

Archer Daniels (ADM)

\$49.58 (As of 01/27/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$52.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 03/02/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: B

Growth: C

Momentum: A

Summary

Shares of Archer Daniels have declined and underperformed the industry in the past three months. Dismal revenues in the company's Carbohydrate Solutions unit have been a drag for the company. Sales in this segment fell 16.1% during the fourth quarter of 2020. Nevertheless, strong results across the Nutrition as well as the Ag Services and Oilseeds units drove the company's top line performance in the said quarter. Management stated that strong demand conditions for grains and oilseeds are likely to keep fueling the Ag Services and Oilseeds segment. Moreover, the Nutrition unit is likely to keep gaining from prudent product innovations and positive consumer growth trends. These apart, the company is on track with strategic growth initiatives as part of the Readiness program, which focuses on accelerating and enhancing competitiveness.

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$53.99 - \$28.92
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	2,350,105
Market Cap	\$29.0 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	3.5%
Beta	0.85
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$1.44 / 2.9%
Industry	Agriculture - Operations
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 26% (186 out of 253)

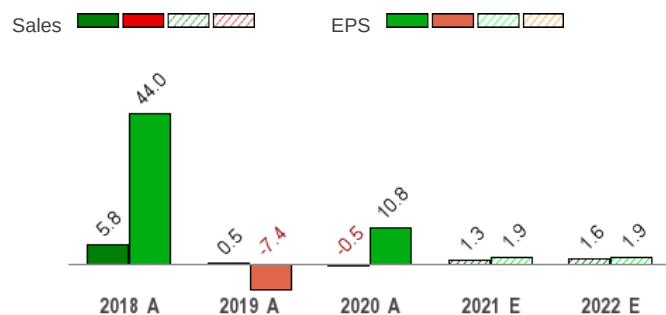
Last EPS Surprise	16.4%
Last Sales Surprise	8.6%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.1%
Expected Report Date	05/05/2021
Earnings ESP	7.3%
P/E TTM	14.5
P/E F1	13.6
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	0.5

Price, Consensus & Surprise



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022					66,280 E
2021	16,601 E	16,481 E	15,780 E	17,012 E	65,212 E
2020	14,970 A	16,281 A	15,126 A	17,978 A	64,355 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022					\$3.73 E
2021	\$0.82 E	\$0.85 E	\$0.93 E	\$1.07 E	\$3.66 E
2020	\$0.64 A	\$0.85 A	\$0.89 A	\$1.21 A	\$3.59 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 01/27/2021. The reports text is as of 01/28/2021.

Overview

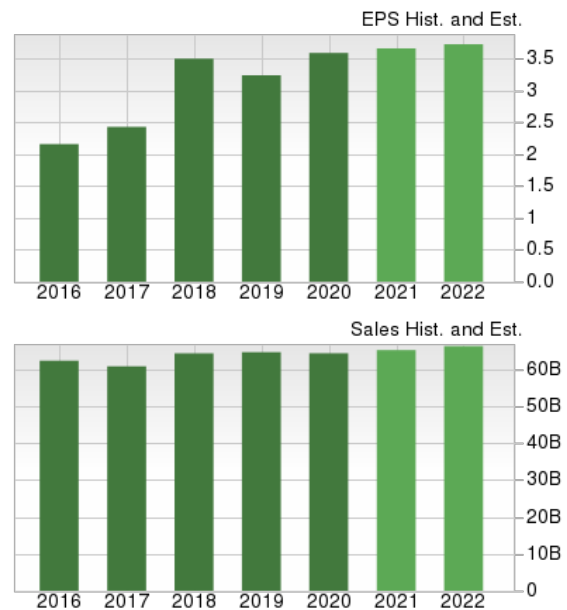
Incorporated in Delaware in 1923, Archer Daniels Midland Company is successor to the Daniels Linseed Co. Founded in 1902, this Illinois-based company is one of the leading producers of food and beverage ingredients as well as goods made from various agricultural products.

The company processes oilseeds, corn, wheat, cocoa and other feedstuffs. Moreover, it engages in the manufacturing, sale, and distribution of products like natural flavor ingredients, flavor systems, natural colors, proteins, emulsifiers, soluble fiber, polyols, hydrocolloids, natural health and nutrition products as well as other specialty food and feed ingredients.

Archer Daniels also has a worldwide grain elevator and transportation network for procurement, storage, cleansing and transportation of agricultural commodities. Archer Daniels also makes important investments in joint ventures to aid growth.

Starting first-quarter 2018, the company realigned its business segments to reflect a new operating structure. It currently reports through the Carbohydrate Solutions, Nutrition, Oilseeds and Origination segments.

On May 29, 2019, Archer Daniels created a new business unit, namely, Ag Services & Oilseeds. The unit combined the company's Origination and Oilseed operations in a single reporting structure which came into operations from Jul 1, 2019.



