

TYSON FOODS INC

Form 10-K

November 13, 2017

UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

☒ Annual Report Pursuant to Section 13 or
15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934
For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2017

☐ Transition Report Pursuant to Section 13 or
15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934
For the transition period from
to

001-14704

(Commission File Number)

TYSON FOODS, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

71-0225165

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

2200 West Don Tyson Parkway, Springdale, Arkansas 72762-6999

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (479) 290-4000

Securities Registered Pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of Each Class	Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered
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Class A Common Stock, Par Value \$0.10	New York Stock Exchange
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Securities Registered Pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: Not Applicable

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes ☐ No ☒

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, smaller reporting company or an emerging growth company. See definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company," and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

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Large accelerated filer ☒ Accelerated filer ☐
Non-accelerated filer ☐ (Do not check if a smaller reporting company) Smaller reporting company ☐
Emerging growth company ☐

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act. ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes ☐ No ☒

Indicate the number of shares outstanding of each of the issuer's classes of common stock, as of September 30, 2017.

Class	Outstanding Shares
Class A Common Stock, \$0.10 Par Value (Class A stock)	297,596,071
Class B Common Stock, \$0.10 Par Value (Class B stock)	70,010,755

On April 1, 2017, the aggregate market value of the registrant's Class A Common Stock, \$0.10 par value (Class A stock), and Class B Common Stock, \$0.10 par value (Class B stock), held by non-affiliates of the registrant was \$17,568,317,217 and \$663,691, respectively. Class B stock is not publicly listed for trade on any exchange or market system. However, Class B stock is convertible into Class A stock on a share-for-share basis, so the market value was calculated based on the market price of Class A stock.

On October 28, 2017, there were 297,708,610 shares of Class A stock and 70,010,355 shares of Class B stock outstanding.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Portions of the registrant's definitive Proxy Statement for the registrant's Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held February 8, 2018, are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

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PART I

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

GENERAL

Tyson Foods, Inc. and its subsidiaries (collectively, the “Company,” “we,” “us,” “our,” “Tyson Foods” or “Tyson”) (NYSE: TS) is one of the world’s largest food companies and a recognized leader in protein. Founded in 1935 by John W. Tyson and grown under three generations of family leadership, the Company has a broad portfolio of products and brands like Tyson®, Jimmy Dean®, Hillshire Farm®, Ball Park®, Wright®, Aidells®, ibp® and State Fair®. Tyson Foods innovates continually to make protein more sustainable, tailor food for everywhere it’s available and raise the world’s expectations for how much good food can do. Headquartered in Springdale, Arkansas, the company had approximately 122,000 team members on September 30, 2017. Through its Core Values, Tyson Foods strives to operate with integrity, create value for its shareholders, customers, communities and team members and serve as a steward of the animals, land and environment entrusted to it. Some of the key factors influencing our business are customer demand for our products; the ability to maintain and grow relationships with customers and introduce new and innovative products to the marketplace; accessibility of international markets; market prices for our products; the cost and availability of live cattle and hogs, raw materials and feed ingredients; and operating efficiencies of our facilities.

We operate a fully vertically-integrated chicken production process. Our integrated operations consist of breeding stock, contract growers, feed production, processing, further-processing, marketing and transportation of chicken and related allied products, including animal and pet food ingredients. Through our wholly-owned subsidiary, Cobb-Vantress, Inc., we are one of the leading poultry breeding stock suppliers in the world. Investing in breeding stock research and development allows us to breed into our flocks the characteristics found to be most desirable. We also process live fed cattle and hogs and fabricate dressed beef and pork carcasses into primal and sub-primal meat cuts, case ready beef and pork and fully-cooked meats. In addition, we derive value from allied products such as hides and variety meats sold to further processors and others.

We produce a wide range of fresh, value-added, frozen and refrigerated food products. Our products are marketed and sold primarily by our sales staff to grocery retailers, grocery wholesalers, meat distributors, warehouse club stores, military commissaries, industrial food processing companies, chain restaurants or their distributors, live markets, international export companies and domestic distributors who serve restaurants, foodservice operations such as plant and school cafeterias, convenience stores, hospitals and other vendors. Additionally, sales to the military and a portion of sales to international markets are made through independent brokers and trading companies.

