

## Hormel Foods(HRL)

**\$49.72** (As of 09/10/20)

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

Long Term: 6-12 Months

**Zacks Recommendation:**

**Neutral**

(Since: 07/24/19)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)

**3-Hold**

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: D

Growth: A

Momentum: B

### Summary

Hormel Foods has outpaced the industry in the past three months. The company has been benefiting from increased demand in the retail channel amid the pandemic, a trend which was witnessed in third-quarter fiscal 2020 as well. During the quarter, earnings and sales topped the consensus mark and the latter grew year over year. The company's Grocery Products and Refrigerated Foods segments did well in particular. Results were aided by strength in retail and deli businesses, which helped counter declines in foodservice. While management expects such trends to be mirrored in the fourth quarter, it remains uncertain about the extent of foodservice recovery, performance of the overall food supply chain and macroeconomic conditions. Apart from this, management expects additional supply-chain costs of \$80-\$100 million for fiscal 2020 due to COVID-19.

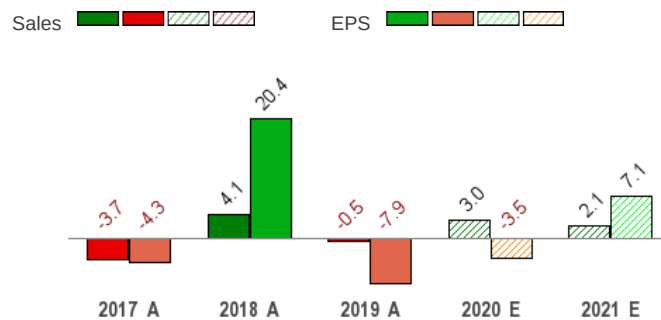
### Price, Consensus & Surprise



### Data Overview

|                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 52-Week High-Low               | \$52.97 - \$39.01           |
| 20-Day Average Volume (Shares) | 1,550,766                   |
| Market Cap                     | \$26.8 B                    |
| Year-To-Date Price Change      | 10.2%                       |
| Beta                           | -0.04                       |
| Dividend / Dividend Yield      | \$0.93 / 1.9%               |
| Industry                       | Food - Meat Products        |
| Zacks Industry Rank            | Bottom 10% (227 out of 251) |

### Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Last EPS Surprise             | 12.1%      |
| Last Sales Surprise           | 3.9%       |
| EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change | 1.5%       |
| Expected Report Date          | 11/24/2020 |
| Earnings ESP                  | -0.7%      |

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| P/E TTM | 29.1 |
| P/E F1  | 29.6 |
| PEG F1  | 4.7  |
| P/S TTM | 2.8  |

### Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

|      | Q1      | Q2      | Q3      | Q4      | Annual* |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2021 | 2,466 E | 2,441 E | 2,417 E | 2,650 E | 9,992 E |
| 2020 | 2,384 A | 2,422 A | 2,381 A | 2,597 E | 9,786 E |
| 2019 | 2,360 A | 2,345 A | 2,291 A | 2,502 A | 9,497 A |

### EPS Estimates

|      | Q1       | Q2       | Q3       | Q4       | Annual*  |
|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2021 | \$0.44 E | \$0.47 E | \$0.43 E | \$0.51 E | \$1.80 E |
| 2020 | \$0.45 A | \$0.42 A | \$0.37 A | \$0.45 E | \$1.68 E |
| 2019 | \$0.44 A | \$0.46 A | \$0.37 A | \$0.47 A | \$1.74 A |

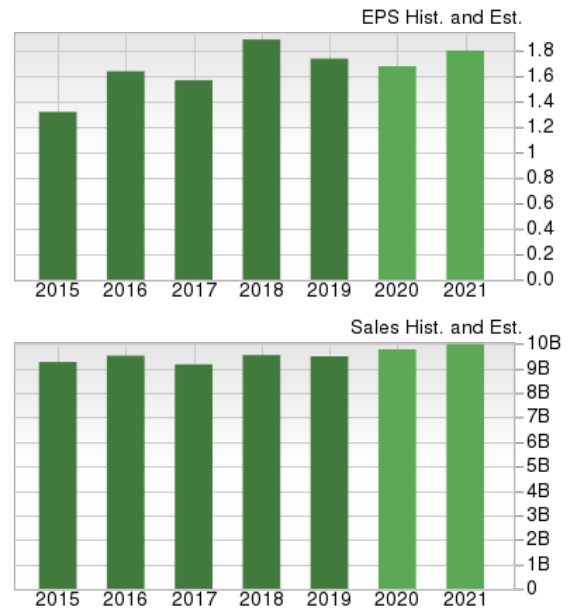
\*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 09/10/2020. The reports text is as of 09/11/2020.

