Throughout the ages, United States’ agriculture has benefited from the infrastructure that transports commodities to market and moves equipment from manufacturers to the farm to plant and harvest food for the world.

Our roadways, interstate system, ports, and of course the Mississippi River, which is linked to 15,000 miles of inland waterway system, have provided us with a key competitive advantage over other agricultural producers around the world. But do we still have that advantage? Are we keeping up with our needs for today and tomorrow?

Currently, the U.S. is ranked 11th in the world in infrastructure competitiveness. Does this give the U.S. the advantage it once enjoyed? In my opinion, no. Good infrastructure policy is not just about fixing a road here and there or fixing, one by one, the 55,000 bridges that are in need of maintenance to meet the standards and needs of today. It’s about completely rethinking infrastructure, acting strategically and incorporating the amazing technologies we now have so we can improve our ranking in the world and, of course, continue to feed the world through agriculture.

The Panama Canal has been expanded to allow much larger ships with 50-foot draft to traverse it. However, the lower Mississippi stretch carrying ocean vessels to the ports of New Orleans, South Louisiana and Baton Rouge is currently only 45 feet deep. Nationwide, an estimated $9 billion in dredging work is needed to accommodate the bigger ships, according to Kurt J. Nagle, president and CEO of the American Association.

continued, page 2
U.S. Infrastructure: Our Competitive Advantage or Not?

Continued from page 1

have the broadband in rural America to maintain our competitive advantage utilizing the cutting edge technologies that have been developed for agriculture? Can the machines talk to one another as designed or run autonomously without connectivity? The answer is NO!

Our contributions to feeding the world, including our own population here in the U.S., is extraordinary. We need this same sort of focus on infrastructure to continue be able to feed the growing population of the world.

AEM has launched The U.S. Infrastructure Advantage™, a report that outlines steps lawmakers should take to reclaim the country’s infrastructure advantage. The document was developed by AEM’s Infrastructure Vision 2050 Task Force and is unique in that it was developed by agriculture and construction industry executives rather than policy experts. Please take some time to review the report (www.aem.org/advocacy) and consider the future needs of our country. It is time for us to make noise about the importance of our infrastructure with our congressional leaders so that we truly can have a competitive advantage going into the 21st century.

Charlie O’Brien
Senior Vice-President
and AEM Ag Sector Lead
cobrien@aem.org

AEM Help Members Think Forward

AEM’s new “Thinking Forward” series is designed to help members prepare for and manage critical challenges like big data, advanced manufacturing and a changing workforce. Join us at the following events:

Disrupting Markets
Date: Thursday, September 21
Location: Volvo Equipment Company, Shippensburg, PA

Topic TBD
Date: Tuesday, October 10
Location: Kubota, Grapevine, TX

Industry 4.0
Date: Thursday, September 28,
Location: AEM Headquarters, Milwaukee, WI

IoT for Industrial Systems
Date: Tuesday, October 17
Location: AGCO Corporation, Duluth, GA

To learn more or to register, please visit www.aem.org/think.
Robots Invade a Wisconsin Dairy Farm

In the AEM Statistics Program, with a fifth to join later this year.

For more information, please contact Rex Sprietsma (rsprietsma@aem.org) or Sarah Miller (smiller@aem.org).

Story submitted by Rex Sprietsma and Sarah Miller.
AEM Perspective

Considering China?

Learn about the region, connect with dealers and officials.

Five reasons to attend:

1. The top 100 Chinese and top 50 Asian Ag equipment dealers are invited to meet and match with the international companies attending

2. Hear industry executives share their global experiences and strategies for success, as well as insights on the impact of precision farming technologies and best practices for limiting soil compaction

3. Officials responsible for developing ag policies and subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the ag mechanization department, the ag machinery promotion center and testing center as well as from the provincial bureaus are invited to attend the summit

4. See the equipment and meet the industry players at CIAME, featuring 2000+ exhibitors, 130,000+ visitors and 90% of the dealers in the Chinese market

5. National Chinese agricultural machinery cooperatives are invited to attend the summit

Optional farm tour, Summit translation, luncheons, dinner and admission to the Expo included.

Go to agrievolution.com for details and registration or contact Agrievolution Secretariat Anita Sennett at a.sennett@aem.org.