On June 7, 2017, we acquired and consolidated AdvancePierre Foods Holdings, Inc. (“AdvancePierre”), a producer and distributor of value-added, convenient, ready-to-eat sandwiches, sandwich components and other entrées and snacks. AdvancePierre’s results of operations are included in the Prepared Foods and Chicken segments. For further description of this transaction, refer to Part II, Item 8, Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements, Note 3:

Acquisitions and Dispositions.

As part of our commitment to innovation and growth, in fiscal 2017 we launched a venture capital fund focused on investing in companies developing breakthrough technologies, business models and products to sustainably feed a growing world population. The Tyson New Ventures LLC, fund is used to broaden our exposure to innovative, new forms of protein and ways of sustainably producing food to complement the Company’s continuing investments in innovation in our core Beef, Pork, Chicken and Prepared Foods businesses.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION OF SEGMENTS

We operate in four reportable segments: Beef, Pork, Chicken and Prepared Foods. Other primarily includes our foreign chicken production operations in China and India, third-party merger and integration costs and corporate overhead related to Tyson New Ventures, LLC. The contribution of each segment to net sales and operating income (loss), and the identifiable assets attributable to each segment, are set forth in Part II, Item 8, Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements, Note 17: Segment Reporting.

DESCRIPTION OF SEGMENTS

Beef: Beef includes our operations related to processing live fed cattle and fabricating dressed beef carcasses into primal and sub-primal meat cuts and case-ready products. Products are marketed domestically to food retailers, foodservice distributors, restaurant operators, hotel chains and noncommercial foodservice establishments such as schools, healthcare facilities, the military and other food processors, as well as to international export markets. This segment also includes sales from allied products such as hides and variety meats, as well as logistics operations to move products through the supply chain.

Pork: Pork includes our operations related to processing live market hogs and fabricating pork carcasses into primal and sub-primal cuts and case-ready products. Products are marketed domestically to food retailers, foodservice distributors, restaurant operators, hotel chains and noncommercial foodservice establishments such as schools, healthcare facilities, the military and other food processors, as well as to international export markets. This segment also includes our live swine group, related allied product processing activities and logistics operations to move products through the supply chain.

Chicken: Chicken includes our domestic operations related to raising and processing live chickens into, and purchasing raw materials for, fresh, frozen and value-added chicken products, as well as sales from allied products. Our value-added chicken products primarily include breaded chicken strips, nuggets, patties and other ready-to-fix or fully cooked chicken parts. Products are marketed domestically to food retailers, foodservice distributors, restaurant operators, hotel chains and noncommercial foodservice establishments such as schools, healthcare facilities, the military and other food processors, as well as to international export markets. This segment also includes logistics operations to move products through our domestic supply chain and the global operations of our chicken breeding stock subsidiary.

Prepared Foods: Prepared Foods includes our operations related to manufacturing and marketing frozen and refrigerated food products and logistics operations to move products through the supply chain. This segment includes brands such as Jimmy Dean®, Hillshire Farm®, Ball Park®, Wright®, State Fair®, Van's®, Sara Lee® and Chef Pierre®, as well as artisanal brands Aidells®, Gallo Salame®, and Golden Island®. Products primarily include ready-to-eat sandwiches, sandwich components such as flame-grilled hamburgers and Philly steaks, pepperoni, bacon, breakfast sausage, turkey, lunchmeat, hot dogs, pizza crusts and toppings, flour and corn tortilla products, desserts, appetizers, snacks, prepared meals, ethnic foods, soups, sauces, side dishes, meat dishes, breadsticks and processed meats. Products are marketed domestically to food retailers, foodservice distributors, restaurant operators, hotel chains and noncommercial foodservice establishments such as schools, healthcare facilities, the military and other food processors, as well as to international export markets.

RAW MATERIALS AND SOURCES OF SUPPLY

Beef: The primary raw materials used in our beef operations are live cattle. We do not have facilities of our own to raise cattle but employ cattle buyers located throughout cattle producing areas who visit independent feed yards and public auctions and buy live cattle on the open spot market. These buyers are trained to select high quality animals, and we continually measure their performance. We also enter into various risk-sharing and procurement arrangements with producers to secure a supply of livestock for our facilities. Although we generally expect adequate supply of live cattle in the regions we operate, there may be periods of imbalance in supply and demand.