- The **Ag Services & Oilseeds** (77.2% of 2020 total revenues) includes the Agricultural Services business, excluding Milling and engages in originating, merchandising, crushing and processing oilseeds.
- The **Carbohydrate Solutions** segment (13.2%) comprises the Corn and Milling operations.
- **Nutrition** segment (9%) includes Animal Nutrition and Bioactives businesses as well as the Wild Flavors & Specialty Ingredients segment (WFSI).
- The **Other** segment (0.6%) primarily includes the company's financial business units. However, it makes negligible contribution to the company's revenues.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ **Robust Q4 Earnings:** Archer Daniels reported strong fourth-quarter 2020 results, with the top and the bottom line surpassing the Zacks Consensus. This marked the company's sixth straight quarter of earnings surprise. Despite the tough environment, it reported the fourth straight quarter of adjusted segment operating profit growth. Moreover, revenues advanced 10.1% year over year to \$17,978 million. Solid sales across majority of the segments contributed toward top line growth. The quarter also gained from advancement in the Readiness program. Management highlighted that its Ag Services and Oilseeds segment retained momentum, backed by solid demand. This, in turn, led the unit to cross the \$2-billion profit mark. Going ahead, consistent demand for grains and oilseeds as well as meal and oils positions the company for a solid start to 2021. Moreover, healthy demand for industrial starches, retail flour and high-grade alcohol is likely to favor the Carbohydrate Solutions unit. Also, the Nutrition segment with its strategic partnerships, product innovation and positive consumer growth trends remains poised for solid revenue and profit growth in 2021. Overall, management expects another year of solid adjusted segment operating profit and bottom-line growth.
- ▲ **Nutrition Segment Aids Performance:** Archer Daniels is gaining from robust performance at its Nutrition segment. During fourth-quarter 2020, revenues in the segment inched up 1.9%. Moreover, the segment's adjusted operating profit rallied 24.5% to \$127 million during the fourth quarter. Notably, the company reported sixth consecutive quarter of operating profit growth of more than 20% year over year for the Nutrition segment. This uptick can be attributable to significant gains in Human and Animal Nutrition units. During the fourth quarter, the Human Nutrition division gained from higher sales of flavors driven by favorable product mix in both North America and EMEA regions. The Animal Nutrition unit witnessed sustained growth in the quarter under review, driven by a solid performance in Asia and EMEA regions along with improved demand in amino acid results. We note that the company is on track with innovations to further boost performance in the Nutrition segment. The company is looking to enhance plant-based protein capabilities. Going ahead, management is optimistic about the performance of this unit.
- ▲ **Strategic Initiatives:** Archer Daniels has been significantly progressing on its three strategic pillars — optimize, drive, and growth. Under the optimize pillar, the company is on track with improvement in its key businesses - the Decatur complex, Golden Peanut and Three Nuts business. The company is restructuring its North American wheat milling footprint by shutting old less efficient mills and opening new, state-of-the-art facility in Mendota. Moreover, as part of the company's optimizing pillar, it continues to adapt with consumers changing nutritional preferences. Under its drive pillar, the company continues to adapt its organizational structure to meet operational excellence and set goals. Further, under the growth pillar, the company is looking to expand its footprint in fast growing alternative protein. The company is also considering at enhancing its animal nutrition capabilities. Also, Archer Daniels is utilizing innovative technologies to develop new products and boost operating capabilities.
- ▲ **Financial Flexibility:** Archer Daniels ended fourth-quarter 2020 with long-term debt (including current maturities) of \$7,887 million. The metric was down 0.5% on a sequential basis. Further, management is undertaking precautionary measures to strengthen its financial position and manage cash flows. During 2020, management undertook efforts to manage capital spending effectively. Capital spending for the year was about \$820 million, in line with the company's earlier guidance. For 2021, management expects capital spending between \$900 million and \$1 billion.
- ▲ **Project Readiness Bodes Well:** Archer Daniels is on track with the Readiness goals of driving business improvement, standardizing functions and enriching consumers' experience. As a part of readiness efforts, the company introduced a company-wide simplification initiative. The company's strategic pillars for growth as well as the aforementioned new initiatives are guided and supported by the Readiness program, focused on accelerating and enhancing competitiveness. During fourth quarter earnings call, management highlighted that the company surpassed by approximately 10% of its stretch goal of \$1.3 billion in readiness runway benefits by the end of 2020.

