



Hormel Foods Corporation (HRL)

Updated December 7th, 2019 by Josh Arnold

Key Metrics

Current Price:	\$45	5 Year CAGR Estimate:	-0.7%	Volatility Percentile:	25.4%
Fair Value Price:	\$32	5 Year Growth Estimate:	4.0%	Momentum Percentile:	27.0%
% Fair Value:	144%	5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:	-7.0%	Growth Percentile:	32.4%
Dividend Yield:	2.1%	5 Year Price Target	\$38	Valuation Percentile:	16.0%
Dividend Risk Score:	A	Retirement Suitability Score:	B	Total Return Percentile:	8.1%

Overview & Current Events

Hormel Foods was founded back in 1891 in Minnesota. Since that time, the company has grown into a \$24 billion market capitalization juggernaut in the food products industry with nearly \$10 billion in annual revenue. Hormel has kept with its core competency as a processor of meat products for well over a hundred years, but has also grown into other business lines through acquisitions. The company sells its products in 80 countries worldwide, and its brands include Skippy, SPAM, Applegate, Justin's, and more than 30 others. In addition, Hormel is a member of the Dividend Kings, having increased its dividend for 54 consecutive years.

Hormel reported Q4 and full-year earnings on 11/26/19 and results were mixed. Volume declined -2% on a headline basis, but was up 1% on an organic basis, which excludes acquisitions and divestitures, as well as forex translation. Total revenue, as a result of lower volumes, was down -1% on a headline basis, but up 2% on an organic basis.

The Refrigerated Foods segment saw volume rise 1%, leading revenue up 4%. However, higher expenses and product costs sent segment operating profit down -3%. Grocery Products saw its revenue down -10% and volumes down -9%. However, excluding the CytoSport divestiture, organic volume and revenue were up 2% and up 1%, respectively, while segment profit was +2%. The Jennie-O business saw volume up 5%, while revenue rose 3% and segment profit increased 6% in a rare strong quarter for the perpetually struggling business. Finally, the International business had a very tough quarter as revenue and volume both declined more than -10%, while segment profit plummeted -30%.

Earnings-per-share came to \$0.47 in Q4, a fractional decline from \$0.48 in the year-ago period. The company guided for \$1.69 to \$1.83 in earnings-per-share for this fiscal year, so our initial estimate is \$1.75.

Hormel also increased its dividend by 11% to a new annualized payout of \$0.93, marking the 54th consecutive year the company has increased its payout to shareholders.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
EPS	\$0.76	\$0.87	\$0.93	\$0.98	\$1.12	\$1.32	\$1.64	\$1.57	\$1.86	\$1.74	\$1.75	\$2.13
DPS	\$0.21	\$0.26	\$0.30	\$0.34	\$0.40	\$0.50	\$0.58	\$0.68	\$0.75	\$0.84	\$0.93	\$1.22
Shares¹	534	532	528	526	527	527	528	528	529	544	550	580

Hormel's earnings-per-share has grown very nicely throughout the past decade, only dipping year-over-year twice in this span. Relatively consistent results have come from a steady stream of acquisitions and a bit of organic growth. This has afforded Hormel the ability to consistently raise its dividend as well.

We are forecasting forward earnings growth of 4% annually as Hormel should grow more slowly than it has in the past. We see sales growth as the primary driver of earnings-per-share expansion moving forward as recent results continue to show that margins and volumes can be unpredictable for this business. Hormel will likely continue to buy growth because its legacy businesses are not currently producing it. This strategy has certainly worked in the past, and has helped to offset seemingly perpetual weakness in the Jennie-O brand, weakness that Hormel cannot seem to figure out.

¹ Share count in millions

Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.



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Given the cash inflow from the CytoSport divestiture, Hormel may go after a business that better fits with its long-term plans. Certainly, however, Hormel's divestiture of non-core brands affords it the ability to continue to buy growth in the coming years without undue stress on its financials.

Valuation Analysis

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Now	2025
Avg. P/E	13.7	15.7	15.6	19.8	21.3	21.6	23.4	21.8	19.3	24.2	25.9	18.0
Avg. Yld.	2.0%	1.9%	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.5%	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%	3.2%

Hormel's price-to-earnings ratio has been volatile in the last decade, sinking as low as 13 in 2009 before rebounding to 23.4 in 2016. It sits at 25.9 now and we believe it will drift lower over time towards its historical mean at 18. That works out to a -7% headwind to total returns over the next five years as the stock is more expensive now than it has been in the past decade. Given Hormel's struggles with volume and margins, we believe investors are much more likely to reduce the earnings multiple than expand it further. At the current multiple, we continue to see significant downside risk to the valuation, and Q4 results and 2020 guidance reiterate this for us. We are forecasting a significantly higher yield five years from now as the stock's valuation could move meaningfully lower.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
Payout	27%	27%	30%	33%	34%	35%	33%	41%	40%	48%	53%	57%