Pork: The primary raw materials used in our pork operations are live hogs. The majority of our live hog supply is obtained through various procurement relationships with independent producers. We employ hog buyers who make purchase agreements of various time durations as well as purchase hogs on a daily basis, generally a few days before the animals are processed. These buyers are trained to select high quality animals, and we continually measure their performance. We believe the supply of live hogs is adequate for our present needs. Additionally, we raise a small number of weanling swine to sell to independent finishers and supply a minimal amount of market hogs and live swine for our own processing needs.

Chicken: The primary raw materials used in our domestic chicken operations are corn and soybean meal used as feed and live chickens raised primarily by independent contract growers. Our vertically-integrated chicken process begins with the grandparent breeder flocks and ends with broilers for processing. Breeder flocks (i.e., grandparents) are raised to maturity in grandparent growing and laying farms where fertile eggs are produced. Fertile eggs are incubated at the grandparent hatchery and produce pullets (i.e., parents). Pullets are sent to breeder houses, and the resulting eggs are sent to our hatcheries. Once chicks have hatched, they are sent to broiler farms. There, contract growers care for and raise the chicks according to our standards, with advice from our technical service personnel, until the broilers reach the desired processing weight. Adult chickens are transported to processing plants where they are harvested and converted into finished products, which are then sent to distribution centers and delivered to customers.

We operate feed mills to produce scientifically-formulated feeds. In fiscal 2017, corn, soybean meal and other feed ingredients were major production costs, representing roughly 55% of our cost of growing a live chicken

domestically. In addition to feed ingredients to grow the chickens, we use cooking ingredients, packaging materials and cryogenic agents. We believe our sources of supply for these materials are adequate for our present needs, and we do not anticipate any difficulty in acquiring these materials in the future. While we produce nearly all our inventory of breeder chickens and live broilers, we also purchase ice-packed or deboned chicken, including no antibiotics ever (sometimes referred to as "NAE") certified chicken, to meet production and sales requirements.

Prepared Foods: The primary raw materials used in our prepared foods operations are commodity based raw materials, including beef, pork, chicken, turkey, corn, flour, vegetables, bread, breadings, cheese, eggs, seasonings, and other cooking ingredients. Some of these raw materials are provided by our other segments, while others may be purchased from numerous suppliers and manufacturers. We believe the sources of supply of raw materials are adequate for our present needs.

SEASONAL DEMAND

Demand for beef, chicken and certain prepared foods products, such as hot dogs and smoked sausage, generally increases during the spring and summer months and generally decreases during the winter months. Pork and certain other prepared foods products, such as prepared meals, meat dishes, appetizers, frozen pies and breakfast sausage, generally experience increased demand during the winter months, primarily due to the holiday season, while demand generally decreases during the spring and summer months.

CUSTOMERS

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. accounted for 17.3% of our fiscal 2017 consolidated sales. Sales to Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. were included in all of our segments. Any extended discontinuance of sales to this customer could, if not replaced, have a material impact on our operations. No other single customer or customer group represented more than 10% of fiscal 2017 consolidated sales.

COMPETITION

Our food products compete with those of other food producers and processors and certain prepared food manufacturers. Additionally, our food products compete in markets around the world.

We seek to achieve a leading market position for our products via our principal marketing and competitive strategy, which includes:

- identifying target markets for value-added products;
- concentrating production, sales and marketing efforts to appeal to and enhance demand from those markets; and
- utilizing our national distribution systems and customer support services.

Past efforts indicate customer demand can be increased and sustained through application of our marketing strategy, as supported by our distribution systems. The principal competitive elements are price, product safety and quality, brand identification, innovation, breadth and depth of product offerings, availability of products, customer service and credit terms.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS

We sold products in approximately 117 countries in fiscal 2017. Major sales markets include Canada, Central America, China, the European Union, Japan, Mexico, the Middle East, South Korea and Taiwan.

We have the following foreign operations:

Cobb-Vantress, a chicken breeding stock subsidiary, has business interests in Argentina, Brazil, China, the Dominican Republic, India, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Venezuela.

Tyson Rizhao, located in Rizhao, China, is a vertically-integrated chicken production operation.

Tyson Dalong, a joint venture in China in which we have a majority interest, is a chicken further-processing facility.

Tyson Nantong, located in Nantong, China, is a vertically-integrated chicken production operation.

Godrej Tyson Foods, a joint venture in India in which we have a majority interest, is primarily a chicken processing business.

Tyson Mexico Trading Company, a Mexican subsidiary, sells chicken products primarily through co-packer arrangements.

