Tractor Supply Company (TSCO)
1Q Recap: Customer Engagement Tri-Fecta

Stay involved. While 1Q benefited from consumables stock-up, strength has continued into 2Q as demand for seasonal and "sustainable living" products has picked up. Comps will inevitably decelerate at some point, and 2Q EPS will be constrained by incremental opex, but TSCO is deepening its relationship with new, previously lapsed and existing customers during these unprecedented times (customer engagement "tri-fecta"). When combined with accelerated investments in convenience capabilities, TSCO is well-positioned to gain share both during and after the current crisis. Reiterate Outperform rating; new $115 price target.

- **1Q recap.** Comps/EPS of +4.3%/$0.71 were in line with the business update provided earlier this month. For more details on 1Q, see our early read note.

- **Sales have remained strong 2Q to-date.** While March's +12% comp (+20% over the final three weeks) benefited from consumers stocking up on core consumables, sales have remained robust in April (similar to March's +12%) as consumer purchases have shifted to more seasonally relevant products, as well as those that support living a more sustainable life. Encouragingly, big ticket continues to perform well. Looking ahead, our potentially conservative 2Q comp estimate (+2.5%) balances strong current momentum with potential headwinds from deflation and a slowdown in energy markets (~10% of stores today vs. mid-teens% in 2015, so less of an issue).

- **Becoming more important to more consumers.** This is perhaps the most important takeaway from today's call, and one that has positive longer term implications for the business. TSCO is seeing deeper engagement with existing customers (more cross-shopping), reactivating lapsed customers and acquiring new ones in record numbers. Bottom line: more consumers are turning to TSCO to fulfill their needs during this crisis – and the company is delivering.

- **Accelerating capability additions.** TSCO's FY20 capex plan remains intact, but management is reprioritizing spend to capitalize on changes in customer shopping behaviors. Specifically, TSCO has accelerated the rollout of curbside pickup for BOPIS, expanded its same-day/next-day delivery capabilities (from ~400 stores to the entire chain), and increased mobile POS capacity by 50% in its stores. In short, accelerating these convenience-related options is increasing TSCO's relevance with consumers (~30% of BOPIS orders were from new customers) and widening its competitive moat with other farm/ranch retailers.

- **Estimates.** Raising 2QE/FY20E EPS to $1.74/$4.75 (from $1.50/$4.55) on stronger top-line trends. FY21E EPS also goes to $5.35 from $5.30.

- **Reiterate Outperform rating.** TSCO remains in an enviable position with significant liquidity (nearly $1B, including >$800M in cash on hand) and the ability to continue operations as an "essential" retailer serving a lifestyle. While comps will inevitably slow from current levels (and 2Q EPS will be constrained by incremental operating costs), we believe TSCO remains well-positioned to gain share during and after this crisis. Reiterate Outperform rating, new $115 price target.

Tractor Supply is the largest farm/ranch chain in the U.S., serving a unique customer niche through a network of ~2,000 stores across 49 states.

Peter S. Benedict
Sr. Research Analyst
pbenedict@rw Baird.com
203.353.1049

Justin E. Kleber, CFA
Sr. Research Associate
jkleber@rwbaiird.com
314.445.6517

Alex A. Vasti
Research Analyst
avasti@rw baird.com
414.298.2480

Please refer to Appendix - Important Disclosures and Analyst Certification

Stock Data
Rating: Outperform
Suitability: Average Risk
Price Target/Previous: ▲$115/$105
Price (4/23/20): $95.08
Market Cap (mil): $11,162
Shares Out (mil): 117.4
Average Daily Vol (mil): 1.91
Dividend Yield: 1.5%
EV/EBITDA (FY20E): 12.0x
FCF Yield (FY20E): 5.0%

Estimates
FY Dec 2019A 2020E 2021E
Q1 0.63 A 0.71 A
Q2 1.80 A 1.74 E
Q3 1.04 A 1.05 E
Q4 1.21 A 1.26 E
Fiscal EPS 4.68 A 4.75 E 5.35 E
Previous Est 4.55 E 5.30 E
Fiscal P/E 20.3x 20.0x 17.8x
Chart/Table Sources: FactSet and Baird Data. Price chart reflects most recent closing price.
Investment Thesis

- **Widening the moat.** While evolving consumer behaviors and ongoing digital innovation are changing the face of retail, TSCO remains uniquely positioned to serve the rural lifestyle customer for years to come. Management has invested in several initiatives across merchandising, CRM, omni-channel, and supply chain which should drive profitable growth longer term as TSCO increasingly leverages its physical and digital capabilities to take share from less sophisticated farm/ranch competitors.

