the storm's wake should result in weekend freezes as far south as the central High Plains.

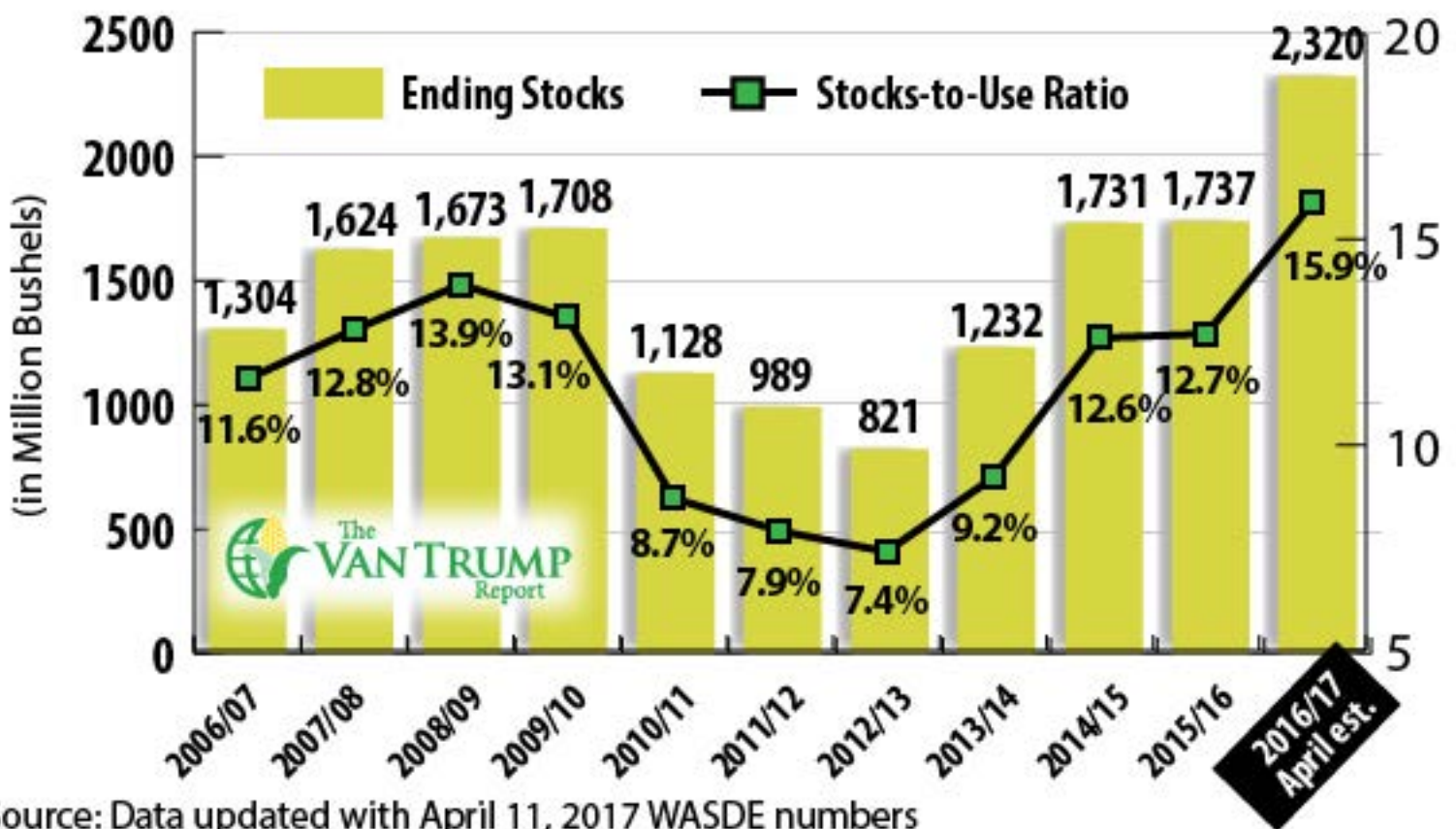
Summer Forecast Released: *Potentially Dry Summer For Midwest: The NOAA's Climate Prediction Center issued a May forecast and a summer forecast yesterday. Looking at the precipitation, we see the first dry bias of the U.S. corn and soybean season. Good news in May. As for summer temps, warmer June - July period for U.S. corn and soybeans, but May only looks warmer than normal in the eastern Corn Belt.*



