

BUSINESS: Caterpillar Incorporated is the world's largest producer of earthmoving equipment. Major global markets include road building, mining, logging, agriculture, petroleum, and general construction. Products include tractors, scrapers, compactors, loaders, off-highway truck engines, and pipelayers. Also makes diesel & turbine engines and lift trucks. Foreign sales 59% of total; research & de-

velopment: 5.1% of sales. 2017 depreciation rate: 9.1%. Has about 98,400 employees. Officers & directors own less than 1.0% of common stock; State Street, 8.3%; The Vanguard Group, 7.3% (4/18 proxy). Chairman: Douglas R. Oberhelman. Chief Executive Officer: Jim Umpleby. Inc.: DE. Addr.: 100 Northeast Adams St., Peoria, IL 61629. Tel.: 309-675-1000. Web: www.caterpillar.com.

 ANNUAL RATES of change (per sh) Sales
 Past 10 Yrs.
 Past 5 Yrs.
 to '21-'23

 "Cash Flow"
 4.0%
 2.5%
 7.0%

 "Cash Flow"
 4.5%
 4.0%
 11.0%

 Earnings
 11.5%
 15.9%
 17.5%

 Book Value
 8.5%
 8.0%
 17.5%

10204

31967

4614

6662

14856

26132

36244

6487 6194

14250

26931

38508

6842

5811

13434

26087

Current Assets

Accts Payable Debt Due

Current Liab

Cal-	QUARTERLY SALES (\$ mill.)				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2015	12702	12317	10962	11030	47011
2016	9461	10342	9160	9574	38537
2017	9822	11331	11413	12896	45462
2018	12859	14011	13510	14020	54400
2019	13600	14800	14200	15000	57600
Cal-	EARNINGS PER SHARE A				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2015	1.86	1.27	.75	.74	4.62
2016	.67	1.09	.85	.83	3.44
2017	1.28	1.49	1.95	2.16	6.88
2018	2.82	2.97	2.86	2.95	11.60
2019	3.00	3.20	3.05	3.25	12.50
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID B=				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2013	.60	.60	.70	.70	2.60
2014	.70	.70	.77	.77	2.94
2015	.77	.77	.77	.77	3.08
2016	.77	.77	.78	.78	3.10
2017	.78	.78	.86	.86	

Operating conditions appear to be sound for Caterpillar. In fact, most end markets continue to gain strength, and order rates and backlog remain at healthy levels. Amid strong global demand and U.S. tariffs, however, the price of various metals (steel has risen nearly 30% this year) has surged. Wall Street is concerned that trade frictions will remain at the forefront. In order to offset higher input costs, the company continues to rely on price hikes. We are not sure this is a sustainable policy since the manufacturer sells to certain industries that have probably reached their cyclical peaks.

bly reached their cyclical peaks. Third-quarter results beat lofty expectations. Sales surged 18% over the year-ago period, to \$13.5 billion, and eclipsed our \$13.0 billion call. The top line was driven by higher volumes across all three segments. It helped Caterpillar overcome a rise in transportation and manufacturing costs, which reflected increased material expenses (especially for steel) due to tariffs. Freight costs advanced because of supply chain efficiencies, as the industry continues to respond to strong global demand. Altogether, Caterpillar reported a

47% share-net gain over the year-ago period, to \$2.86, which beat our \$2.81 estimate. This was the best third-quarter profit performance in the company's long history. Despite the solid showing, the aforementioned geopolitical factors likely led Caterpillar to maintain its 2018 adjusted profit-per-share outlook of \$11.00-\$12.00. This seems somewhat conservative, leading us to modestly raise our topand bottom-line estimates, to \$54.40 billion and \$11.60, respectively. Due to pentup demand, sales and profit comparisons should be favorable in 2019.

The recent share price serves as a potential entry at a favorable valuation. The stock had been on a two-year run and even established a new all-time high earlier this year, but has since fallen roughly 30% in price as investors have grown wary of a potentially prolonged trade war. Due to this moderation, CAT stock is trading at a P/E multiple (10.8x) that is well below the level we expect out to 2021-2023. Moreover, the issue's 3- to 5-year total return potential eclipses that of the Value Line median.

Dominic B. Silva November 16, 2018

(A) Diluted earnings. Excl. net nonrecurring gain (losses): '03, (6¢); '06, (8¢); '07, 5¢; '08, (5¢); '14, (41¢); '12, (88¢); '13, (4¢); '14, (49¢); '15, (\$1.12); '16, (\$3.55). Includes 75¢ of

restructuring costs in '09; est'd Health Care Reform chg of 11¢ in 10, '10. Next egs report late January. (B) Div'ds historically paid mid-April, May, August, November. ■ Div'd rein-

vestment plan avail. (C) Incl. equip. purch. for leasing. (D) Incl. intang. In '16: \$8.3 bill., \$14.30/sh. (E) In mill., adjusted for split. (F) Accelerated basis.

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability 65
Price Growth Persistence 35
Earnings Predictability 45

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