## Overview

Austin, MN-based **Hormel Foods Corporation (HRL)** is a leading manufacturer and marketer of various meat and food products in the U.S. and international markets. In fiscal 2017, Hormel Foods reported revenue results through five segments: On Nov 21, 2017, Hormel Foods declared that it has consolidated the Specialty Foods segment into the Grocery Products segment.

- **Grocery Products** (25% of total revenues in fiscal 2019): This segment consists primarily of the processing, marketing and sale of shelf-stable food products sold predominantly in the retail market.
- **Refrigerated Foods** (54.8% of total revenues in fiscal 2019): This segment includes the Hormel Refrigerated, Burke Corporation (Burke) and Dan's Prize operating segments. It consists primarily of the processing, marketing and sale of branded and unbranded pork and beef products for retail, food service and fresh-product customers.
- **Jennie-O Turkey Store** (14% of total revenues in fiscal 2019): This segment consists primarily of the processing, marketing and sale of branded and unbranded turkey products for retail, food service and fresh product customers.
- **International & Other** (6.2% of total revenues in fiscal 2019): This segment includes the Hormel Foods International ('HFI') operating segment, which manufactures markets and sells the company's various miscellaneous corporate products internationally.



The company concluded the divestiture of CytoSport business to PepsiCo. The transaction was valued at nearly \$465 million.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

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## Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Coronavirus-Led Demand Aids Sales:** Shares of Hormel Foods have gained 7.1% in the past three months compared with the industry's growth of 2.2%. The company has been benefiting from increased demand in the retail channel amid the pandemic, a trend which was also witnessed in third-quarter fiscal 2020. Hormel Foods' net sales in the third quarter were \$2,381.5 million, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$2,293 million. Moreover, the top line increased about 4% year over year, while organic sales grew around 2%. The company's Grocery Products and Refrigerated Foods segments did well in particular. Results were largely aided by strength in retail and deli businesses, which helped counter declines in foodservice. Such favorable trends, especially strength in retail business, are expected to be mirrored in the fourth quarter as well.

Hormel Foods continues to gain from strength in retail and deli businesses amid the pandemic. These trends are expected to be mirrored in the fourth quarter as well.

Channel-wise, U.S. retail net sales climbed 19% and U.S. deli net sales grew 4%. The company particularly gained from increased retail sales at all brands, thanks to the rising demand amid the coronavirus-led pantry loading and stay-at home trends. In fact, Hormel Foods continued to see market-share gains in several categories. Further, the company saw robust strength in e-commerce, including direct to consumer as well as online grocery pickup and delivery. Certainly, the company's e-commerce investments are paying off.

▲ **Brand Strength & Innovation:** Strength in brands like Bacon 1, Fire Braised, Austin Blues, Café H, Natural Choice, Burke, Fontanini, as well as Sadler's Smokehouse (acquired recently) aided the company's growth in third-quarter fiscal 2020. Management informed that the pandemic-led demand further accelerated for these brands. Well, the company has been making strategic advertisement investments to support growth of its brands. Additionally, the company focuses on launching products to meet consumers' preferences. In this regard, Hormel Foods' has been conducting virtual products showcases amid the coronavirus outbreak.