Agrievolution Summit:
Sixth World Summit on Agriculture Machinery

The Asian Perspective:
Cooperation among industry, research and best practices in global farming

Wu Han, China –
October 25 & 26, 2017

In conjunction with China International Agriculture Machinery Exhibition (CIAME)
How Vermeer’s Cradle to Grave Approach is Building Its Future Workforce

Tucked about midway from Ottumwa to Des Moines, you won’t catch more than a glimpse of Pella, Iowa if you breeze through on the 163 bypass. Nonetheless, this little city of 10,000 is home to the Vermeer Corporation, a global leader in equipment manufacturing that competes with companies headquartered in cities like Chicago, New York and Beijing.

Making its roots in the farm fields where the company’s original prototype designs sprang to life presents Vermeer with unique workforce challenges, according to Talent Acquisition Manager Whitney Wilkinson.

But Vermeer has turned its small-town circumstances into a human resources asset, Wilkinson said, by leveraging a comprehensive workforce development initiative that’s nearly cradle-to-grave in its scope. The company’s investment in preparing people for a career in manufacturing goes far beyond the high school and college levels, starting well before elementary school and continuing past retirement, in some cases.

“Vermeer has turned its small-town circumstances into a human resources asset, by leveraging a comprehensive workforce development initiative that’s nearly cradle-to-grave in its scope... starting well before elementary school and continuing past retirement”

Starting them young — STEM-focused daycare

Just recently, Vermeer launched a partnership to open a childcare and early learning facility across the street from its manufacturing campus in Pella. The Yellow Iron Academy focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in its daily curriculum to get young children ready to succeed as students and better prepare them for career opportunities of the future.

While the company won’t have the opportunity to hire any of these STEM-savvy youngsters for years, Wilkinson said the daycare fulfills a more immediate need as well—providing busy parents who work odd hours with a childcare solution custom-tailored to their needs. While the daycare is open to the general public, Vermeer team members receive discounted services, and the facility caters to workers on a variety of different schedules.

Reshaping students’ attitudes about manufacturing

Every year, Vermeer hosts a “Manufacturing Day” event at its plant in Pella, part of a nationwide effort in October to dispel myths about manufacturing. More than 650 students from 10 area high schools engage with employees at information booths, participate in simulations and learn about the skills needed to be successful in manufacturing.

Prior to the event, only 39 percent of those students say they would consider a career in manufacturing. But once they’ve toured the facility and met with employees, Wilkinson says their surveys find that 61 percent of those same young people would now consider a job there.

Stopping the “brain drain” of institutional knowledge

At the other end of the spectrum, the company also offers retirees the opportunity to return to the workforce on a limited part-time basis. Through the “Friends of Vermeer” program, senior team members can make a little extra income while ensuring that their valuable institutional knowledge is not lost.

Without a doubt, it takes a great deal of time and energy to orchestrate Vermeer’s comprehensive workforce development programs. So why does the company invest the effort and expense in strategies that don’t guarantee immediate, measurable results?

“It’s because we know this workforce challenge is going to continue for years to come, and it’s only going to get more difficult unless we start building these pipelines early,” Wilkinson said.

Dusty Weis, AEM Strategic Communications Manager

AEM Perspective

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Dusty Weis, AEM Strategic Communications Manager
Trade Talk: Dealers, Manufacturers Weigh in on Importance of Trade Agreements

Trade is an especially important issue for both equipment manufacturers and dealers. About 30 percent of agricultural equipment manufactured in the United States is intended for export, according to a 2017 report by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM). The 2016 U.S. presidential election injected trade and trade agreements into the center of the policy discussion in the agriculture equipment industry. As a candidate, Donald Trump pledged to revisit existing U.S. trade agreements. As president, he has largely followed through on that promise by withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and opening up the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for renegotiation. While Canada and other countries continue to pursue the TPP, President Trump has expressed his desire to enter into bi-lateral trade agreements in an effort to promote and protect U.S. interests.

AEM and the Equipment Dealers Association (EDA) surveyed their members in May to gauge the industry’s perception of these trade developments and how they might impact the agricultural equipment market. The majority of survey takers, both equipment dealers (36 percent) and manufacturers (59 percent), said that they were largely satisfied with the existing terms of NAFTA but that some small changes were needed.