We continue to evaluate growth opportunities in foreign countries. Additional information regarding export sales and long-lived assets located in foreign countries is set forth in Part II, Item 8, Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements, Note 17: Segment Reporting.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

We conduct continuous research and development activities to improve product development, to automate manual processes in our processing plants and growout operations, and to improve chicken breeding stock. With regards to our food products we have two research and development locations, our Discovery Center in Springdale, Arkansas, and another center located in Downers Grove, Illinois. The centers include more than 80,000 square feet of United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") pilot plant space, two consumer sensory and focus group areas, a packaging lab and 25 research kitchens. The centers enable us to bring new market-leading retail and foodservice products to the customer quickly and efficiently. Research and development costs totaled \$113 million, \$96 million, and \$75 million in fiscal 2017, 2016 and 2015, respectively.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION AND FOOD SAFETY

Our facilities for processing beef, pork, chicken, turkey and prepared foods, milling feed and housing live chickens and swine are subject to a variety of international, federal, state and local environmental laws and regulations, which include provisions relating to the discharge of materials into the environment and generally provide for protection of the environment. We believe we are in substantial compliance with such applicable laws and regulations and are not aware of any violations of such laws and regulations likely to result in material penalties or material increases in compliance costs. The cost of compliance with such laws and regulations has not had a material adverse effect on our capital expenditures, earnings or competitive position, and except as described below, is not anticipated to have a material adverse effect in the future.

Congress, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and some states continue to consider various options to control greenhouse gas emissions. It is unclear at this time what options, if any, will be finalized, and whether such options would have a direct impact on the Company. Due to continuing uncertainty surrounding this issue, it is premature to speculate on the specific nature of impacts that imposition of greenhouse gas emission controls would have on us and whether such impacts would have a material adverse effect.

We work to ensure our products meet high standards of food safety and quality. In addition to our own internal Food Safety and Quality Assurance oversight and review, our beef, pork, chicken, and prepared foods products are subject to inspection prior to distribution, primarily by the USDA and the United States Food and Drug Administration. We are also participants in the United States Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point program and are subject to the Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures and the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002. Additionally, our foreign operations are subject to various other food safety and quality assurance oversight and review.

EMPLOYEES AND LABOR RELATIONS

As of September 30, 2017, we employed approximately 122,000 employees. Approximately 117,000 employees were employed in the United States, and 5,000 employees were employed in foreign countries, primarily in China. Approximately 31,000 employees in the United States were subject to collective bargaining agreements with various labor unions, with approximately 10% of those employees at locations either under negotiation for contract renewal or included under agreements expiring in fiscal 2018. The remaining agreements expire over the next several years. Approximately 4,000 employees in foreign countries were subject to collective bargaining agreements. We believe our overall relations with our workforce are good.

MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION

Our principal marketing objective is to be the preferred provider of beef, pork, chicken, and prepared foods products for our customers and consumers. We build the Tyson®, Jimmy Dean®, Hillshire Farm®, Ball Park®, Wright®, Aidells®, ibp® and State Fair® brands while supporting strong regional and emerging brands primarily through well-defined, product-specific advertising, marketing, and public relations efforts focused toward key consumer targets with specific needs. We identify growth and business opportunities through consumer and customer insights derived via leading research and analytic capabilities. We utilize our national distribution system and customer support services to achieve the leading market position for our products and brands.

We have the ability to produce and ship fresh, frozen and refrigerated products worldwide. Domestically, our distribution system extends to a broad network of food distributors and is supported by our owned or leased cold storage warehouses, public cold storage facilities and our transportation system. Our distribution centers accumulate fresh and frozen products so we can fill and consolidate partial-truckload orders into full truckloads, thereby decreasing shipping costs while increasing customer service. In addition, we provide our customers a wide selection of products that do not require large volume orders. Our distribution system enables us to supply large or small quantities of products to meet customer requirements anywhere in the continental United States. Internationally, we utilize both rail and truck refrigerated transportation to domestic ports, where consolidations take place to transport to foreign destinations.

PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

We have filed a number of patents relating to our processes and products that either have been approved or are in the process of review. Because we do a significant amount of brand name and product line advertising to promote our products, we consider the protection of our trademarks to be important to our marketing efforts and have registered and applied for the registration of a number of trademarks. We also have developed non-public proprietary information regarding our production processes and other product-related matters. We utilize internal procedures and safeguards to protect the confidentiality of such information and, where appropriate, seek patent and/or other protection for the technology we utilize.