Corn bears remain in control with the JUL17 contract pulling back by over -15 cents from last Fridays high. Most bears see the recent rounds of rain as “re-charging” the soils and limiting the chances of a crop damaging drought. Many inside the market are wondering how far producers will have to fall behind their traditional planting pace before the trade begins to sit up and take notice. Last week the USDA reported 6% of the U.S. corn crop as planted vs. the 5-year average of 9%. Monday could get a bit more interesting as we start to fall further behind. The average pace is thought to be at or just north of 15%, whereas we will probably only have 9% to 11% planted. From there the historical average starts advancing rather quickly, jumping to 30%, then 50% by the end of the first week in May, and to around 70% planted by May 15th. I’m certainly not saying it can’t happen, because

I've seen the U.S. producer get faster and faster and much more advanced in the past several years, but it feels like the weather will need to turn more cooperative and provide a slightly larger window of opportunity. Demand domestically remains strong with ethanol continuing to lead the growth story. Weekly export sales were alright but towards the lower end of the range. There is some talk of cheaper wheat and more poor quality creating stronger competition for corn. Personally I don't see "demand" as the problem, rather it's the reality that we are swimming in supply, especially with South America hitting a recent homerun. Yes, U.S. planted acres have pulled back an approximate -4.0 million compared to last year, but we are still looking at a healthy 89 to 90 million. As you can see from the graphic below "stocks-to-use" offers up little in the way of bullish rhetoric. It's now all about U.S. weather. If we catch some widespread "uncertainty" there's perhaps +50 cents of upside with the funds begin positioned aggressively short. If weather cooperates I feel there's perhaps another -50 cents of downside. In my opinion it's still a coin-toss...

U.S. Corn Stocks-to-Use



Source: Data updated with April 11, 2017 WASDE numbers

Soybeans traders seem to be searching for fresh new headlines. South American weather risk-premium continues to come out of the market. The crop in Brazil is closing in on 90% harvested, while the crop in Argentina, though well behind its traditional pace, is closing in on 20% harvested. The bears are also talking about weaker than expected weekly export sales data, in fact the second lowest of the marketing year. There's also a bit of concern starting to brew as the pace of new-crop export sales lags each of the previous five-years. Bears are thinking if we are already running behind schedule and South America is soon

to be sitting on record supply, perhaps they could continue to attract and provide global buyers with soy deeper into the marketing year, ultimately meaning a setback in U.S. export estimates and a bump in overall new-crop ending stocks. It's tough to argue the bears logic at this juncture. It's also tough to argue fundamentals when the U.S. producer is gearing up to plant an all-time new record number of soybean acres, up by more than +6.0 million compared to last years record setting crop. I continue to believe there is more downside risk nearby and remain patient in regard to building any type of bullish position. As a producer I continue to keep all hedges in place and waiting to move deeper into the U.S. growing season.

Wheat prices are down almost -30 cents from last Friday's highs on improved crop-conditions across most of the entire U.S. and continued bearish pressure by the funds who are thought to be record short. There was also talk circulating yesterday that Argentine producers are expected to push wheat planting almost +8% higher than last year. That's a bit tough for fundamentalist to swallow when they are already trying to digest current record setting global supply. The bulls are pointing to continued questions and uncertainty regarding European weather, U.S. weekly export sales at the upper end of the range, "quality" becoming more of a concern as rains continue to fall and U.S. acres being the lowest in history. There's also some bullish talk about small production problems in parts of Canada and a few areas in Russia. Clearly the trade is not taking a second look at weather concerns, deeming them as non-threatening as we are sitting on such burdensome domestic and global surplus. Keep your eye on this mornings StatCan numbers, as they will provide a few more clues about Canadian production. I still see nothing in the nearby headlines strong enough to change the funds record holding bearish position.