Survey comments from participating equipment dealers and manufacturers give us some insight into these figures. Equipment dealers cited concerns that TPP would lead to the U.S. providing inequitable subsidies to its trading partners while others noted they believed that bi-lateral trade agreements would make it easier for American farmers to export their goods and, in turn, create American economic growth. Manufacturers conveyed a sense of disappointment in the abandonment of the TPP, citing concerns that TPP could have provided an incentive for non-parties to the agreement, namely China, to start seeking and complying with higher standards in their own trade agreements with other nations.

Equipment dealers and manufacturers in Canada had markedly more positive views of trade. Eighty percent of Canadian equipment dealers who responded to the survey expressed satisfaction with the terms of NAFTA. Over half of Canadian equipment manufacturers said they were completely satisfied with NAFTA’s terms – more than double the number of U.S.-based manufacturers who said the same thing.

EDA and AEM will continue to keep members abreast of these trade issues as the NAFTA renegotiation gets underway later this summer.
Exports of U.S.-made agricultural equipment were up 15.5 percent year over year compared to the first quarter of 2016. In the first quarter of 2017, $1.8 billion shipped to global markets. However, when we compare the last 4 quarters to the previous 4, exports were still down 6 percent. While trend changes take a bit longer to show in the rolling 4 quarter view, it does eliminate one-off improvements.

Growth was led by trade in North America ($574 million, up 26.49 percent), Central America ($356 million, up 19.76 percent), South America ($160 million, up 39.63 percent) and Australia and Oceania ($136 million, up 58.48 percent). Trade to Europe ($466 million) remained stable, while trade with Asia ($117 million) declined 12.29 percent.

While the small reversal in exports is positive, it waits to be seen whether this is the beginning of a new trend. A strong dollar continues to hamper our nation’s competitiveness and we can expect that to continue as the Federal Reserve continues to increase rates. Looking at the results of our quarterly surveys, more respondents are once again indicating that exports are growing versus decreasing.

International trade agreements have been a hotly debated topic, which is why AEM and EDA have worked together to provide more insight in the perception of trade agreements in the agricultural equipment industry (see ‘Trade Talk’).

We likely are seeing the results of goals laid out by China’s “Made in China 2025” proposal, which aims to boost manufacturing innovation and promote home-grown products. We see a 63.2 percent drop in exports to China in the recent four quarters compared to the same time frame last year.

### The Below Charts Illustrate a Rolling 4 Quarters vs. Previous 4 Quarters for Countries with > $25 Mil./yr in Exports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Top 10 Growth Countries - US Ag Equipment Exports</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Bottom 10 Growth Countries - US Ag Equipment Exports</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UKRAINE</td>
<td>$185,765,528</td>
<td>108.2%</td>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>$163,514,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSSIA</td>
<td>$154,451,354</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>BULGARIA</td>
<td>$16,488,425</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARGENTINA</td>
<td>$87,280,726</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>$127,570,749</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERU</td>
<td>$49,791,004</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>VENEZUELA</td>
<td>$20,389,141</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROMANIA</td>
<td>$37,363,034</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>$15,840,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>$1,248,225,915</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>CZECH REPUBLIC</td>
<td>$19,107,785</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENMARK</td>
<td>$38,068,532</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>UNITED ARAB EMIR</td>
<td>$18,595,004</td>
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<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
<td>$33,935,519</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>TURKEY</td>
<td>$34,920,227</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUNGARY</td>
<td>$39,208,688</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>POLAND</td>
<td>$43,818,513</td>
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<td>JAPAN</td>
<td>$65,865,779</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>CHILE</td>
<td>$103,283,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Total</td>
<td>$6,781,998,157</td>
<td>-6.0%</td>
<td>Global Total</td>
<td>$6,781,998,157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top 10 Countries - US Ag Equipment Imports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Last 4 Qtrs</th>
<th>Prev 4 Qtrs</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>$1,130,373,190</td>
<td>$1,337,842,910</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAPAN</td>
<td>$845,134,681</td>
<td>$1,107,293,240</td>
<td>-23.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>$790,192,735</td>
<td>$865,080,994</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>$682,816,362</td>
<td>$760,421,175</td>
<td>-8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>$636,501,920</td>
<td>$641,872,178</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td>$554,830,649</td>
<td>$557,799,678</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>$338,967,789</td>
<td>$532,828,617</td>
<td>-36.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNITED KINGDOM</td>
<td>$227,596,138</td>
<td>$297,358,539</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>$209,962,387</td>
<td>$187,009,533</td>
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<td>TURKEY</td>
<td>$185,104,170</td>
<td>$231,634,666</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Total</td>
<td>$6,934,515,684</td>
<td>$7,979,763,122</td>
<td>-13.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market Intelligence

Ag Tractor & Combine Sales

The <40hp tractor retail sales continue to outpace last year’s performance up 10% in June and 12.1% YTD. Higher horsepower 2WD 100hp and 4WD tractors continues their downward trend in June and for the year. However, Combine sales had a good month in June up 18.7% from last year providing some level of optimism for this segment with used inventories at a manageable levels helping to enable increases in new combine sales.

