The Wealth Perspective

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2018 Market Results

S&P 500	+4%
NASDAQ Composite	+7.5%
Dow Industrials	+4%
Russell 2000	+1.6%
Dow Global	+3.1%

Source the Wall Street Journal 02/27/18

Artificial Intelligence ?

Anyone who has gardened knows, how miserable and inefficient it is to pull hoe or otherwise deal with weeds while trying to grow produce. I will come up with just about any excuse to put off pulling weeds. 95 degree heat and 95% humidity makes the grocery store produce section look better and better vs. growing your own.

Weeds are a bane to large agriculture as well. They cost billions on dollars in lost yield from crops. Over the last 25 years the use of Genetic Modified Organisms (GMO) has caught on in a big way. All of the huge multi national agriculture companies sell GMO seeds that are resistant to bugs and weed killers. Raising these GMO crops has given farmers a competitive advantage. One of the biggest sellers is Round Up Ready seeds. What a deal the plants would come up, and the farmer could just spray Round Up on the plants, the weeds would die and the crop would continue to prosper, with no weeds to suck nutrients away. This has been a great formula making farmers more efficient and adding billions of dollars to the bottom lines of seed producers, until nature as it always does wins. Some weeds survive and now we have Round Up ready weeds populating fields. Not all crops work well with the Round Up ready GMO seeds anyway. What to do ?

AI to the rescue. Jorge Heraud a Peruvian born engineer started Blue River Technology to develop agriculture assist machines that take the drudgery out of many labor intensive agriculture tasks. Jorge and his team of 20 engineers worked endless hours to produce LettuceBot that can thin lettuce fields leaving only the strongest of the juvenile plants to keep growing into a big head of lettuce. The Bot identifies over 1.5 million plants per hour and activates as fast as 60 times per second. At one point in it's development Jorge and his team were sleeping on cots next to the lettuce field and even recruiting their wives to help. That was in late 2015, now about 20% of all lettuce grown in the U.S. uses LettuceBot To thin lettuce fields. Blue River was started to beyond making money be a win for the environment and a win for farmers, and ultiomately a win for consumers in better cheaper food products. Jorge was really excited when Nvidia Corp. released a computer with outsize learning power, basically the same unite used in many self driving car technology. This allowed Blue River to go beyond lettuce.

Late last fall John Deer acquired Blue River for $305 million dollars. Jorge and his team are perfecting a cotton field weeding machine. The Cotton machine uses advanced AI image recognition that the machine relies on to recognize healthy cotton plants from unhealthy and of course weeds. Blue River's See and Spray only delivers the herbicide in the most efficient way possible right on the plant and weeds the AI image tech tells the articulating spray robot to hit. The Bot so far has shown to reduce herbicide use by up to 90%. This opens the door for use of types of herbicides that are to strong for broadcast use, and also compounds that break down quickly in the environment. John Deer and Jorge have big plans to expand beyond cotton to soy beans and corn and other crops which could benefit from the technology.

No more weeding, not quite darn it. The machine is bigger than my whole garden.

RE: Bloomberg/Businessweek Amanda Little ; www.Wired.com Tom Simonite

Thanks, Andy McClung *CFP*

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Maximum Wealth Management Inc. is a Registered Investment Advisor.