> Brazil To Offer Subsidies To Corn Producers: *The Brazilian government will offer up to 500 million reais (\$159 million) in subsidies to help corn producers sell their large crop in the 2016/17 cycle. Corn buyers would compete in auctions for the grants they are allowed to receive when closing purchases of the grain in the domestic market. Producers would receive at least the minimum guaranteed price set by the government each year. In previous harvests, such subsidies ended up boosting crop commercialization in record production years. Brazil's agricultural statistics and food supply agency Conab will oversee the auctions. Earlier in April, Conab said corn output in the season should reach 91.5 million metric tons, more than the 88.9 million metric estimated last month, as favorable weather for grains continue to boost crop prospects in Brazil. Although the program is intended to boost domestic sales of corn, some traders have used the grants to make export deals financially feasible, since government subsidies reduce the cost of transporting the cereal from producing regions to ports.*

> Paraguayan Corn Headed For U.S.: *A shipment of Paraguayan corn is due to arrive next month at the U.S. port of Wilmington, North Carolina. The vessel Nord Bering was*

moored at the Brazilian port of Paranagua, according to Thomson Reuters Eikon data. It is scheduled to arrive in Wilmington by May 20, according to the port website. The grain was shipped to Brazil from land-locked Paraguay before being loaded onto the U.S.-bound vessel, said a U.S. trader, who spoke to Reuters on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. If loaded to its 61,000 ton capacity, the shipment would be the biggest-ever U.S. import of Paraguayan corn. Paraguay last shipped a total of 37,654 tonnes of corn to the United States in 2015 following record shipments totaling 49,540 tonnes in 2013. The trader said it was "more important to get corn with no vomitoxin," according to Reuters. Some U.S. corn supplies have had elevated levels of the plant toxin that can sicken animals. (Source: Reuters)

> Argentina Expected To Slow Biodiesel Production: Oil world says domestic demand for soyoil used for biodiesel production is set to decline in the next 1-2 months due to the deteriorated export prospects to the U.S. Argentine industry insiders are optimistic that prospects for EU exports will be improve later this year.

> Argentine Wheat Production Seen Increasing YoY: The Buenos Aires Grains Exchange is forecasting Argentina's 2017/18 planted wheat area at 13.6 million acres, with production estimated at 17.5 million metric tons, up from 16.3 million in 2016/17.

> U.S. Blocks India WTO Compliance Panel Request: The U.S. has blocked India's first request for a compliance panel that would examine whether the country is complying with an earlier ruling that faulted restrictions on imports of U.S. poultry and other agricultural products. The World Trade Organization's appellate body first declared India's import restrictions illegal in 2015, directing the country to revise measures aimed at addressing concerns over the spread of avian flu. After India released a revised compliance measure in September, the U.S. complained the following month at a meeting of the dispute settlement body that the import restrictions were still "substantially more trade-restrictive" than what is allowed under international trading rules. India made a second round of changes to its regulations that the U.S. argues still falls short of being in compliance with trade rules. U.S. officials said a compliance panel proceeding wouldn't lead to a prompt resolution of the dispute. (Source: Politico)

> Nestle Reports Strong Gains In Organic Sales: Nestle reported a slight increase in first-quarter sales, while organic sales growth was strong with improved performance mainly in emerging markets. Overall sales for the first-quarter increased 0.4 percent to 21.0 billion Swiss francs from 20.9 billion francs a year ago. Organic growth was at 2.3 percent, with 1.3 percent of real internal growth or RIG and pricing of 1.0 percent. Organic growth was 0.8 percent for developed markets and 4.3 percent for emerging markets.

> U.S. Red Meat Production Hit New Record In 2016: U.S. red meat production during 2016 was a new all-time high. The USDA says production last year was 50.481 billion pounds, up 4% from 2015, including a new record high for pork at 24.957 billion and a 6% year to year increase for beef at 25.288 billion pounds. For hogs, the commercial slaughter was 2% above the previous year at 118.220 million head, cancelling out a 1 pound decline in the average live weight to 282 pounds, and the beef kill was up 6% at 30.578 million head with a 3 pound increase in the average live weight to 1,363 pounds. Through February, 2017 red meat production is 3% ahead of 2016's pace, with the USDA's slaughter numbers for March out Thursday at 3 PM Eastern/2 PM Central.