INDUSTRY PRACTICES

Our agreements with customers are generally short-term, primarily due to the nature of our products, industry practices and fluctuations in supply, demand and price for such products. In certain instances where we are selling further processed products to large customers, we may enter into written agreements whereby we will act as the

exclusive or preferred supplier to the customer, with pricing terms that are either fixed or variable.

AVAILABILITY OF SEC FILINGS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS ON INTERNET WEBSITE

We maintain an internet website for investors at <http://ir.tyson.com>. On this website, we make available, free of charge, annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language) reports, and all amendments to any of those reports, as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such reports with, or furnish such reports to, the Securities and Exchange Commission. Also available on the website for investors are the Corporate Governance Principles, Audit Committee charter, Compensation and Leadership Development Committee charter, Governance and Nominating Committee charter, Strategy and Acquisitions Committee charter, Code of Conduct and Whistleblower Policy. Our corporate governance documents are available in print, free of charge to any shareholder who requests them.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENTS RELEVANT TO FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF “SAFE HARBOR” PROVISIONS OF THE PRIVATE SECURITIES LITIGATION REFORM ACT OF 1995

Certain information in this report constitutes forward-looking statements. Such forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, current views and estimates of our outlook for fiscal 2018, other future economic circumstances, industry conditions in domestic and international markets, our performance and financial results (e.g., debt levels, return on invested capital, value-added product growth, capital expenditures, tax rates, access to foreign markets and dividend policy). These forward-looking statements are subject to a number of factors and uncertainties that could cause our actual results and experiences to differ materially from anticipated results and expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements. We wish to caution readers not to place undue reliance on any forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date made. We undertake no obligation to update any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Among the factors that may cause actual results and experiences to differ from anticipated results and expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements are the following: (i) fluctuations in the cost and availability of inputs and raw materials, such as live cattle, live swine, feed grains (including corn and soybean meal) and energy; (ii) market conditions for finished products, including competition from other global and domestic food processors, supply and pricing of competing products and alternative proteins and demand for alternative proteins; (iii) outbreak of a livestock disease (such as avian influenza (AI) or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)), which could have an adverse effect on livestock we own, the availability of livestock we purchase, consumer perception of certain protein products or our ability to access certain domestic and foreign markets; (iv) the integration of AdvancePierre Foods Holdings, Inc.; (v) the effectiveness of our financial fitness program; (vi) the implementation of an enterprise resource planning system; (vii) access to foreign markets together with foreign economic conditions, including currency fluctuations, import/export restrictions and foreign politics; (viii) changes in availability and relative costs of labor and contract growers and our ability to maintain good relationships with employees, labor unions, contract growers and independent producers providing us livestock; (ix) issues related to food safety, including costs resulting from product recalls, regulatory compliance and any related claims or litigation; (x) changes in consumer preference and diets and our ability to identify and react to consumer trends; (xi) effectiveness of advertising and marketing programs; (xii) our ability to leverage brand value propositions; (xiii) risks associated with leverage, including cost increases due to rising interest rates or changes in debt ratings or outlook; (xiv) impairment in the carrying value of our goodwill or indefinite life intangible assets; (xv) compliance with and changes to regulations and laws (both domestic and foreign), including changes in accounting standards, tax laws, environmental laws, agricultural laws and occupational, health and safety laws; (xvi) adverse results from litigation; (xvii) cyber incidents, security breaches or other disruptions of our information technology systems; (xviii) our ability to make effective acquisitions or joint ventures and successfully integrate newly acquired businesses into existing operations; (xix) risks associated with our commodity purchasing activities; (xx) the effect of, or changes in, general economic conditions; (xxi) significant marketing plan changes by large customers or loss of one or more large customers; (xxii) impacts on our operations caused by factors and forces beyond our control, such as natural disasters, fire, bioterrorism, pandemics or extreme weather; (xxiii) failure to maximize or assert our intellectual property rights; (xxiv) our participation in a multiemployer pension plan; (xxv) the Tyson Limited Partnership’s ability to exercise significant control over the Company; (xxvi) effects related to changes in tax rates, valuation of deferred tax assets and liabilities, or tax laws and their interpretation; (xxvii) volatility in capital markets or interest rates; and (xxviii) those factors listed under Item 1A. “Risk Factors.”