Archer Daniels' Q4 results gained from growth across the Nutrition and the Ag Services & Oilseeds segments. Strong demand for grains and oilseeds are likely to keep favoring the company's performance.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ **Dismal Carbohydrate Solutions' Unit Revenues:** During the fourth quarter of 2020, Archer Daniels' Carbohydrate Solutions unit's revenues declined nearly 16.1%. This was caused by weakness in the ethanol industry. In fact, soft margins in corn oil and wet mill ethanol were a drag on the segment's operating profit. During the third quarter, revenues in the segment declined 19.5%. Shares of the company have dropped 0.7% in the past three months compared with the industry's growth of 11.5%.
- ▼ **Higher SG&A Expenses:** Archer Daniels is grappling with rising costs. Any deleverage in SG&A (selling, general, and administrative) expenses has a direct bearing on the company's profitability. During the fourth quarter of 2020, SG&A expenses increased 14.5% to \$749 million. Prior to this SG&A expenses rose 10% and 6% during the third and second quarter of 2020, respectively.
- ▼ **Risk of Operating in Overseas Markets:** Archer Daniels' financial performance may be adversely affected due to its significant presence in the international market, which exposes it to unfavorable foreign currency translations, economic or political instability, and other governmental actions on trade and repatriation of foreign profits.
- ▼ **Intense Competition May Adversely Impact Operations:** Archer Daniels faces intense competition from its rivals, such as Cargill Inc., Bunge Ltd. and Corn Products International Inc. in all segments of the markets where it operates. These markets are extensively competitive and hence, the company faces the risk of availability of substitutes. Being part of such a competitive industry, Archer Daniels may find it difficult to execute and implement new business strategies, which in turn, may impact its operations adversely.

Sluggish revenues in the Carbohydrate Solutions' Unit were a drag on Q4 performance. Also, high SG&A expenses remain a woe.

Last Earnings Report

Archer Daniels' Q4 Earnings & Revenue Beat Estimates

Archer Daniels reported fourth-quarter 2020 results, wherein both top and bottom lines surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Despite the tough ongoing environment, it reported the fourth straight quarter of adjusted segment operating profit growth.

Also, management highlighted that its Ag Services and Oilseeds segment retained momentum, backed by solid demand. This, in turn, led the unit to cross the \$2-billion profit mark. Going ahead, continued demand for grains and oilseeds as well as meal and oils position it well for a solid start to 2021. Moreover, healthy demand for industrial starches, retail flour and high-grade alcohol is likely to favor the Carbohydrate Solutions unit. Lastly, the Nutrition segment with its strategic partnerships, product innovation and positive consumer growth trends remains poised for solid revenue and profit growth in 2021. Overall, management expects another year of solid adjusted segment operating profit and bottom-line growth.

Quarter Ending	12/2020
Report Date	Jan 26, 2021
Sales Surprise	8.61%
EPS Surprise	16.35%
Quarterly EPS	1.21
Annual EPS (TTM)	3.59

Q4 Highlights

Adjusted earnings of \$1.21 per share in the fourth quarter declined 14.8% from the year-ago quarter but outpaced the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.04. On a reported basis, the company's earnings were \$1.22 per share, up 36% from the prior-year quarter's 90 cents.

Revenues advanced 10.1% year over year to \$17,978 million and surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$16,553 million. Solid sales across the majority of segments contributed to the top line.

Segment-wise, revenues for the Nutrition and the Ag Services & Oilseeds segments improved 1.9% and 16.3% year over year to \$1,441 million and \$14,369 million, respectively. Meanwhile, the metric declined 16.1% to \$2,078 million for the Carbohydrate Solutions unit.

Gross profit increased 15.7% year over year to \$1,352 million, while gross margin expanded 30 basis points (bps) to 7.5% in the quarter under review. SG&A expenses rose 14.5% to \$749 million.

Moreover, Archer Daniels reported an adjusted segment operating profit of \$1,152 million in fourth-quarter 2020, up 12.1% from the year-ago quarter. On a GAAP basis, the company's segmental operating profits grew nearly 22% year over year to \$1,139 million.

Segment Operating Profit Discussion

Adjusted operating profit at Ag Services & Oilseeds increased 12.9% year over year to \$834 million. Operating results gained performance in North America, driven by robust demand particularly in China along with higher volumes and improved margins. On the flip side, a slow-selling season for Brazilian farmers as compared to the first half of 2020 led to sluggishness in South America. Also, unfavorable timing acted as a deterrent.

Moreover, strong margins in all regions on the back of higher soybean supplies and healthy global demand for meal and vegetable oils contributed positively to the crushing business. Operating results for Refined Products and Other improved year over year, driven by solid margins in South America.

The Carbohydrate Solutions segment's adjusted operating profit grew 19.5% to \$208 million owing to a higher demand for starches and sweeteners. Also, the unit gained from reduced net corn expenses and risk-control measures, which more than offset soft margins in corn oil and wet mill ethanol. Despite sluggishness in the ethanol industry, Vantage Corn Processors performed well year over year on higher demand for USP-grade alcohol.