▲ **Focus on Buyouts:** Hormel Foods intends to strengthen its business on the back of strategic acquisitions. In this regard, the company acquired a Texas-based pit-smoked meats company, Sadler's Smokehouse (completed on Mar 2, 2020). The buyout is in sync with Hormel Foods' initiatives to strengthen position in foodservice and is already yielding. Further, the Columbus (completed on Nov 27, 2017) and Fontanini (completed on Aug 17, 2017) buyouts have been aiding performance. Notably, through the inclusion of Columbus, the company has been able to develop the new Hormel deli solutions division, which is included within refrigerated foods, and is helping meet retailer needs. Also, the Ceratti acquisition (completed on Aug 24, 2017) is aiding the International segment. These buyouts are expected to continue boosting performance in the forthcoming periods.

▲ **Efforts to Enhance Capacity:** Hormel Foods is focused on expanding capacity. Along with its fourth-quarter fiscal 2019 results, the company revealed plans to construct state-of-the-art dry sausage production facility for its Columbus charcuterie products. The envisioned plant will help Hormel Foods expand Columbus products distribution to the East Coast. Also, the company is on track with its Burke pizza toppings plant expansion, Project Orion as well as a new dry sausage facility for the remainder of fiscal 2020.

▲ **Financial Flexibility:** In third-quarter fiscal 2020, Hormel Foods generated cash of \$330 million from operating activities, while its operating free cash flow amounted to \$242 million. The company looks poised on the dividend-payout front. On Aug 17, Hormel Foods paid out its 368th straight quarterly dividend. Hormel Foods' current annual dividend rate of 93 cents per share reflects a 10.7% rise from the prior-year period. Notably, the company has a dividend payout of 54.5%, dividend yield of 1.9% and free cash flow yield of 3.2%.

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## Reasons To Sell:

▼ **Escalated Cost Concerns:** Hormel Foods' third-quarter fiscal 2020 operating results were affected by escalated costs associated with COVID-19. During the quarter, the company absorbed roughly \$40 million due to additional supply-chain costs stemming from the pandemic-led soft production volumes, employee bonuses and costs to ensure better safety measures in production units. These costs amounted to \$60 million year to date. Management anticipates total additional supply-chain costs of \$80-\$100 million for fiscal 2020 and \$20-\$40 million for the fourth quarter.

Hormel Foods' anticipates total additional supply-chain costs of \$80-\$100 million for fiscal 2020 and \$20-\$40 million for the fourth quarter on account of COVID-19.

▼ **Foodservice Business Challenges:** While Hormel Foods' retail business has been performing strongly, the company is seeing declines in its foodservice business amid the pandemic. This could be attributed to reduced demand from restaurants, hotels, distributors and various other foodservice venues in the wake of COVID-19 induced social distancing. During the third quarter of fiscal 2020, net sales in the U.S. foodservice channel declined 19%.

During its earnings call, management noted that although its foodservice business saw a rebound, it remains below year-ago levels. This trend is also likely to persist in the fourth quarter. In fact, while management expects its overall third-quarter sales trend to be mirrored in the fourth quarter, it remains uncertain about the extent of foodservice recovery, performance of the overall food supply chain and macroeconomic conditions.

▼ **Production Related Headwinds:** Hormel Foods' workers have been working relentlessly to cater to the elevated demand and the company is producing much more than ever in some categories. However, in some core categories, robust demand and the adverse impact of the pandemic on the company's manufacturing facilities have compelled it to explore other solutions to elevate production. This includes reliance on the co-manufacturing allies. Hormel Foods expects factors like limited availability of labor, manufacturing inefficiencies (related to pandemic-led safety measures) and unseasonably reduced inventory levels to hinder its ability to cater to the rising demand for some products in the fourth quarter.

▼ **Industry Related Threats:** The food industry is witnessing stiff competition and aggressive promotional environment. The company faces intense competition from other food companies on the grounds of quality, prices and availability. To meet such competitive pressure effectively, Hormel Foods may have to lower prices for products or indulge in marketing activities to maintain market share. Additionally, the outbreak of any livestock diseases is likely to disrupt the company's operations and profitability.

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## Last Earnings Report

### Hormel Foods Earnings Top Estimates Amid High Costs

Hormel Foods posted third-quarter fiscal 2020 results, wherein earnings of 37 cents per share beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 33 cents. The bottom line remained flat year over year. While sales and volumes increased year over year, the company's operating results were affected by escalated costs associated with COVID-19.

