

Financial Daily Dose 4.29.2020 | Top Story: White House Declares Meat Processing “Critical Infrastructure” Even as Unions Object Over Safety Concerns

Despite [actually, more likely because of] a rash of recent closures at meat processing facilities due to COVID-19 outbreaks, the White House issued an executive order classifying the slaughterhouses as “critical infrastructure” in an effort to “prevent looming shortages of pork, chicken and other products as a result of the coronavirus” – NYTimes and WSJ and Bloomberg and MarketWatch

Investors anxiously awaiting some semblance of normal in the economy and markets are making early bets that the post-virus future will be ruled by “America’s corporate colossuses.” Hence, climbing Microsoft, Apple, and Amazon stocks, even as “analysts have trimmed expectations for all three companies’ quarterly earnings, which they’ll report this week” – NYTimes

A strong Q1 (despite a slowdown in ad sales) won’t hurt Alphabet’s chances of staying in that conversation, too – Bloomberg and MarketWatch and WSJ

Let’s just say that the Small Business Administration finds a way to get PPP round #2 money out to American businesses (no sure bet based on Day 1). That means \$670 billion in aid has flowed from the government in recent weeks—nearly all of it, as it turns out, without the usual audit requirement aimed at catching fraud or egregious errors on the front end. And that means that any efforts to do so on the backend will be, in a word, difficult – WSJ

Lobbyists are working overtime in an effort to push the White House and Congress to “shield American companies from a wide range of potential lawsuits related to reopening the economy amid the coronavirus pandemic, opening a new legal and political fight over how the nation deals with the fallout from Covid-19” – NYTimes and Law360

On cue, Simon Group—the country’s biggest mall operator—has laid out plans for reopening nearly 50 of them in 10 states by next week – NYTimes

JetBlue will now require masks for all of its passengers from the beginning to end of their trip, the first major U.S. carrier to implement such a policy – NYTimes

Boeing, meanwhile, is facing “criminal and civil scrutiny into years of widespread quality-control lapses on its 737 Max line”—inquiries that build on “a federal grand-jury investigation into hazardously designed flight-control systems” at the planemaker – WSJ

Zuck and crew have made major changes in Facebook’s security teams over the past week, a shift in strategy that “displaces more than two dozen employees” and affects detection-engineering and alert-response groups. According to insiders, the “latest cuts are part of a change in philosophy on security efforts, spurred by infighting and long-running issues within the department” – NYTimes

The shakeup is just the latest in a months-long effort from Zuck to assert himself, leaving him “more actively and visibly in charge than he has been in years” – WSJ

Concerns about “de-risking” have prompted the Government Accountability Office to press the Fed and FDIC to revisit AML regs in an effort to ensure that banks aren’t “limiting services or ending relationships to avoid ‘perceived regulatory concerns about facilitating money laundering’” – Law360

U.S. securities regulators are reportedly investigating Luckin Coffee’s recent disclosure that “some of its employees cooked its books last year.” The thoroughness of the SEC’s probe of the Chinese-based Starbucks rival, however, will depend squarely on “how much information is shared by Chinese regulators, who are staging their own probe” – WSJ

Questions left unresolved after a special audit of Wirecard AG’s accounting practices helped drive shares in the German electronics-payments giant down more than 25% on Tuesday – WSJ

And here you are thinking you’d make it to midweek without mention of the Pentagon’s UFO videos. Oh, no no no no. [Even if it’s not exactly little-green-men kind of stuff] – NYTimes

Stay safe,
MDR