- **Merchandising engine in high gear.** While the company's "test and learn" merchandising mentality hasn't changed, we are encouraged by the level of newness on tap for this year. Specifically, new brands (Toro, Triple Crown equine feed), new space productivity technology (allowing for greater SKU localization), and an enhanced shopping experience (branded "store-within-a-store" shops) represent incremental sales drivers for this year.

- **Store growth opportunity remains plentiful.** As customer attribution rates have improved in recent years, TSCO has gained a better understanding of who shops its stores. Two key learnings have emerged in support of management's 2,500 store target: (1) density of "core" TSCO households is actually higher than previously thought, and (2) TSCO stores are appealing to an even broader group of non-core households. With no comparable No. 2 competitor jockeying for real estate, the quality of TSCO's future store runway is a key differentiator relative to other retail growth stories.

- **ONETractor top-line initiatives should continue to drive profitable share gains.** TSCO's Neighbor's Club represents a transformational asset that should continue to benefit the business, and the company's private label credit appears poised to scale further in FY20. When combined with TSCO's omni-channel/digital capabilities (BOPIS, Stockyard, Mobile POS), prospects for profitable share gains in the years ahead remain good.

- **Margin stabilization.** Recently completed operational efficiency work with McKinsey suggests an opportunity for TSCO to bend the curve on several cost buckets, including transportation, store/DC labor, and indirect spend. When combined with benefits from price management tools, initial FY20 guidance assumed a stable EBIT margin profile (at ~8.9%). While incremental operating costs will weigh on profitability near-term, we would expect a recovery in FY21.

- **Price target rationale.** Our $115 price target assumes ~21x FY21E EPS, a slight premium to the stock's five-year average NTM multiple of ~20x given TSCO's enviable position as a needs-based retailer in today's uncertain economic environment.

Risks & Caveats

- **Inflationary pressures,** which could squeeze margins if TSCO is unable to raise retail prices at the same rate as costs increase.

- **Deflationary impact on comps.** While deflation has historically benefitted gross margin, reported comps could moderate in a deflationary environment, which could pressure the stock's multiple.

- **Seasonality and weather.** TSCO's business is highly seasonal, with sales and profits the highest in the spring (2Q) and winter (4Q) selling seasons due to demand seasonality of its merchandise offering. Unseasonable weather, heavy precipitation, drought conditions, and early or late frosts have the potential to negatively impact sales and profitability in any given quarter.

- **Managing unit growth.** A key component of TSCO's long-term strategy is predicated on expanding its store base. New store performance is dependent upon TSCO's ability to effectively integrate new stores into its existing operations, as well as recruiting and retaining qualified store managers and associates. If TSCO's rate of expansion were to slow as a result of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., inability to find suitable locations, construction and/or site approval delays), sales and earnings growth could be impeded.
■ **Systems implementation.** Any potential disruptions associated with the implementation of IT systems (price optimization, warehouse management) could negatively impact financial results.

■ **Increased competition.** While the company's unique product assortment and targeted focus on serving a specialized customer niche helps differentiate itself from the competition, a more aggressive marketing or pricing campaign, particularly from regional farm/ranch chains or "big box" retailers, could have an adverse impact on TSCO's financial results.

■ **Economic conditions.** A contraction in consumer spending resulting from macroeconomic factors such as higher interest rates, rising fuel/energy costs, increased unemployment levels, and lack of credit availability could negatively impact sales.

---

**Company Description**

Tractor Supply Company is the largest retail farm and ranch chain in the U.S., with ~2,000 stores operating under the names Tractor Supply Company and Petsense. Tractor Supply is focused on supplying the "Out Here" lifestyle needs of recreational farmers and ranchers and serving the maintenance needs of those who enjoy the rural lifestyle. Stores are located in towns outlying major metropolitan markets and in rural communities. Tractor Supply offers the following comprehensive selection of merchandise: (1) equine, pet and animal products, including items necessary for health, care, growth, and containment; (2) maintenance products for agricultural and rural use; (3) hardware products and tools; (4) seasonal products, including lawn and garden power equipment; (5) truck, trailer, and towing accessories; and (6) work/recreational clothing and footwear.
Appendix - Important Disclosures and Analyst Certification

Approved on 23 April 2020 18:11EDT/ Published on 23 April 2020 18:16EDT.