In the Nutrition segment, adjusted operating profit of \$127 million rallied 24.5% from \$102 million in the year-ago quarter owing to significant gains in Human and Animal Nutrition units. The Human Nutrition division gained from higher sales of flavors driven by favorable product mix in both North America and EMEA regions. The Animal Nutrition unit witnessed sustained growth in the quarter under review, driven by a solid performance in Asia and EMEA regions along with improved demand in amino acid results. This was somewhat offset by currency headwinds in Latin America.

Other Financials

Archer Daniels ended the quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$666 million, long-term debt, including current maturities, of \$7,887 million and shareholders' equity of \$20,022 million.

In the twelve months ending Dec 31, 2020, the company used \$2,386 million in cash for operating activities. Additionally, it bought back shares of \$133 million and paid out dividends of \$809 million in the said period.

Recent News

Archer Daniels Raises dividend – Jan 26, 2021

Archer Daniels raised its quarterly dividend by nearly 2.8%, from 36 cents per share to 37 cents. The new dividend of 37 cents per share, is payable on Mar 2, 2021 to its shareholders of record as of Feb 19.

Archer Daniels Declares Dividend – Nov 5, 2020

Archer Daniels declared quarterly cash dividend of 36 cents per share, which is paid on Dec 10, 2020 to its shareholders of record as of Nov 19.

Valuation

Archer Daniels shares are up 15.5% in the past six months and 13.5% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Consumer Staples sector are up 26.3% and 5.7% in the past six months, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is up 23.1% while the sector is down 1.3%.

The S&P 500 index is up 16.2% over the last six months and 16.6% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 13.51X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 15.66X for the Zacks sub-industry, 19.18X for the Zacks sector and 22.47X for the S&P 500 Index.

Over the last five years, the stock has traded as high as 20.25X and as low as 8.81X, with a 5-year median of 14.39X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$52 price target reflects 14.17X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for ADM

Valuation Multiples - ADM					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	13.51	15.66	19.18	22.47
	5-Year High	20.25	16.44	22.42	23.8
	5-Year Low	8.81	10.6	16.5	15.3
	5-Year Median	14.39	14.48	19.57	17.82
P/S F12M	Current	0.42	0.58	10.23	4.45
	5-Year High	0.46	0.58	11.97	4.45
	5-Year Low	0.24	0.21	8.59	3.2
	5-Year Median	0.38	0.3	10.5	3.67
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	11.25	8.43	39.05	17.04
	5-Year High	14.28	10.64	45.76	17.54
	5-Year Low	5.93	4.33	27.35	9.53
	5-Year Median	9.19	7.39	39.03	13.23

As of 01/27/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 26% (186 out of 253)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Bunge Limited (BG)	Outperform	1
B&G Foods, Inc. (BGS)	Outperform	1
Corteva, Inc. (CTVA)	Outperform	2
Adecoagro S.A. (AGRO)	Neutral	3
United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI)	Neutral	4
MetaboliX, Inc. (YTEN)	Neutral	4
Calavo Growers, Inc. (CVGW)	Underperform	5
Limoneira Co (LMNR)	Underperform	5

The positions listed should not be deemed a recommendation to buy, hold or sell.

Industry Comparison Industry: Agriculture - Operations				Industry Peers		
	ADM	X Industry	S&P 500	AGRO	CVGW	LMNR
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Underperform	Underperform
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	5	5
VGM Score	B	-	-	A	C	F
Market Cap	29.03 B	288.67 M	26.55 B	913.27 M	1.34 B	297.48 M
# of Analysts	6	1.5	13	2	2	3
Dividend Yield	2.76%	0.00%	1.45%	0.00%	1.52%	1.78%
Value Score	B	-	-	A	C	F
Cash/Price	0.22	0.10	0.06	0.24	0.00	0.00
EV/EBITDA	9.73	2.71	14.63	3.10	277.22	-29.31
PEG F1	NA	1.67	2.53	NA	NA	25.92
P/B	1.45	1.48	3.85	1.04	5.23	1.53
P/CF	9.21	7.98	14.48	3.33	31.32	NA
P/E F1	13.75	29.23	20.44	33.91	29.23	388.85
P/S TTM	0.45	1.74	2.92	1.10	1.27	1.81
Earnings Yield	7.01%	2.92%	4.80%	2.95%	3.43%	0.24%
Debt/Equity	0.39	0.30	0.69	0.82	0.02	0.63
Cash Flow (\$/share)	5.39	0.19	6.90	2.22	2.47	-0.12
Growth Score	C	-	-	B	B	D
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	12.45%	21.66%	9.69%	95.17%	1.90%	115.56%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	2.00%	32.67%	12.69%	235.29%	65.29%	106.28%
Current Cash Flow Growth	6.09%	-8.24%	4.97%	5.84%	-34.61%	-364.63%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	-1.15%	1.41%	8.07%	13.14%	3.98%	NA
Current Ratio	5.46	1.78	1.38	1.76	1.28	1.35
Debt/Capital	28.45%	24.20%	41.88%	45.06%	2.18%	37.24%
Net Margin	2.75%	-7.26%	10.47%	-4.53%	-1.29%	-9.99%
Return on Equity	10.40%	-0.59%	15.37%	10.33%	9.86%	-5.86%
Sales/Assets	1.50	0.41	0.50	0.35	2.34	0.41
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	1.33%	1.95%	6.10%	NA	1.95%	10.30%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	A	D	F
Daily Price Change	-4.98%	-1.02%	-2.74%	-5.13%	2.07%	-3.86%
1-Week Price Change	1.19%	0.35%	-0.02%	-2.76%	1.05%	10.08%
4-Week Price Change	-0.66%	4.95%	-0.38%	12.29%	10.30%	-3.05%
12-Week Price Change	6.60%	20.74%	9.81%	60.87%	12.46%	19.82%
52-Week Price Change	13.51%	14.39%	6.94%	-1.46%	-0.40%	-19.20%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	2,350,105	104,248	1,872,056	342,033	81,813	67,827
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.14%	0.07%	0.22%	2,400.00%	-0.38%	-76.36%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	6.50%	10.65%	1.79%	2,400.00%	-13.36%	-76.36%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	4.46%	0.00%	0.00%	NA	0.00%	-38.10%