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

These risks, which should be considered carefully with the information provided elsewhere in this report, could materially adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations. Additional risks and uncertainties not currently known to us or that we currently deem to be immaterial also may materially adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Fluctuations in commodity prices and in the availability of raw materials, especially feed grains, live cattle, live swine and other inputs could negatively impact our earnings.

Our results of operations and financial condition, as well as the selling prices for our products, are dependent upon the cost and supply of commodities and raw materials such as beef, pork, poultry, corn, soybean, packaging materials and energy and, to a lesser extent, cheese, fruit, seasoning blends, flour, corn syrup, corn oils, butter and sugar. Corn, soybean meal and other feed ingredients, for instance, represented roughly 55% of our cost of growing a live chicken in fiscal 2017. Production and pricing of these commodities are determined by constantly changing market forces of supply and demand over which we have limited or no control. Such factors include, among other things, weather patterns throughout the world, outbreaks of disease, the global level of supply inventories and demand for grains and other feed ingredients, as well as agricultural and energy policies of domestic and foreign governments.

Volatility in our commodity and raw material costs directly impact our gross margin and profitability. The Company's objective is to offset commodity price increases with pricing actions over time. However, we may not be able to increase our product prices enough to sufficiently offset increased raw material costs due to consumer price sensitivity or the pricing postures of our competitors. In addition, if we increase prices to offset higher costs, we could experience lower demand for our products and sales volumes. Conversely, decreases in our commodity and other input costs may create pressure on us to decrease our prices. While we use derivative financial instruments, primarily futures and options, to reduce the effect of changing prices and as a mechanism to procure the underlying commodity, we do not fully hedge against changes in commodities prices.

Over time, if we are unable to price our products to cover increased costs, to offset operating cost increases with continuous improvement savings or are not successful in our commodity hedging program, then commodity and raw material price volatility or increases could materially and adversely affect our profitability, financial condition and results of operations.

The prices we receive for our products may fluctuate due to competition from other food producers and processors. The food industry in general is intensely competitive. We face competition from other food producers and processors that have various product ranges and geographic reach. Some of the factors on which we compete include: pricing, product safety and quality, brand identification, innovation, breadth and depth of product offerings, availability of our products (including distribution channels used, such as e-commerce) and competing products, customer service, and credit terms.

From time to time in response to these competitive pressures or to maintain market share, we may need to reduce the prices for some of our products or increase or reallocate spending on marketing, advertising and promotions and new product innovation. Such pressures also may restrict our ability to increase prices in response to raw material and other cost increases. Any reduction in prices as a result of competitive pressures, or any failure to increase prices to offset cost increases, could harm our profit margins. If we reduce prices but we cannot increase sales volumes to offset the price changes, then our financial condition and results of operations will suffer. Alternatively, if we do not reduce our prices and our competitors seek advantage through pricing or promotional changes, our revenues and market share could be adversely affected.

Outbreaks of livestock diseases can adversely impact our ability to conduct our operations and the supply and demand for our products.

Supply of and demand for our products can be adversely impacted by outbreaks of livestock diseases, which can have a significant impact on our financial results. Efforts are taken to control disease risks by adherence to good production practices and extensive precautionary measures designed to ensure the health of livestock. However, outbreaks of disease and other events, which may be beyond our control, either in our own livestock or livestock owned by independent producers who sell livestock to us, could significantly affect demand for our products, consumer perceptions of certain protein products, the availability of livestock for purchase by us and our ability to conduct our operations. Moreover, the outbreak of livestock diseases, particularly in our Chicken segment, could have a significant effect on the livestock we own by requiring us to, among other things, destroy any affected livestock. Furthermore, an outbreak of disease could result in governmental restrictions on the import and export of our products to or from our suppliers, facilities or customers. This could also result in negative publicity that may have an adverse effect on our ability to market our products successfully and on our financial results.

The integration of AdvancePierre may be more difficult, costly or time consuming than expected, and the acquisition may not result in any or all of the anticipated benefits, including cost synergies.

The success of the acquisition of AdvancePierre, including the realization of the anticipated benefits, will depend in part on our ability to successfully integrate AdvancePierre's businesses in an efficient and effective manner. We may not be able to accomplish this integration process smoothly or successfully. The necessity of coordinating geographically separated organizations, systems and facilities and addressing possible differences in business backgrounds, corporate cultures and management philosophies may increase the difficulties of integration. Failure to effectively integrate the businesses could adversely impact the expected benefits of the acquisition, including cost synergies arising from supply chain efficiencies, merchandising activities and overlapping general and administrative functions.