During the quarter, the company absorbed roughly \$40 million due to additional supply-chain costs stemming from the pandemic-led soft production volumes, employee bonuses and costs to ensure better safety measures in production units. These costs amounted to \$60 million year to date. Management anticipates total additional supply-chain costs of \$80-\$100 million for fiscal 2020 and \$20-\$40 million for the fourth quarter.

Net sales in the third quarter were \$2,381.5 million, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$2,293 million. Moreover, the top line increased about 4% year over year, while organic sales grew around 2%. The company particularly gained from increased sales in the retail and deli businesses, together with a revival in the foodservice business. These trends are expected to be reflected in the fourth quarter as well. Channel-wise, U.S. retail net sales climbed 19% and U.S. deli net sales grew 4%. However, International net sales dropped 2% and the U.S. foodservice net sales declined 19%.

Selling, general and administrative expenses rose slightly to \$181.1 million due to increased employee-related costs, largely countered by reduced advertising investments. Operating margin in this quarter contracted 70 basis points (bps) to 10.5% due to escalated costs related to coronavirus.

### Segment Details

Sales in the **Grocery Products** unit rose nearly 7% to \$580.8 million and volumes were up 6% on solid consumer demand for center store brands such as Herdez, SKIPPY and Dinty Moore, to name a few. Increased sales and a better mix aided segment profit, which grew 36% year over year.

Net sales in the **Jennie-O Turkey Store** segment dropped 4% to \$286.8 million, with volumes declining 9%. Sales were marred by weak foodservice, commodity and whole-bird sales, partly made up by increased retail sales, which were fueled by Jennie-O lean ground products. Segment profit tanked 67% due to elevated manufacturing and live production costs accountable to impacts from three ongoing plant pauses. Also, high COVID-19 costs dented profits.

The company's **Refrigerated Foods** segment generated sales of \$1,363.1 million, up 5% year over year. Also, volumes grew 8%. Sales and volumes were fueled by robust demand for branded retail and deli product sales, greater fresh pork commodity sales along with contributions from Sadler's Smokehouse buyout. These upsides countered declines in the foodservice business. Applegate, Hormel Black Label and Columbus brands aided sales in particular. However, segment profit decreased 11% due to sluggish foodservice sales, high costs related to coronavirus and hog hedge-related losses.

**International & Other** sales inched up 2% to \$150.8 million, while volumes fell 5%. Higher sales in China and branded exports were somewhat countered by reduced fresh pork export sales. Notably, the company saw exceptionally solid global demand for SKIPPY peanut butter and SPAM luncheon meat. Segment profit improved 26% on better results in China, along with the company's partners in Europe, Philippines and South Korea.

### Balance Sheet & Cash Flow

The company ended the quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$1,729.4 million and long-term debt of \$1,046.8 million (excluding current maturities). In third-quarter fiscal 2020, Hormel Foods generated cash of \$330 million from operating activities. Capital expenditure summed \$88 million in the quarter, resulting in operating free cash flow of \$242 million. Management expects capital expenditure of \$350 million for fiscal 2020. During the quarter, Hormel Foods did not make share buybacks. Nonetheless, on Aug 17, the company paid out its 368th straight quarterly dividend. Hormel Foods' current annual dividend rate of 93 cents per share reflects an 11% rise from the prior-year period.

### Outlook

While management expects its third-quarter sales trend to be mirrored in the fourth quarter, it remains uncertain about the extent of foodservice recovery, performance of the overall food supply chain and macroeconomic conditions. The company further informed that although its foodservice business saw a rebound, it remains below year-ago levels. This trend is also likely to persist in the fourth quarter.