> UBS Downgraded Bank Stocks Because Of Tax Reform Delay: *UBS downgraded U.S. banks this week, partly based on the view that President Donald Trump's promised tax reform will take longer than expected to achieve. "Recent comments by the Federal Reserve suggesting a more dovish outlook for policy rates, as well as comments by President Trump prioritizing healthcare reform ahead of tax reform and infrastructure spending, imply that improvements in the sector's revenues and profitability may take longer than previously anticipated to come through," a UBS team led by strategist Philip Finch and analyst Mariana Taddeo said in a note that was released yesterday to the media. The report lowered UBS' view on U.S. banks to neutral from overweight, maintaining a preference for brokers and universal banks over regional banks. Financial stocks have led the post-election market rally as the sector was expected to benefit the most from Trump's pro-growth policies of tax reform and deregulation. However, markets have grown less certain about the timing of tax reform after Republicans pulled a proposal to repeal and replace Obamacare. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin is now saying a plan will be released soon, but there has been no clear indication of what the timeline looks like. (Source: CNBC)*

> The Galaxy S8 hits store shelves today, *and Samsung is hoping sales will make up for last year's disastrous recall. The phone's OLED "infinity" screen has piqued the interest of many, along with its Bixby assistant, new navigation keys and high-end tech. Samsung said that pre-orders had surpassed those for the S7. (SeekingAlpha)*

> Millennials Aren't A Bunch Of Job-Hopping Flakes: *Pew researchers published findings that refute a stereotype about millennials: the idea that they're job-hopping more often than other generations. According to Pew's analysis of recent government data, "college-educated millennials are sticking with their jobs longer than their Gen X counterparts." Just like so much else that millennials are reputed to want or need more than their elders (like "purpose" in their work), job-hopping is another phenomenon that can't be explained away with sweeping demographic generalizations. "The increasing job tenure of college-educated millennials is consistent with a decline in employer switching among all working-age adults since the 1980s," Pew researchers point out. "The reasons for the decline are not well understood," but they aren't generational.*

Millennials' job tenure no shorter than that of prior generation

% of 18- to 35-year-old workers by length of employment with current employer

13 months or more



5 years or more



Note: Workers refers to wage and salary workers. The self-employed are not included. Workers who have worked for their current employer for more than one year are considered to have worked 13 months or more. Workers who have worked for their current employer for more than four years are considered to have worked five years or more. Gen X in 2000 includes workers born between 1965 and 1982 and includes some older Millennials born after 1980.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population Survey Displaced Worker Supplements.



FROM THE FIELD

Central Louisiana - *We have all of our corn planted and about half of the beans planted. We are sitting right now as unexpected showers rolled through. We will plant the corn and add starter in the furrow, then side dress with 32%. We will probably need another week to get all the beans in the ground once we can get rolling again. We are seeing an unbelievable amount of cotton acres get planted. Around us last year there wasn't 500 acres of cotton but this year cotton fields are going to be everywhere. I would say that 75% of farmers are adding at least a few fields of cotton this year. I think that the cotton acres are replacing bean acres actually, which many thought wouldn't be the case. Our cotton last year made 1100# per acre which we can live with. Our ground can make 2 bales to 2.75 bales pretty consistently. We did have a few fields make 3 bales per acre last year. I have priced the majority of our cotton for this year which I feel is at good prices. I have not priced as much corn this year. The whole farm average is normally between 180bpa to 200bpa and I would like to be at 150bpa priced but I am no where close to that now. The beans have been profitable and if we catch late rains the yields will show it. It was three years ago that we caught all the timely rains that our entire farm average was right at 80bpa. We will typically make between 60bpa and 70bpa.*

Northeast Nebraska - *Things have been pretty good all winter but we are very wet right now. Early spring started out a little dry but we have received good rains recently. The last few years have seen good yields here. The corn crop last year made 198bpa on some ground that would be considered B or C for these parts. We had decent rains in previous seasons but I have been putting down bio-solids for the past few years as well. We have been getting a bio-solid supply from the city waste facility on a regular basis but it is starting to get a little scarce. I believe the word is out about them. We will normally see an average yield in the 180bpa to 185bpa range so the bio-solids helped add a 10% increase in yields. I have a partner that used the bio-solids on some very poor ground that made 180bpa last year. We do supplement things with dry fertilizers over the top, which I think are making us more efficient with our applications. We have also added cover crops to all of our acres. I have seen the data and become a believer after a couple of years. We have worked with the university and the proof is in the pudding. We will go in with a rye which has really thrived, creating a good root structure that aerates our soil, allows better filtration and helps eliminate erosion. The beans have been outstanding with the rye cover crop. The yields last year were some of the best with the whole farm average at 68bpa. Most guys are waiting to plant now and the hope is early next week will give us a good planting window.*