The integration of two large companies is complex, and we will be required to devote significant management attention and incur substantial costs to integrate AdvancePierre's and Tyson's business practices, policies, cultures and operations. This diversion of our management's attention from day-to-day business operations and the execution and pursuit of strategic plans and initiatives could result in performance shortfalls, which could adversely impact the combined company's business, operations and financial results. The integration process could also result in the loss of key employees, which could adversely impact the combined company's future financial results.

Furthermore, during the integration planning process, we may encounter additional challenges and difficulties, including those related to, without limitation, managing a larger combined company; streamlining supply chains,

consolidating corporate and administrative infrastructures and eliminating overlapping operations; retaining our existing vendors and customers; unanticipated issues in integrating information technology, communications and other systems; and unforeseen and unexpected liabilities related to the acquisition of AdvancePierre. Delays encountered in the integration could adversely impact the business, financial condition and operations of the combined company. We continue to evaluate our estimates of synergies to be realized from the AdvancePierre acquisition and refine them. Our actual cost savings could differ materially from our current estimates. Actual cost savings, the costs required to realize the cost savings and the source of the cost savings could differ materially from our estimates, and we cannot assure you that we will achieve the full amount of cost savings on the schedule anticipated or at all or that these cost savings programs will not have other adverse effects on our business. In light of these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on our estimated cost savings.

Finally, we may not be able to achieve the targeted operating or long-term strategic benefits of the AdvancePierre acquisition in a timely manner or at all or could incur higher transition costs than anticipated. An inability to realize the full extent of, or any of, the anticipated benefits of the AdvancePierre acquisition, as well as any delays encountered in the integration process, could have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

We may not realize any or all of the anticipated benefits of our financial fitness program, which may prove to be more difficult, costly, or time consuming than expected.

In the fourth quarter of fiscal 2017, our Board of Directors approved a multi-year restructuring program (the “Financial Fitness Program”), which is expected to contribute to the Company’s overall strategy of financial fitness through increased operational effectiveness and overhead reduction. For more information regarding this program, refer to the heading “Overview” set forth in Part II, “Item 7. Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” of this report.

The success of the Financial Fitness Program, including the realization of the anticipated benefits, will depend in part on our ability to successfully implement the program in an efficient and effective manner. The implementation of the Financial Fitness Program may be more difficult, costly, or time consuming than expected, and the Financial Fitness Program may not result in any or all of the anticipated benefits. If we are unable to implement the Financial Fitness Program smoothly or successfully, or we otherwise do not capture the anticipated savings, our business, results of operations and financial condition for future periods could be negatively impacted.

In addition, we may incur higher costs associated with reductions in overhead than anticipated, and the reduction in overhead could result in performance shortfalls. The Financial Fitness Program may become a distraction for our organization and may disrupt our ongoing business operations; cause deterioration in employee morale; disrupt or weaken the internal control structures of the affected business operations; and result in negative publicity which could affect our corporate reputation. If we are unable to successfully manage the negative consequences of the Financial Fitness Program, our business, results of operations and financial condition for future periods could be adversely affected.

We may experience difficulties in implementing an enterprise resource planning system over the next few years.

We are engaged in a multi-year implementation of an enterprise resource planning (“ERP”) system. Such an implementation is a major undertaking from a financial, management, and personnel perspective. The implementation of the ERP system may prove to be more difficult, costly, or time consuming than expected, and there can be no assurance that this system will continue to be beneficial to the extent anticipated. Any disruptions, delays or deficiencies in the design and implementation of our new ERP system could adversely affect our ability to process orders, ship products, send invoices and track payments, fulfill contractual obligations, produce financial reports, or otherwise operate our business. As we implement our new ERP system, our exposure to system attacks may be elevated because we will be running old and new processes in parallel and must simultaneously protect both the new system and legacy systems. If we are unable to implement the ERP system smoothly or successfully, or we otherwise do not capture anticipated benefits, our business, results of operations and financial condition for future periods could be negatively impacted. Additionally, our implementation of the ERP system may involve greater utilization of third-party “cloud” computing services in connection with our business operations. Problems faced by us or our third-party “cloud” computing providers, including technological or business-related disruptions, as well as cybersecurity threats, could adversely impact our business, results of operations and financial condition for future periods.