Management noted that its workers have been working relentlessly to cater to the elevated demand and the company is producing much more than ever in some categories. However, in some core categories, robust demand and the adverse impact of the pandemic on the company's manufacturing facilities have compelled it to explore other solutions to elevate production. This includes reliance on the co-manufacturing allies. Hormel Foods expects factors like limited availability of labor, manufacturing inefficiencies (related to pandemic-led safety measures) and unseasonably reduced inventory levels to hinder its ability to cater to the rising demand for some products in the fourth quarter.

| Quarter Ending   | 07/2020      |
|------------------|--------------|
| Report Date      | Aug 25, 2020 |
| Sales Surprise   | 3.86%        |
| EPS Surprise     | 12.12%       |
| Quarterly EPS    | 0.37         |
| Annual EPS (TTM) | 1.71         |

## Valuation

Hormel Foods shares are up 11.9% in the year-to-date period and 15.3% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are down 11.8% in the year-to-date period, while the Zacks Consumer Staples sector is down 3.6%. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is down 11.8%, while the sector declined 2.3%.

The S&P 500 index is up 7% in the year-to-date period and 15.6% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 27.98X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 18.23X for the Zacks sub-industry, 20.28X for the Zacks sector and 22.6X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 29.65X and as low as 17.63X, with a 5-year median of 22.8X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our \$52 price target reflects 29.26X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for HRL

| Valuation Multiples - HRL |               |       |              |        |         |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------|--------|---------|
|                           |               | Stock | Sub-Industry | Sector | S&P 500 |
| P/E F12M                  | Current       | 27.98 | 18.23        | 20.28  | 22.6    |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 29.65 | 19.1         | 22.37  | 23.44   |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 17.63 | 11.48        | 16.63  | 15.26   |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 22.8  | 15.22        | 19.66  | 17.63   |
| P/S F12M                  | Current       | 2.71  | 0.93         | 9.65   | 4.16    |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 2.86  | 1.11         | 11.15  | 4.29    |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 1.6   | 0.63         | 8.12   | 3.11    |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 2.09  | 0.94         | 9.89   | 3.66    |
| EV/EBITDA F12M            | Current       | 18.8  | 10.2         | 35.62  | 15.28   |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 19.78 | 19.91        | 37.28  | 19.68   |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 11.3  | 7.49         | 25.87  | 13.54   |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 14.36 | 9.87         | 33.72  | 16.52   |

As of 09/10/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

## Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 10% (227 out of 251)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

## Top Peers

| Company (Ticker)                  | Rec          | Rank |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| Red River Bancshares, Inc. (RRBI) | Outperform   | 2    |
| Beyond Meat, Inc. (BYND)          | Neutral      | 3    |
| Conagra Brands Inc. (CAG)         | Neutral      | 3    |
| General Mills, Inc. (GIS)         | Neutral      | 3    |
| Sanderson Farms, Inc. (SAFM)      | Neutral      | 3    |
| Tyson Foods, Inc. (TSN)           | Neutral      | 3    |
| Post Holdings, Inc. (POST)        | Underperform | 5    |
| Pilgrims Pride Corporation (PPC)  | Underperform | 5    |