Central Texas - *Its been a little strange around the last few days as the wind has not been blowing at all. It has been warm which usually brings high winds blowing everything that is not held down. The winter wheat around this area is very hit and miss. If you caught some rains things look good and if you didn't it's a little ugly. We did have fairly*

widespread rains about three weeks ago that brought up to 4" of rain for some guys. We are getting fertilizer down on our corn acres and look to plant in three weeks. Most guys will put on all of their fertilizer in the spring going with liquid, 32%, unless there are moisture issues in those specific fields. We are not like out west or south Texas where much of the corn has already gone in the ground. We are seeing more acres of cotton mostly to the south areas. The cotton acres have increased dramatically and many can lock in a profit if they are proactive with their marketing. Water is definitely an issue here for the corn guys. If they miss some of the early rains it will be a tough summer. I think that a lot of guys have seen the benefits of a normal crop rotation and may get away from all the corn on corn acres in the future.



How Much Salt Do Cows Need When On Pasture? *Livestock and forage specialist Barry Yaremicio said the amount depends to a large extent on the type of feed available in the pasture. However, research conducted by forage specialist Rob Hand in the mid-1990s held some surprises about consumption. "He found that it was an average of 4.8 days between visits when cows went to the salt and mineral feeder. Yearlings were 2.6 days and calves 3.1 days. So, they come when they feel like it," said Yaremicio. Read more details and specifics in an article by Barb Glen at [The Western Producer](#).*

Nebraska Farmers Could Derail Keystone XL Pipeline: *When President Donald Trump handed TransCanada Pipeline Co. a permit for its Keystone XL pipeline last month, he said the company could now build the long-delayed and divisive project "with efficiency and with speed." But Trump and the firm will have to get through Nebraska farmer Art Tanderup first, along with about 90 other landowners in the path of the pipeline. They are mostly farmers and ranchers, making a last stand against the pipeline - the fate of which now rests with an obscure state regulatory board, the Nebraska Public Service Commission. The group is fine-tuning an economic argument it hopes will resonate better in this politically conservative state than the environmental concerns that dominated the successful push to block Keystone under former President Barack Obama. Read more from [Reuters](#).*

NYC Could Raise Cigarette Prices To \$13: *The nation's priciest cigarettes are about to get even more expensive. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio on Wednesday said he wants to increase the minimum price of a pack of smokes to \$13, a \$2.50 hike from the current base price. He said his goal is to reduce the number of smokers in the city by 160,000 over the next three years. The mayor also indicated he would seek to cap and license the number of cigarette sellers, who far outnumber other types of retailers in the city. Read more [HERE](#).*

The 20 Most Expensive Places In America To Die: *With the current relatively generous federal estate tax exemption of \$5.49 million for 2017 — doubled if you are married — most folks are free of any federal estate tax worries. Also, President Trump's proposed*

tax plan would eliminate the federal estate tax. And 30 U.S. states have no estate or inheritance taxes. That's the good news. The bad news? Some 20 states and the District of Columbia currently impose their own estate or inheritance taxes, or both, for 2017, and some of them have exemptions well below the federal amount. If you live in one of these jurisdictions, you could be exempt from the federal estate tax but still exposed to a significant state death tax hit. Find out where it could cost you a pretty penny when you die [HERE](#).

Fast Food for the Dude: Greasy, Fatty, Salty Is Red-Hot Formula: *Consumers are maddeningly fickle, switching up tastes on a dime under influence from the latest health craze or rage on social media. But dude, if you want predictability, look to the hungry young men of America. There are enough carnivorous under-30 males to keep sales humming at not only Taco Bell but Jack in the Box Inc. and Arby's too. In what's been a year-long slump for the industry, they're outperforming the likes of McDonald's Corp., which has been touting healthful and fresh fare including not-frozen beef patties, kale salads and antibiotic-free chicken. Guys who gravitate toward Arby's 1,030-calorie Meat Mountain or Jack's 55-fat-gram Brunch Burger are unmoved by economic trends or super-greens fads. They are part of what Taco Bell calls the "core male user group." Read more from [Bloomberg](#)*

1976 ACDC, It's A Long Way To The Top: *The folks in the park who got to see this back in 1976 likely had no idea how crazy it is to hear ACDC played on bagpipes! Thought it was interesting in comparison to Tony Orland's hit below. Click [HERE](#)*





