

tradesmen and small businesses. The company provides livestock and pet products (47% of 2021 sales); hardware, tools, truck, and towing (21%); seasonal products (such as snow blowers and mowers), gifts, and toys (21%); clothing and footwear (8%); and ag-

about 46,000 empls. Off./dir. own less than 1% of common; two funds 20.9%, (3/22 Proxy). Chrmn: Cynthia Jamison. Pres. & CEO: Hal Lawton. Inc.: Delaware. Addr.: 5401 Virginia Way, Brentwood, TN 37027. Tel.: 615-440-4000. Internet: www.tractorsupply.com.

ANNUAL RATES Past Past Est'd '19-'21 to '25-'27 10 Yrs. of change (per sh) 5 Yrs. 12.0% 13.0% Sales "Cash Flow" 14.5% 17.0% 18.0% 13.0% 21.5% 9.5% 17.5% 16.5% Earnings Dividends 19.5% 30.0% Book Value 10.0% 9.0%

976.1 4.6 763.1

1743.8

Accts Payable Debt Due Other

Current Liab.

1155.6 3.9

905.3

2064.8

1219.6 3.1 872.5

2095.2

Cal- endar	QUARTERLY SALES (\$ mill.) A Mar.Per.Jun.Per.Sep.Per. Dec.Per.				Full Year
2019	1822.2	2353.8	1984.1	2191.8	8351.9
2020	1959.2	3176.3	2606.6	2878.3	10620.4
2021	2792.3	3601.6	3017.9	3319.3	12731.1
2022	3024.1	3903.4	3270.8	3891.7	14090
2023	3300	4225	3625	3950	15100
Cal-	EARNINGS PER SHARE A B				Full
endar	Mar.Per	.Jun.Per	.Sep.Per	Dec.Per.	Year
2019	.63	1.80	1.04	1.21	4.68
2020	.71	2.90	1.62	1.64	6.87
2021	1.55	3.19	1.95	1.93	8.61
2022	1.65	3.53	2.10	2.35	9.63
2023	1.75	3.80	2.45	2.45	10.45
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID C				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2018	.27	.31	.31	.31	1.20
2019	.31	.35	.35	.35	1.36
2020	.35	.35	.40	.40	1.50
2021	.52	.52	.52	.52	2.08
2022	.92	.92	.92	.92	

Tractor Supply's third-quarter results once again made for good reading, with sales and earnings roughly in line with our expectations. The top line rose more than 8%, coming in a hair below our \$3.3 billion forecast. Comparable-store sales were up 5.7%, as the average ticket increased 7.0% (largely due to inflation) and comparable transactions fell 1.3%. The key demand driver remained "every day, needs-based merchandise," for which demand is fairly inelastic. These categories include consumable, usable and edible items, as well as year-round assortments. The company is known for its customer service, and management has done a good job leveraging its consumer data and loyalty programs to drive sales. In terms of profitability, the gross margin slipped 32 basis points from a year earlier, as price hikes were able to offset much, but not all, of the higher product and transportation costs that the retailer incurred. SG&A expenses rose 16 basis points as a percentage of the top line, as growth initiatives and employee compensation overshadowed lower COVID-19-related costs. Earnings per share rose slightly under 8% year over

vear, to \$2.10. Our forecast was \$2.08. The acquisition of industry Orscheln Farm and Home closed on October 12th. The deal expands TSCO's presence in the Midwest, adding 81 stores (85 were divested to obtain regulatory clearance). These stores will be remodeled to the Tractor Supply brand over the coming months. The purchase should add about \$75 million to the top line in the fourth quarter and at least \$300 million next year, according to management. In 2023, the pact is apt to add \$0.10 a share to the bottom line. We've updated our estimates and projections accordingly. Tractor Supply stock has climbed nicely since our September full-page report went to press. That said, our Timeliness Ranking System suggests that the momentum is getting long in the tooth, and the shares are ranked 4 (Below Average) for Timeliness. Capital appreciation potential is also lackluster over the coming

stand out on its own

Matthew Spencer, CFA

(C) Dividends paid in early March, June, Sep- (E) In mill. adjusted for stock splits.

(A) Fiscal year ends on the last Saturday in December.

(B) Diluted earnings per share. Excludes non-recurring charges: '17, \$0.03; '19, \$0.02; '20, \$0.49. Next earnings report due late January.

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Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability A+ 80 Price Growth Persistence 70 **Earnings Predictability** 90

December 16, 2022

3- to 5-year window. The dividend is a

sweetener, as are the low Beta and Above

Average (2) rank for Safety, but it does not