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

| Industry Comparison Industry: Food - Meat Products |           |            |           | Industry Peers |          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------------|----------|-----------|
|                                                    | HRL       | X Industry | S&P 500   | PPC            | SAFM     | TSN       |
| Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)                   | Neutral   | -          | -         | Underperform   | Neutral  | Neutral   |
| Zacks Rank (Short Term)                            | 3         | -          | -         | 5              | 3        | 3         |
| VGM Score                                          | B         | -          | -         | A              | A        | A         |
| Market Cap                                         | 26.83 B   | 4.08 B     | 22.97 B   | 4.08 B         | 2.82 B   | 23.16 B   |
| # of Analysts                                      | 7         | 3.5        | 14        | 2              | 1        | 5         |
| Dividend Yield                                     | 1.87%     | 0.00%      | 1.65%     | 0.00%          | 1.01%    | 2.65%     |
| Value Score                                        | D         | -          | -         | A              | C        | A         |
| Cash/Price                                         | 0.06      | 0.06       | 0.07      | 0.13           | 0.02     | 0.06      |
| EV/EBITDA                                          | 18.76     | 7.10       | 12.97     | 5.91           | 13.19    | 8.29      |
| PEG F1                                             | 4.68      | 3.90       | 2.92      | 3.84           | NA       | NA        |
| P/B                                                | 4.28      | 1.54       | 3.16      | 1.72           | 2.01     | 1.54      |
| P/CF                                               | 23.94     | 7.50       | 12.49     | 5.99           | 13.80    | 7.50      |
| P/E F1                                             | 29.77     | 27.65      | 21.20     | 25.71          | NA       | 12.79     |
| P/S TTM                                            | 2.77      | 0.65       | 2.39      | 0.35           | 0.80     | 0.54      |
| Earnings Yield                                     | 3.38%     | 3.38%      | 4.55%     | 3.89%          | -0.15%   | 7.82%     |
| Debt/Equity                                        | 0.17      | 0.13       | 0.70      | 1.10           | 0.07     | 0.75      |
| Cash Flow (\$/share)                               | 2.08      | 2.08       | 6.93      | 2.79           | 9.19     | 8.46      |
| Growth Score                                       | A         | -          | -         | B              | A        | A         |
| Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)                  | 4.57%     | -2.25%     | 10.41%    | -13.84%        | -32.09%  | 10.07%    |
| Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)                       | -3.45%    | -9.22%     | -4.75%    | -59.88%        | -107.57% | -9.16%    |
| Current Cash Flow Growth                           | -8.04%    | -5.88%     | 5.26%     | 16.70%         | 3.93%    | -3.73%    |
| Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)            | 8.67%     | 3.13%      | 8.49%     | -4.98%         | -8.98%   | 13.92%    |
| Current Ratio                                      | 2.39      | 2.39       | 1.35      | 1.89           | 2.79     | 1.80      |
| Debt/Capital                                       | 14.30%    | 11.40%     | 42.95%    | 52.42%         | 6.36%    | 42.91%    |
| Net Margin                                         | 9.59%     | 2.24%      | 10.25%    | 2.24%          | -0.64%   | 4.26%     |
| Return on Equity                                   | 15.20%    | 7.89%      | 14.59%    | 7.89%          | -4.15%   | 12.63%    |
| Sales/Assets                                       | 1.13      | 1.26       | 0.50      | 1.67           | 1.88     | 1.26      |
| Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)                     | 3.04%     | 1.01%      | -1.42%    | 0.00%          | 2.56%    | 1.01%     |
| Momentum Score                                     | B         | -          | -         | B              | A        | B         |
| Daily Price Change                                 | -1.87%    | 2.28%      | -1.51%    | 4.18%          | 4.22%    | 3.61%     |
| 1-Week Price Change                                | 0.91%     | 0.68%      | -1.28%    | -0.49%         | 5.45%    | -2.33%    |
| 4-Week Price Change                                | -4.60%    | 4.30%      | -2.05%    | 1.83%          | 8.14%    | -1.78%    |
| 12-Week Price Change                               | 3.26%     | 2.24%      | 4.48%     | -8.09%         | 2.44%    | -0.89%    |
| 52-Week Price Change                               | 13.00%    | -27.53%    | -1.95%    | -44.94%        | -11.92%  | -23.99%   |
| 20-Day Average Volume (Shares)                     | 1,550,766 | 202,456    | 1,834,261 | 724,394        | 202,456  | 2,345,370 |
| EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change                      | 0.00%     | 0.00%      | 0.00%     | 0.00%          | 13.60%   | 0.00%     |
| EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change                      | 1.51%     | 1.51%      | 0.00%     | 0.00%          | 28.50%   | 0.24%     |
| EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change                     | 1.51%     | 1.51%      | 4.05%     | -64.29%        | 21.80%   | 12.73%    |
| EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change                     | -2.17%    | 0.00%      | 0.00%     | 0.00%          | 65.04%   | -9.31%    |

Source: Zacks Investment Research

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## 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.

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### 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    | D |
| Growth Score   | A |
| Momentum Score | B |
| 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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## Disclosures

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## Additional Disclosure

This material represents an assessment of the market and economic environment at a specific point in time and is not intended to be a forecast of future events, or a guarantee of future results. Forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties. Any statements that refer to expectations, projections or characterizations of future events or circumstances, including any underlying assumptions, are forward-looking statements. Actual results, performance, or achievements may differ materially from those expressed or implied.

**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.