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Zacks Stock Rating System

We offer two rating systems that take into account investors' holding horizons: Zacks Rank and Zacks Recommendation. Each provides valuable insights into the future profitability of the stock and can be used separately or in combination with each other depending on your investment style.

Zacks Recommendation

The Zacks Recommendation aims to predict performance over the next 6 to 12 months. The foundation for the quantitatively determined Zacks Recommendation is trends in the company's estimate revisions and earnings outlook. The Zacks Recommendation is broken down into 3 Levels; Outperform, Neutral and Underperform. Unlike many Wall Street firms, we maintain a balance between the number of Outperform and Neutral recommendations. Our team of 70 analysts are fully versed in the benefits of earnings estimate revisions and how that is harnessed through the Zacks quantitative rating system. But we have given our analysts the ability to override the Zacks Recommendation for the 1200 stocks that they follow. The reason for the analyst over-rides is that there are often factors such as valuation, industry conditions and management effectiveness that a trained investment professional can spot better than a quantitative model.

Zacks Rank

The Zacks Rank is our short-term rating system that is most effective over the one- to three-month holding horizon. The underlying driver for the quantitatively-determined Zacks Rank is the same as the Zacks Recommendation, and reflects trends in earnings estimate revisions.

Zacks Style Scores

The Zacks Style Score is as a complementary indicator to the Zacks rating system, giving investors a way to focus on the highest rated stocks that best fit their own stock picking preferences.

Academic research has proven that stocks with the best Value, Growth and Momentum characteristics outperform the market. The Zacks Style Scores rate stocks on each of these individual styles and assigns a rating of A, B, C, D and F. We also produce the VGM Score (V for Value, G for Growth and M for Momentum), which combines the weighted average of the individual Style Scores into one score. This is perfectly suited for those who want their stocks to have the best scores across the board.

Value Score	B
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	B

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

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Returns quoted represent past performance which is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate so that when shares are redeemed, they may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance shown.

Investing involves risk; principal loss is possible. There is no guarantee that companies that can issue dividends will declare, continue to pay or increase dividends.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

52-Week High-Low: The range of the highest and lowest prices at which a stock has traded during the past year. This range is determined based on the stock's daily closing price which may differ from the intra-day high or low. Many investors use it as a technical indicator to determine a stock's current value and future price movement. The idea here is that if price breaks out from the 52-week range, in either direction, the momentum may continue in the same direction.

20-Day Average Volume (Shares): The average number of shares of a company traded in a day over the last 20 days. It is a direct indication of a security's overall liquidity. The higher the average daily trading volume, the easier it is to enter or exit the stock at a desired price with more buyers and sellers being available.

Daily Price Change: This is the percentage difference between a trading day's closing price and the prior trading day's closing price. This item is updated at 9 p.m. EST each day.

1-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 5 trading days. This change reflects the collective buying and selling sentiment over the 1-week period.

A strong weekly price increase for the stock, especially when accompanied by increased volume, is an indication of it gaining momentum.

4-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 20 trading days or past 4 weeks. This is a medium-term price change metric and an indication of the stock gaining momentum.

12-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change of a stock's closing price over the last 60 trading days or past 12 weeks. Similar to 4-week price change, this is a medium-term price change metric. It shows whether a stock has been enjoying strong investor demand, or if it has been in consolidation, or distress over this period.

52-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 260 trading days or past 52 weeks. This long-term price change metric is a good reference point for investors. Some investors seek stocks with the best percentage price change over the last 52 weeks, expecting the momentum to continue.

Market Cap: The number of outstanding common shares of a company times its latest price per share. This figure represents a company's size, which indicates various characteristics, including price stability and risk, in which investors could be interested.