Data courtesy: Association of Equipment Manufacturers Statistics
North American Manufacturers Optimistic

The North America Ag Equipment Industry Trends Report is a quarterly state of the industry report for the agriculture industry. The survey is based on Net Rising Indexes. We take the positive answers and detract the negative ones. Anything below zero means a market contraction, anything above means growth. The stronger the contraction or growth, the stronger the market consensus. To receive the full results of this survey, please sign up by contacting Benjamin Duyck at bduyck@aem.org.

Demand and Planning: The improvements in the Net Rising Index for Ag Wholegoods and Parts (year over year) that we saw in Q4 2016 continued into Q1 2017 as the industry re-adjusts its market optimism after the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. When we look at Production, New Orders and Backlog of Work, we can also tell that new orders are coming in, production is increasing and work backlog is increasing. While some of this optimism might be grounded in economic improvements in, for example, the 2017 farm income or larger macro-economic expansions, uncertainty regarding international trade agreements, tax reform and an eased up regulatory environment remains.

Subjective comments provided in the survey provide a good insight in the boost of optimism across survey participants:

Consumer segment is strong, Farm segment is showing a few signs of recovery.
Demand is very high. Outlook for the next 12 months remains positive.
Farmer & Rancher sentiment improving — as noticed at recent trade shows.
Field inventory levels in much better position than recent past which is justifying new ordering by dealers.

Flat but optimistic.
It appears dealers are more optimistic presently than they were one year ago.
Optimistic that the market will move into a period of sustainable growth.
Positive feelings coming from the market, less negativity than previous.
Seeing some positive buying attitudes that are surprising given current ag projections.
Dealer inventories for service parts appear to be lower than normal.

### Ag Wholegoods

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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Production: 2016 Q1</th>
<th>Production: 2016 Q2</th>
<th>Production: 2016 Q3</th>
<th>Production: 2016 Q4</th>
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### Ag Components and Attachments

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<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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Agricultural production in China has recorded exceptional growth over recent years, driven by an expansion in area cultivated and strong growth in productivity. Output growth is slowing down in some of the largest producing regions due to pollution and land constraints. The government has acknowledged the challenge and is more reformist than ever, aiming to boost mechanization and eventually allow the commercialization of GM crops in the country. Robust consumption growth and the ongoing industrialization of agriculture will favor the development of the livestock and dairy sectors in the coming years. With the new 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020), China will carry on reforming its agricultural sector.

### Key Forecasts

- **Soybean production growth to 2020/21:** 20.1% to 14.2mn tons. The drop of the minimum support price and stockpiling schemes for corn is favoring soybean production. However, we forecast only modest growth for output going forward due to the lack of land.
- **Pork production growth to 2020/21:** 18.2% to 61.5mn tons. China’s pork production will be supported by the ongoing modernization and industrialization of the supply chain.
- **Corn production growth to 2020/21:** -1.0% to 222mn tons. China has been releasing further details of its new corn production policy, and they point to fewer incentives for corn farming in many provinces, which will limit production expansion in the coming years. The domestic deficit will grow at a fast pace out to 2020/21.
- **BMI universe agribusiness market value:** USD 1,365mn in 2017, up 6.0% compared with 2016, growth forecast to average 4.7% annually between 2017 and 2021.
- **2017 consumer price inflation:** 2.0% y-o-y ave, up from 1.8% in 2016, forecast to ave 2.4% over 2017-21.
- **2017 Central Bank policy rate:** 4.35% eop, same than in 2016; forecast to ave 4.35% eop over 2017-21.

With these reforms, China aims to address mounting challenges and deficiencies in its agricultural sector - which include grains overproduction, elevated prices far above international levels, excessive government stockpiling and environmental degradation. Authorities are now aiming to boost yields to offset the stagnation in arable land but without sacrificing the environment.