Earth's Two Warmest March's On Record

Once again, global temperatures continue to push higher. The recent highs in March continue a trend of record or near-record setting temperature anomalies. Global surface temperatures in March of 2017 were the second warmest for any March on record dating back to the late-19th century. NASA's [Goddard Institute](#) calculates the Earth's mean temperature over land and water. This past March was +1.12 degrees C above average, second only to March 2016's +1.27 degree departure from average drawn from 137 years of record keeping. NOAA's most recent "State of the Climate" report also found March 2017 to be the second warmest March in their dataset since 1880, +1.05 degrees Celsius above average. The Japanese Meteorological Agency also found last month to be the second warmest March in its records. In fact this past March temperatures were the fourth highest of any month on record in NASA's database, and fifth highest in NOAA's records. Taken together, the first three months of 2017 are the planet's second warmest January through March. Also interesting is the fact NOAA has reported this March was the first time a monthly departure from average topped +1 degree C without an active El Nino in play. Below are a few more noteworthy findings from NOAA's [State of the Climate](#) report for March:

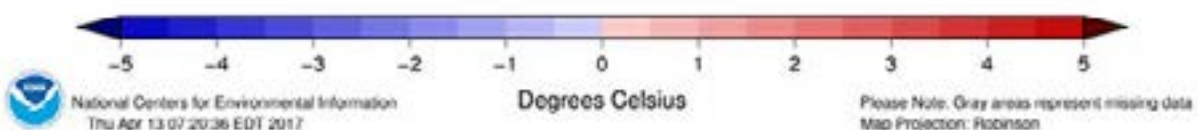
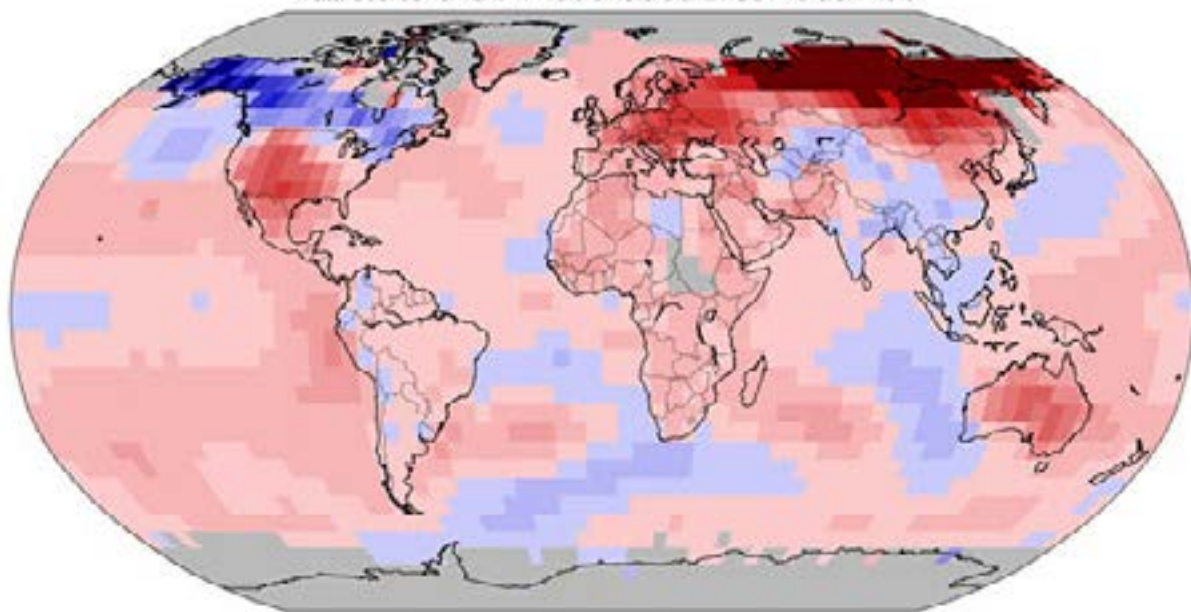
- **Did Something Change In 2015?** *Before October 2015, not one of the 1,629 months in NASA's database dating to 1880 had a warm temperature anomaly of +1 degree C. Since then, eight of the past 18 months have seen such warm global anomalies, and five of those months occurred consecutively from December 2015 through April 2016.*
- **Hottest:** *Austria set a record for its warmest March, dating back over 250 years. Germany also surpassed their previous record for the month of March. France tied their hottest March. Switzerland recorded its second warmest March and England had its third warmest March. Australia had its third warmest March in 108 years, while NOAA also found most of northern Russia had a record warm March.*
- **Coldest:** *Interestingly Alaska experienced its coldest March in the past decade.*