Year-To-Date Price Change: Change in a stock's daily closing price in the period of time beginning the first day of the current calendar year through to the previous trading day.

of Analysts: Number of EPS estimates used in calculating the current-quarter consensus. These estimates come from the brokerage analysts tracking this stock. However, the number of such analysts tracking this stock may not match the number of estimates, as all brokerage analysts may not come up with an estimate or provide it to us.

Beta: A measure of risk commonly used to compare the volatility of a stock to the overall market. The S&P 500 Index is the base for calculating beta and carries a value of 1. A stock with beta below 1 is less risky than the market as a whole. And a stock with beta above 1 is riskier.

Dividend: The portion of earnings a company is expected to distribute to its common shareholders in the next 12 months for each share they own. Dividends are usually paid quarterly. Dividend payments reflect positively on a company and help maintain investors' trust. Investors typically find dividend-paying stocks appealing because the dividend adds to any market price appreciation to result in higher return on investment (ROI). Moreover, a steady or increasing dividend payment provides investors a cushion in a down market.

Dividend Yield: The ratio of a company's annual dividend to its share price. The annual dividend used in the ratio is calculated based on the most recent dividend paid by the company. Dividend yield is an estimate of the dividend-only return from a stock in the next 12 months. Since dividend itself doesn't change frequently, dividend yield usually changes with a stock's price movement. As a result, often an unusually high dividend yield is a result of weak stock price.

S&P 500 Index: The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. It is a market-capitalization-weighted index of stocks of the 500 largest U.S. companies. Each stock's weight in the index is proportionate to its market value.

Industry: One of the 250+ groups that Zacks classifies all stocks into based on the nature of business. These groups are termed as expanded (aka "X") industries and map to their respective (economic) sectors; Zacks has 16 sectors.

Zacks Industry Rank: The Zacks Industry Rank is determined by calculating the average Zacks Rank for all stocks in the industry and then assigning an ordinal rank to it. For example, an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 1.6 is better than an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 2.3. So, the industry with the better average Zacks Rank would get a better Zacks Industry Rank. If an industry has the best average Zacks Rank, it would be considered the top industry (1 out of 250+), which would place it at the top 1% of Zacks-ranked industries. Studies have shown that roughly half of a stock's price movement can be attributed to the industry group it belongs to. In fact, the top 50% of Zacks-ranked industries outperforms the bottom 50% by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

Last EPS Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported earnings per share from the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Companies with a positive earnings surprise are more likely to surprise again in the future (or miss again if they recently missed).

Last Sales Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported sales from the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Expected Report Date: This is an estimated date of a company's next earnings release. The information originated or gathered by Zacks Investment Research from its information providers or publicly available sources is the basis of this estimate.

Earnings ESP: The Zacks Earnings ESP compares the Most Accurate Estimate to the Zacks Consensus Estimate for the yet-to-be reported quarter. The Most Accurate Estimate is the most recent version of the Zacks Consensus EPS Estimate. The idea here is that analysts revising their estimates closer to an earnings release have the latest information, which could potentially be more accurate than what they and others contributing to the consensus had predicted earlier. Thus, a positive or negative Earnings ESP reading theoretically indicates the likely deviation of the actual earnings from the consensus estimate. However, the model's predictive power is significant for positive ESP readings only. A positive Earnings ESP is a strong predictor of an earnings beat, particularly when combined with a Zacks Rank #1 (Strong Buy), #2 (Buy) or #3 (Hold). Our research shows that stocks with this combination produce a positive surprise nearly 70% of the time.

Periods:

TTM: Trailing 12 months. Using TTM figures is an effective way of analyzing the most-recent financial data in an annualized format that helps neutralize the effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variation.

F1: Current fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the ongoing full fiscal year.

F2: Next fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the next full fiscal year.

F12M: Forward 12 months. Using F12M figures is an effective way of analyzing the near-term (the following four unreported quarters) estimates in an annualized manner. Instead of typically representing estimates for the full fiscal year, which may not represent the nitty-gritty of each quarter, F12M figures suggest an all-inclusive annualized estimate for the following four quarters. The annualization helps neutralize the potential effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variations.

P/E Ratio: The price-to-earnings ratio measures a company's current market price per share relative to its earnings per share (EPS). Usually, the trailing-12-month (TTM) EPS, current-fiscal-year (F1) EPS estimate, or forward-12-month (F12M) EPS estimate is used as the denominator. In essence, this ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of EPS. In other words, this ratio gives a sense of what the relative value of the company is at the already reported level of earnings or at a future level of earnings.

It is one of the most widely-used multiples for determining the value of a company and helps comparing its valuation with that of a competitor, the industry group or a benchmark.