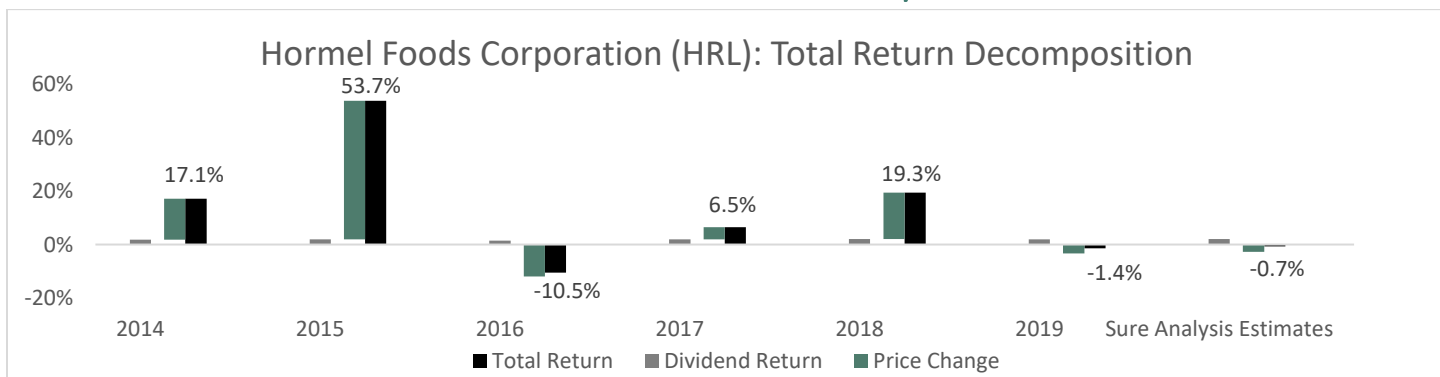
Hormel's payout ratio is just around half of earnings, and we expect that it will remain this way for the foreseeable future. Management is certainly committed to the dividend, but it wants to acquire growth as well, which uses cash.

Hormel's main competitive advantage is its 35 products that are either #1 or #2 in their category. Hormel has brands that are proven, and that leadership position is difficult for competitors to supplant. In addition, Hormel has a global network of distributors that few food companies can rival. Hormel's earnings-per-share actually grew during the Great Recession while most of the world was in rather dire straits, a testament to the stock's defensive nature.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Hormel's recent price action makes the stock look quite overvalued today. The company is in a tough spot as it tries to grow without sacrificing margins. We are forecasting slightly negative annual total returns for the next five years, comprised of the modest yield, a sizable headwind from a lower valuation, and 4% earnings growth. Because of essentially no expected returns, this Dividend King continues to earn a sell recommendation from Sure Dividend at current prices.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Revenue	7221	7895	8231	8752	9316	9264	9523	9168	9546	9497
Gross Profit	1239	1334	1332	1413	1565	1809	2158	1997	1979	1885
Gross Margin	17.2%	16.9%	16.2%	16.1%	16.8%	19.5%	22.7%	21.8%	20.7%	19.8%
SG&A Exp.	605	619	606	627	651	744	872	759	841	728
D&A Exp.	126	124	119	125	130	133	132	131	162	165
Operating Profit	633	716	726	785	914	1065	1286	1237	1138	1157
Operating Margin	8.8%	9.1%	8.8%	9.0%	9.8%	11.5%	13.5%	13.5%	11.9%	12.2%
Net Profit	396	474	500	526	603	686	890	847	1012	979
Net Margin	5.5%	6.0%	6.1%	6.0%	6.5%	7.4%	9.3%	9.2%	10.6%	10.3%
Free Cash Flow	396	394	385	531	588	848	784	813	852	629
Income Tax	225	240	253	268	316	370	427	432	169	231

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Assets	4054	4244	4564	4916	5456	6140	6370	6976	8142	8109
Cash & Equivalents	468	463	682	434	334	347	415	444	459	673
Accounts Receivable	431	461	507	552	610	606	591	618	600	574
Inventories	794	886	951	968	1055	993	986	921	964	1042
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	771	763	754	1313	1781	2527	2738	3147	3921	3516
Total Liabilities	1647	1585	1739	1599	1844	2138	1919	2036	2537	2183
Accounts Payable	361	390	386	387	484	495	482	553	619	590
Long-Term Debt	350	250	250	250	250	435	250	250	625	250
Shareholder's Equity	2401	2657	2819	3311	3606	3998	4448	4936	5601	5921
D/E Ratio	0.15	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.11	0.06	0.05	0.11	0.04

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Return on Assets	10.2%	11.4%	11.4%	11.1%	11.6%	11.8%	14.2%	12.7%	13.4%	12.0%
Return on Equity	17.5%	18.8%	18.3%	17.2%	17.4%	18.0%	21.1%	18.0%	19.2%	17.0%
ROIC	15.1%	16.7%	16.7%	15.8%	16.2%	16.5%	19.5%	17.1%	17.7%	15.8%
Shares Out.	534	532	528	526	527	527	528	528	529	544
Revenue/Share	13.34	14.52	15.30	16.19	17.24	17.12	17.56	17.00	17.55	17.42
FCF/Share	0.73	0.72	0.72	0.98	1.09	1.57	1.45	1.51	1.57	1.15

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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