We are subject to risks associated with our international activities, which could negatively affect our sales to customers in foreign countries, as well as our operations and assets in such countries.

In fiscal 2017, we sold products to approximately 117 countries. Major sales markets include Canada, Central America, China, the European Union, Japan, Mexico, the Middle East, South Korea and Taiwan. Our sales to customers in foreign countries for fiscal 2017 totaled \$4.5 billion, of which \$3.9 billion related to export sales from the United States. In addition, we had approximately \$217 million of long-lived assets located in foreign countries, primarily Brazil, China, European Union and India, at the end of fiscal 2017.

As a result, we are subject to various risks and uncertainties relating to international sales and operations, including:

- imposition of tariffs, quotas, trade barriers and other trade protection measures imposed by foreign countries regarding the importation of beef, pork, poultry, and prepared foods products, in addition to import or export licensing requirements imposed by various foreign countries;
- closing of borders by foreign countries to the import of beef, pork, and poultry products due to animal disease or other perceived health or safety issues;
- impact of currency exchange rate fluctuations between the United States dollar and foreign currencies, particularly the Brazilian real, the British pound sterling, the Canadian dollar, the Chinese renminbi, the European euro, the Japanese yen and the Mexican peso;
- political and economic conditions;
- difficulties and costs to comply with, and enforcement of remedies under, a wide variety of complex domestic and international laws, treaties and regulations, including, without limitation, the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and economic and trade sanctions enforced by the United States Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control;

different regulatory structures and unexpected changes in regulatory environments;
tax rates that may exceed those in the United States and earnings that may be subject to withholding requirements and incremental taxes upon repatriation;

potentially negative consequences from changes in tax laws; and

distribution costs, disruptions in shipping or reduced availability of freight transportation.

Negative consequences relating to these risks and uncertainties could jeopardize or limit our ability to transact business in one or more of those markets where we operate or in other developing markets and could adversely affect our financial results.

We depend on the availability of, and good relations with, our employees.

We have approximately 122,000 employees, approximately 35,000 of whom are covered by collective bargaining agreements or are members of labor unions. Our operations depend on the availability and relative costs of labor and maintaining good relations with employees and the labor unions. If we fail to maintain good relations with our employees or with the labor unions, we may experience labor strikes or work stoppages, which could adversely affect our financial results.

If we are unable to attract, hire or retain key employees or a highly skilled and diverse global workforce, it could have a negative impact on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Our continued growth requires us to attract, hire, retain and develop key employees, including our executive officers and senior management team, and maintain a highly skilled and diverse global workforce. We compete to attract and hire highly skilled employees and our own employees are highly sought after by our competitors and other companies. Competition could cause us to lose talented employees, and unplanned turnover could deplete our institutional knowledge and result in increased costs due to increased competition for employees.

We depend on contract growers and independent producers to supply us with livestock.

We contract primarily with independent contract growers to raise the live chickens and turkeys processed in our poultry operations. A majority of our cattle and hogs are purchased from independent producers who sell livestock to us under marketing contracts or on the open market. If we do not attract and maintain contracts with growers or maintain marketing and purchasing relationships with independent producers, our production operations could be negatively affected.

If our products become contaminated, we may be subject to product liability claims and product recalls, which could adversely affect our financial results and damage our reputation.

Our products may be subject to contamination by disease-producing organisms or pathogens, such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* and *E. coli*. These organisms and pathogens are found generally in the environment and there is a risk that one or more, as a result of food processing, could be present in our products. These organisms and pathogens also can be introduced to our products as a result of improper handling at the further-processing, foodservice or consumer level. These risks may be controlled, but may not be eliminated, by adherence to good manufacturing practices and finished product testing. We have little, if any, control over handling procedures once our products have been shipped for distribution. Even an inadvertent shipment of contaminated products may be a violation of law and may lead to increased risk of exposure to product liability claims, increased scrutiny and penalties, including injunctive relief and plant closings, by federal and state regulatory agencies, and adverse publicity, which could exacerbate the associated negative consumer reaction. Any of these occurrences may have an adverse effect on our financial results. In addition, we may be required to recall some of our products if they spoil, become contaminated, are tampered with or are mislabeled. A widespread product recall could result in significant losses due to the costs of a recall, the destruction of product inventory and lost sales due to the unavailability of product for a period of time. Such a product recall also could result in adverse publicity, damage to our reputation, and a loss of consumer confidence in our products, which could have a material adverse effect on our business results and the value