PEG Ratio: The price/earnings to growth ratio is a stock's P/E ratio using current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by its expected EPS growth rate over the coming 3 to 5 years. This ratio essentially determines a stock's value by factoring in the company's expected earnings growth and is thus believed to provide a more complete picture than just the P/E ratio, particularly for faster-growing companies.

P/S Ratio: The price-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by trailing 12 months (TTM) sales or revenues per share. This ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of TTM sales per share. The P/S ratio is at times the only valuation metric when the company has yet to become profitable.

Cash/Price Ratio: The cash-to-price ratio or Cash Yield is calculated as cash and marketable securities per share divided by the company's current share price. Like the earnings yield, which shows the anticipated yield (or return) on a stock from earnings for each dollar invested, the cash yield does the same, with cash being the source of return instead of earnings. For example, a cash/price ratio of 0.08 suggests a return of 8% or 8 cents for every \$1 investment.

EV/EBITDA Ratio: The EV/EBITDA ratio, also known as Enterprise Multiple, is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Usually, trailing-12-month (TTM) or forward-12-month (F12M) EBITDA is used as the denominator.

EV/Sales Ratio: The enterprise value-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by annual sales. It is an expansion of the P/S valuation, which uses market value instead of enterprise value. The EV/Sales ratio is perceived as more accurate than P/S, in part, because the market capitalization does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/CF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-cash flow ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by the trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow. It's a measure of how long it would take to buy the entire business if you were able to use all the company's operating cash flow.

The EV/CF ratio is perceived as more accurate than the P/CF ratio, in part, because the market price does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/FCF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-free cash flow metric compares a company's enterprise value to its trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow (FCF). This metric is very similar to the EV/CF ratio, but is considered a more exact measure owing to the fact that it uses free cash flow, which subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding growth activities and payments to shareholders.

P/EBITDA Ratio: The P/EBITDA ratio is calculated as a company's per share market value divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). This metric is very similar to the EV/EBITDA ratio, but is considered a little less exact measure as it uses market price, which does not take a company's debt into account. However, since EBITDA is often considered a proxy for cash income, the metric is used as a measure of what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of the company's cash profitability in the trailing 12 months (TTM) or forward 12 months (F12M).

P/B Ratio: The price-to-book ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by its book value (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks) per share. In short, the book value is how much a company is worth. In other words, it reflects the total value of a company's assets that its common shareholders would receive if it were to be liquidated. So, the P/B ratio indicates whether you're paying higher or lower than what would remain if the company went bankrupt immediately. Investors typically use this metric to determine how a company's stock price stacks up to its intrinsic value.

P/TB Ratio: The price-to-tangible-book value ratio is calculated as a the per share market value of a company divided by the value of its tangible assets (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks – intangible assets) per share. Tangible book value is the same thing as book value except it excludes the value of intangible assets to get a step closer to the baseline value of the company.

P/CF Ratio: The price-to-cash flow ratio measures a company's per share market price relative to its trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow per share. This metric is used to determine whether a company is undervalued or overvalued relative to another stock, industry or sector. And like the P/E ratio, a lower number is typically considered better from the value perspective.

One of the reasons why P/CF ratio is often preferred over P/E ratio is the fact that operating cash flow adds back non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortization to net income. This feature helps valuing stocks that have positive cash flow but are not profitable because of large noncash charges.

P/FCF Ratio: The price-to-free cash flow ratio is an extension of P/CF ratio, which uses trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow per share instead of operating cash flow per share. This metric is considered a more exact measure than P/CF ratio, as free cash flow subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding activities that generate additional revenues.

Earnings Yield: The earnings yield is calculated as current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by the company's current share price. The ratio, which is the inverse of the P/E ratio, measures the anticipated yield (or return) from earnings for each dollar invested in a stock today.

For example, earnings yield for a stock, which is trading at \$35 and expected to earn \$3 per share in the current fiscal year (F1), would be 0.0857 ($3/35 = 0.0857$) or 8.57%. In other words, for \$1 invested in the stock today, the yield from earnings is anticipated to be 8.57 cents.

Investors most commonly compare the earnings yield of a stock to that of a broad market index (such as the S&P 500) and prevailing interest rates, such as the current 10-year Treasury yield. Since bonds and stocks compete for investors' dollars, stock investors typically demand a higher yield for the extra risk they assume compared to investors of U.S. Treasury-backed securities that offer virtually risk-free returns. This additional return is referred to as the risk premium.

Debt/Equity Ratio: The debt-to-equity ratio is calculated as a company's total liabilities divided by its shareholder equity. This metric is used to gauge a company's financial leverage. In other words, it is a measure of the degree to which a company is financing its operations through debt versus its own funds. The higher the ratio, the higher the risk for shareholders.

However, this ratio is difficult to compare across industry groups where ideal amounts of debt vary. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-equity ratio should be compared with other companies in the same industry.