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Face to Face with Members of Congress

Join fellow AEM members in Washington, D.C. from September 11-13 for the first-ever *I Make America Fly-In*!

While AEM members have participated in a number of industry group events in Washington, this will be the first standalone fly-in for the equipment manufacturing industry.

The goal is to bring AEM member companies’ representatives to Washington, D.C. for two days of advocacy and networking. This is a great opportunity to have face-to-face meetings with members of Congress or their staff about the issues that matter to the equipment manufacturing industry and your company.

This year we are placing greater emphasis on engagement with elected officials – both in Washington, D.C. and across the country.

Visit [http://updates.aem.org/acton/form/7024/0058:d-0001/0/-/-/-/-/index.htm](http://updates.aem.org/acton/form/7024/0058:d-0001/0/-/-/-/-/index.htm) to follow a link to the registration page. While there is a fixed number of available spots, AEM staff will work with your company to accommodate everyone who is interested in joining for this exciting gathering. If you have any questions please contact Abigail Lannoye (alannoye@aem.org, 414-298-4746).

We hope to see you in Washington D.C. this fall!

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Commodity Classic Heads West

Preparations for the 2018 Commodity Classic in Anaheim, CA are well underway, with over 190,000 square feet of exhibit space already contracted. The Anaheim Convention Center is larger than the available space in San Antonio in 2017, so prime booth space is still available.

- 72% consider themselves early adopters of new products and practices
- Average age of 50 years
- Average of $319,029 in annual equipment purchases
- Average of 2,779 total crop acres

*2017 Commodity Classic Attendee Survey

2018 will mark the third year for AEM as a Commodity Classic Affiliate. If you haven’t yet reserved your space for the March show or need additional information, call 888-447-6734 or email tradeshow@commodityclassic.com.
Advocacy & Legislation

EPA and USDA Take to the Field

On April 25, AEM, along with the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), hosted 40 officials from EPA’s Office of Pesticide Programs and USDA’s Pest Management Policy Office for a full day of exposure to modern planting technologies. The event took place on the Maryland family farm of Chip Bowling, NCGA’s past president and 2017 chairman.

AEM members CaseIH, Great Plains, John Deere and Vaderstad provided planters and technical experts to bring the latest in precision planting to life. The equipment demonstrations allowed our industry to also highlight voluntary efforts taken to reduce fugitive dust while planting treated seed.

ASTA members were on-hand to educate participants on the benefits and science of modern seed treatments. NCGA provided valuable information on the demands farmers face during the hectic planting season.

This was a great opportunity for regulators with little to no practical agricultural experience to get out from behind their desks and into a field to learn. The proactive, positive engagement further allows our industry to foster a good working relationship with policy makers that allow us to address issues early on with the aim of avoiding unnecessary and/or burdensome regulations.

Welcome New 2017 Ag Members!

Trump’s Policies and Rural America

T

hough the past six months have been a tumultuous period in Washington, rural America continues to express support for some of President Trump’s core proposals. The president has made a recent push to emphasize a series of policies important to farming and manufacturing communities, including infrastructure investment and workforce development.

A new Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation poll offered a glimpse into how rural communities – which helped form the backbone of Trump’s 2016 election victory – view the state of the economy, and some of the president’s top proposals.

A majority of Americans in rural communities (53 percent) said that the area in which they live had experienced a loss of farming, manufacturing or other factory jobs over the last decade. And 56 percent of those same respondents said their community had yet to recover. Those numbers in part explain the urban-rural economic disconnect in America, and underscore why many rural voters are now looking to Trump to deliver on jobs for their towns.

When it comes to addressing the situation, rural voters said that President Trump should look first to infrastructure. A whopping 93 percent of rural Americans said investment in infrastructure projects were important for improving the job situation in their community. That’s of little surprise given the findings of a new report by TRIP (The Road Information Program), which underscores the dire road conditions across rural America. Over a third of America’s rural roads – 36 percent – are rated as being in poor or mediocre condition.

But, as noted in the cover story of this newsletter, infrastructure doesn’t stop at road and bridge construction; it involves priorities like expanding rural broadband as well. That type of comprehensive infrastructure plan could further enable how customers use farm equipment in their work.

At the same time, rural voters express support for tax and regulatory relief. The Trump administration has aggressively worked to roll back and streamline regulations, while Congress has teed up tax reform for consideration later this year.