Record-Smashing Warmth (Monthly Rankings Since 1880; Data: NASA/GISS)

October 2015	Record Warmest
November 2015	Record Warmest
December 2015	Record Warmest
January 2016	Record Warmest
February 2016	Record Warmest
March 2016	Record Warmest
April 2016	Record Warmest
May 2016	Record Warmest
June 2016	Record Warmest (tied)
July 2016	Record Warmest
August 2016	Record Warmest
September 2016	Second Warmest
October 2016	Second Warmest
November 2016	Second Warmest
December 2016	Second Warmest (tied)
January 2017	Third Warmest
February 2017	Second Warmest
March 2017	Second Warmest

Land & Ocean Temperature Departure from Average Mar 2017 (with respect to a 1981–2010 base period)

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



How a 70's Hit Single Solidified An American Tradition

It was on this day in 1973 Tony Orlando and Dawn's "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree" topped the pop charts and embedded a tradition that has lived on forever. In fact I suspect many of us can still remember back to 1980-81 when families and neighbors across the country were tying yellow ribbons around the trees in front yards as a sign of support for the hostage crisis in Iran. A tradition many Americans still practice to show support for our deployed troops or missing loved ones. Interestingly, where the use of the yellow ribbon began hasn't always been agreed upon by cultural historians. It seems questions began to arise in 1981 when the Library of Congress received a blizzard of inquiries, particularly from the news media, about the history of yellow ribbons. After significant research at the Library of Congress it was noted that the tradition did not stem from the civil war as some had thought, but that it resonated from an American folk tale orally passed on beginning around 1940. The tale - which happens to mirror the lyrics to the hit song - shared an ex-convicts fear of heading home from prison to see if his true love still cared for him. He asked for a sign - ribbons in the apple tree near the station - signifying it was ok to depart the train when it arrived in town. The story had sticking power as ABC-TV aired a dramatized version of the story in 1972 with James Earl Jones starring as the ex-con. Television then pushed the ritual to new heights in 1975 when evening news viewers watched as the wife of watergate famed Jeb Stuart McGruder awaited her husbands arrival home from his prison sentence on their front porch which of course was adorned with yellow ribbons. It is interesting to note that McGruder's return to his home exactly parallels the situation in both the folk narrative and the popular song. The final act of embedding the tradition was played out as the American ambassador to Iran and his staff were held hostage for 444 days. Led by the wife of the Ambassador - Americans everywhere showed support for their fellow countrymen as they wrapped trees and porches in yellow ribbons. It is believed that this is the first announcement that the yellow ribbon symbol had become a banner through which families could express their determination to be reunited. I recall the sense of national pride all those in my neighborhood felt as we "did our part" in supporting the hostages. I find it interesting that we are at a time when "nationalism" is once again being touted by many sources in the media. I included below a fun video of Tony Orlando's big hit song. Keep in mind it became the biggest seller of 1973, selling over 6 million copies. My how times have changed! Click [HERE](#) to listen and view. (Source: American Folk Life Center, History.com)