Cash Flow (\$/share): Cash flow per share is calculated as operating cash flow (after-tax earnings + depreciation + other non-cash charges) divided by common shares outstanding. It is used by many investors as a measure of a company's financial strength. Since cash flow per share takes into consideration a company's ability to generate cash by adding back non-cash expenses, it is regarded by some as a more accurate measure of a company's financial situation than earnings per share, which could be artificially deflated.

Current Ratio: The current ratio or liquidity ratio is a company's current assets divided by its current liabilities. It measures a company's ability to pay short-term obligations. A current ratio that is in line with the industry average or slightly higher is generally considered acceptable. A current ratio that is lower than the industry average would indicate a higher risk of distress or default. A higher number is usually better. However, a very high current ratio compared to the industry average could be an indication of inefficient use of assets by management.

Debt/Capital Ratio: Debt-to-capital ratio is a company's total debt (interest-bearing debt + both short- and long-term liabilities) divided its total capital (interest-bearing debt + shareholders' equity). It is a measure of a company's financial leverage. All else being equal, the higher the debt-to-capital ratio, the riskier the stock.

However, this ratio can vary widely from industry to industry, the ideal amount of required debt being different. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-capital ratio should be compared with the same for its industry.

Net Margin: Net margin is calculated as net income divided by sales. It shows how much of each dollar in sales generated by a company translates into profit. For example, if a company's net margin is 15%, its net income is 15 cents for every \$1 of sales it makes.

A change in margin can reflect either a change in business conditions, or a company's cost controls, or both. If a company's expenses are growing faster than sales, its net margin will decline. However, different net margin rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare net margin rates of companies in the same industry group.

Return on Equity: Return on equity (ROE) is calculated as trailing-12-month net income divided by trailing-12-month average shareholder equity (including reinvested earnings). This metric is considered a measure of how effectively management is using a company's assets to generate profits. For example, if a company's ROE is 10%, it creates 10 cents profits for every \$1 shareholder equity, which is basically the company's assets minus debt. A company's ROE deemed good or bad depends on what's normal for its peers or industry group.

Sales/Assets Ratio: The sales-to-assets ratio or asset utilization ratio or asset turnover ratio is calculated as a company's annual sales divided by average assets (average of assets at the beginning of the year and at the year's end). This metric helps investors understand how effectively a company is using its assets to generate sales. For example, a sales-to-assets ratio of 2.5 indicates that the company generated \$2.50 in sales for every \$1 of assets on its books.

The higher the sales-to-assets ratio, the better the company is performing. However, similar to many other ratios, the asset turnover ratio tends to be higher for companies in certain industries/sectors than in others. So, a company's sales-to-assets ratio should be compared with the same for its industry/sector.

Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years): This is the average annual (trailing-12-month) EPS growth rate over the last 3-5 years. This metric helps investors see how a company's EPS has grown from a long-term perspective.

Note: There are many factors that can influence short-term numbers — a recession will reduce this number, while a recovery will inflate it. The longterm perspective helps smooth out short-term events.

Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0): This is the estimated EPS growth rate for the current financial year. It is calculated as the consensus estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported EPS for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Current Cash Flow Growth: It measures the latest year-over-year change in operating cash flow. Cash flow growth tells an investor how quickly a company is generating inflows of cash from operations. A positive change in the cash flow is desired and shows that more 'cash' is coming in than going out.

Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years): This is the annualized change in cash flow over the last 3-5 years. The change in a longer period helps put the current reading into proper perspective. By looking at the rate, rather than the actual dollar value, the comparison across the industry and peers becomes easier.

Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0): This metric looks at the estimated sales growth for the current year. It is calculated as sales estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported sales for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Like EPS growth, a higher rate is better for sales growth. A look at a company's projected sales growth instantly tells you what the outlook is for their products and services. However, different sales growth rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare sales growth rates of companies in the same industry group.

EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past week. The change in a company's consensus EPS estimate (or earnings estimate revision) has proven to be strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares. It is an integral part of the Zacks Rank.

If a stock's consensus EPS estimate is \$1.10 now versus \$1.00 a week ago, that will be reflected as a 10% upward revision. If, on the other hand, it went from \$1.00 to 90 cents, that would be a 10% downward revision.

EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past four weeks.

A stock's earnings estimate revision in a 1-week period is important. But it's more meaningful to look at the longer-term revision. And, of course, the 4-week change helps put the 1-week change into proper perspective.

EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past 12 weeks.

This metric essentially shows how the consensus EPS estimate has changed over a period longer than 1 week or 4 weeks.

EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal quarter over the past four weeks.

While the revision in consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year is strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares, the estimate revision for the current fiscal quarter is an important metric as well, especially over the short term, and particularly as a stock approaches its earnings date. If a stock's Q1 EPS estimate decreases ahead of its earnings release, it's usually a negative sign, whereas an increase is a positive sign.