AEM and other commodity groups have warned the administration against exiting our existing trade agreements altogether. And so far, the president has heeded this advice, and has instead focused on renegotiating agreements like NAFTA rather than ending it.

In short, the success of President Trump’s agenda this year hinges on the rural voters who supported his campaign. And if the president can notch some victories on infrastructure and taxes while avoiding missteps on trade and issues like the Renewable Fuel Standard, he should be able to count on continued support from rural communities.
Be aware of big changes that are on the way for 2018 if you are shipping products into Canada. Here are a few to consider:

**Import Reporting Requirements and Engine Emission Regulations:** Currently this process requires companies or their representative to contact multiple agencies in multiple locations to ensure that all the proper requirements are met for importation of engines to Canada. In 2018, Canada is moving to provide what is called the Single Window Initiative, which will consolidate this process into a one point of contact process.

**Canadian Tire Stewardship:** Currently this is done at point of purchase and is consistent across Canada. In 2018, Ontario plans to implement changes in the fee charging and collection process, which may impact where companies choose to ship tires into Canada. It is unclear how tires in other provinces will be treated as they enter Ontario. AEM is strongly encouraging Ontario to model the collection mechanism on the current method.

Howard Mains, AEM’s Canada Consultant on Public Policy and Laura Dornan from Environment and Climate Change Canada, reported on four Canadian regulations changes that will impact our industry in a June 28 WebEx. For more information on these changes and others, please watch the webinar on [www.aem.org/safety-and-technical](http://www.aem.org/safety-and-technical).

**PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS WITH AEM SAFETY MANUALS.**

Visit [safetymaterials.org](http://safetymaterials.org) to educate operators and reduce risk.
Charlie O’Brien Retires

Charlie O’Brien announced in April his intention to retire from AEM to take care of family and a family business. “We want to extend a heartfelt ‘thank you’ to Charlie for his decade of service and unselfish willingness to work during a transition period to help provide uninterrupted service to the membership,” said Slater.

O’Brien joined AEM in 2007, with more than 20 years of industry experience, most recently serving as president of FPC Financial, a banking division of John Deere Credit. “Charlie has been an invaluable member of the AEM senior leadership team and highly respected throughout the industry, and we are grateful for his knowledge and guidance,” said Slater. “He played a critical strategic role for AEM and his dedication is evident in the growth of our Ag sector programs and services during his tenure.”

AEM Names New AEM Senior VP Ag Services: Curt Blades

Effective August 1, Curt Blades will take on the role of senior vice president, Ag services at AEM. Blades will be responsible for strategic direction of agriculture programs and services for the AEM membership, and will serve as primary liaison with ag-specific industry organizations, customer groups and government agencies, both in North America and worldwide. He replaces Charlie O’Brien, who announced his retirement from AEM earlier this year.

“We are very pleased to welcome Curt to the AEM team and look forward to the expertise and enthusiasm he brings,” said AEM President Dennis Slater. “He has a strong agricultural and management background and while we had some big shoes to fill with Charlie’s departure, we are confident that Curt will help us achieve continued success.”

American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE)

The American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) has:


• Withdrawn ANSI/ASAE EP455, Environmental Considerations in Development of Mobile Agricultural Electrical/Electronic Components, from continued publication. EP455, published in 1990, was determined to be outdated and redundant.

• Revised its standard for ASAE EP552.2, Reporting of Fuel Properties When Testing Diesel Engines with Alternative Fuels Derived from Plant Oils and Animal Fats. It now includes alternative fuels derived from plant oils and animal fats.

• Initiated the adoption of:
  1) ISO 3463:2006, Tractors for agriculture and forestry — Roll-over protective structures (ROPS) — Dynamic test method and acceptance conditions
  2) ISO 5700:2013, Tractors for agriculture and forestry — Roll-over protective structures — Static test method and acceptance conditions
  5) ISO 17225-4, Solid biofuels – Fuel specifications and classes – Part 4: Graded wood chips. This is being led by a team supported by the U.S. Forest Service to establish a standard for the U.S. wood-heating industry and to promote its use. The group is working with industry stakeholders to identify specific deviations to the international standard that will increase its applicability in the U.S. Additional participation is encouraged; find more information at www.woodchipstandard.org.

For information on these or any other ASABE standard, contact Scott Cedarquist at 269-932-7031, cedarm@asabe.org. A current listing of all ASABE standards projects can be found on the ASABE web site at www.asabe.org/projects.