"Jeter & Jeb" Trying To Buy The Marlins

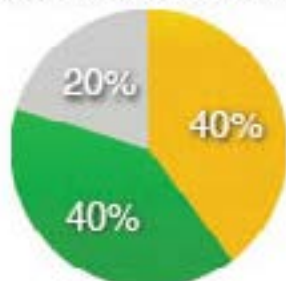
Jeb Bush and Derek Jeter have joined forces in their bid to buy the Miami Marlins. The former Florida governor and retired New York Yankees star once were rivals for the Major League Baseball franchise but now have teamed up to try and buy the team, the sources said. They are competing against a New York financier named Wayne Rothbaum, manager of Quogue Capital. The alliance pairs one of Miami's most prominent political leaders — Bush lives in Coral Gables — with one of the most famous names in baseball. Jeter retired from the Yankees in 2014 and has a house in Tampa. I should point out that "Jeter & Jeb" are in the running for the Marlins bid against the Romney family. That's right, Tagg Romney, the son of 2012 GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney is bidding to own the Marlins as well. Tagg Romney is the managing partner at Solamere Capital, a Boston-based investment firm. It's unclear if Mitt Romney will play a direct role in any potential bid from this group; the elder Romney is however chairman of Solamere Capital, so I have to imagine there's some type of influence or play. I hear there's also another group in the running being led by hedge fund investor Wayne Rothbaum, the founder of Quogue Capital. Rothbaum is said to have deep pockets and backing from Goldman Sachs. ESPN had reported back in early-February that Charles Kushner was part of the group that was going to purchase the club for an estimated \$1.6 to \$1.7 billion. Kushner is the father-in-law to Ivanka Trump. His son, Jared Kushner, is a senior advisor to President Trump. For some reason that deal didn't go down. Now more people are starting to toss their hat in the ring. From what I understand current owner Jeffrey Loria purchased the team for \$158.5 million back in 2002. Loria, who owned the Expos from 1999-2002, purchased the Marlins as part of a series of transactions involving former commissioner Bud Selig and John Henry, who owned the Marlins at the time and currently owns the Red Sox. As part of the deal, Loria sold the Expos to the other 29 MLB owners for \$120 million -- the team was effectively run by the commissioner's office until the franchise moved to Washington to become the Nationals -- and purchased the Marlins from Henry for \$158.5 million. That paved the way for Henry to purchase the Red Sox. Many sources argue the Marlins aren't worth anywhere near the +\$1.5 billion that is being rumored. Let's keep in mind however, back in 2012 the Dodgers sold for \$2 billion when many experts estimated their value at less than \$1.4 billion. The NBA's Los Angeles Clippers weren't thought to be worth much over \$700 million back in the summer of 2014, then all of a sudden a cash happy Steve Ballmer walks in and pays a whopping \$2 billion for the team. Remember, the sale of any MLB team has to be approved by the league's commissioner. It's worth pointing out that Jeb's brother and former president George W. Bush owned the Texas Rangers from 1989 to 1998, so perhaps he has an inside edge. I personally hope "Jeter & Jeb" get the team. I would love to see Derek Jeter get back just small bit of what he has given to the game. During his 20 seasons with the Yankees, he has been the league's MVP, won numerous World Series, and is considered a lock for the Baseball Hall of Fame. If anyone has played hard and given his life to the game we love to watch, it's Derek Jeter. He has clearly earned his right to own a team... I hope he gets his opportunity!



CASH SALES & HEDGING TOTALS

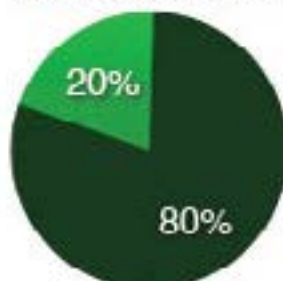
CORN 2016 CROP

40% SOLD
40% HEDGED
20% UNPROTECTED



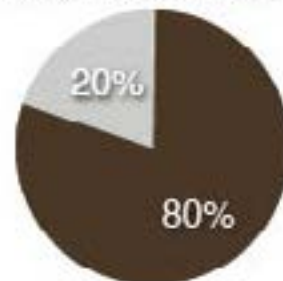
SOYBEANS 2016 CROP

80% SOLD
20% HEDGED
0% UNPROTECTED



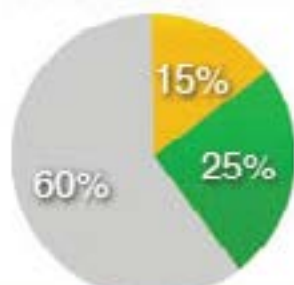
WHEAT 2016 CROP

80% SOLD
0% HEDGED
20% UNPROTECTED



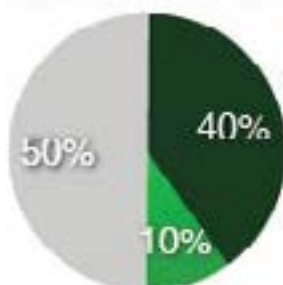
CORN 2017 CROP

15% SOLD
25% HEDGED
60% UNPROTECTED



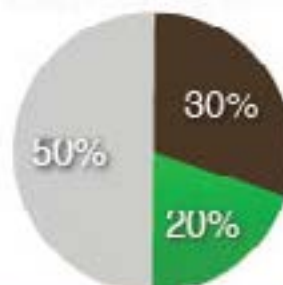
SOYBEANS 2017 CROP

40% SOLD
10% HEDGED
50% 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