1 Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated makes a market in the securities of TSCO.

Appendix – Important Disclosures and Analyst Certification

Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated (“Baird”) and/or its affiliates expect to receive or intend to seek investment-banking related compensation from the company or companies mentioned in this report within the next three months. Baird may not be licensed to execute transactions in all foreign listed securities directly. Transactions in foreign listed securities may be prohibited for residents of the United States. Please contact a Baird representative for more information.

Investment Ratings: Outperform (O) - Expected to outperform on a total return, risk-adjusted basis the broader U.S. equity market over the next 12 months. Neutral (N) - Expected to perform in line with the broader U.S. equity market over the next 12 months. Underperform (U) - Expected to underperform on a total return, risk-adjusted basis the broader U.S. equity market over the next 12 months.

Risk Ratings: L - Lower Risk – Higher-quality companies for investors seeking capital appreciation or income with an emphasis on safety. Company characteristics may include: stable earnings, conservative balance sheets, and an established history of revenue and earnings. A - Average Risk – Growth situations for investors seeking capital appreciation with an emphasis on safety. Company characteristics may include: moderate volatility, modest balance-sheet leverage, and stable patterns of revenue and earnings. H - Higher Risk – Higher-growth situations appropriate for investors seeking capital appreciation with the acceptance of risk. Company characteristics may include: higher balance-sheet leverage, dynamic business environments, and higher levels of earnings and price volatility. S - Speculative Risk – High growth situations appropriate only for investors willing to accept a high degree of volatility and risk. Company characteristics may include: unpredictable earnings, small capitalization, aggressive growth strategies, rapidly changing market dynamics, high leverage, extreme price volatility and unknown competitive challenges.

Valuation, Ratings and Risks. The recommendation and price target contained within this report are based on a time horizon of 12 months but there is no guarantee the objective will be achieved within the specified time horizon. Price targets are determined by a subjective review of fundamental and/or quantitative factors of the issuer, its industry, and the security type. A variety of methods may be used to determine the value of a security including, but not limited to, discounted cash flow, earnings multiples, peer group comparisons, and sum of the parts. Overall market risk, interest rate risk, and general economic risks impact all securities. Specific information regarding the price target and recommendation is provided in the text of our most recent research report.

Distribution of Investment Ratings. As of March 31, 2020, Baird U.S. Equity Research covered 725 companies, with 60% rated Outperform/Buy, 39% rated Neutral/Hold and 1% rated Underperform/Sell. Within these rating categories, 11% of Outperform/Buy-rated and 4% of Neutral/Hold-rated companies have compensated Baird for investment banking services in the past 12 months and/or Baird managed or co-managed a public offering of securities for these companies in the past 12 months.

Analyst Compensation. Research analyst compensation is based on: (1) the correlation between the research analyst’s recommendations and stock price performance; (2) ratings and direct feedback from our investing clients, our institutional and retail sales force (as applicable) and from independent rating services; (3) the research analyst’s productivity, including the quality of such analyst’s research and such analyst’s contribution to the growth and development of our overall research effort; and (4) compliance with all of Baird’s internal policies and procedures. This compensation criteria and actual compensation is reviewed and approved on an annual basis by Baird’s Research Oversight Committee. Research analyst compensation is derived from all revenue sources of the firm, including revenues from investment banking. Baird does not compensate research analysts based on specific investment banking transactions.
A complete listing of all companies covered by Baird U.S. Equity Research and applicable research disclosures can be accessed at http://www.rwbaird.com/research-insights/research/coverage/third-party-research-disclosures.aspx. You can also call 800-792-2473 or write: Robert W. Baird & Co., Equity Research, 777 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

Analyst Certification
The senior research analyst(s) certifies that the views expressed in this research report and/or financial model accurately reflect such senior analyst's personal views about the subject securities or issuers and that no part of his or her compensation was, is, or will be directly or indirectly related to the specific recommendations or views contained in the research report.

Disclaimers
Baird prohibits analysts from owning stock in companies they cover.
This is not a complete analysis of every material fact regarding any company, industry or security. The opinions expressed here reflect our judgment at this date and are subject to change. The information has been obtained from sources we consider to be reliable, but we cannot guarantee the accuracy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON COMPANIES MENTIONED HEREIN IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
The Dow Jones Industrial Average, S&P 500, S&P 400 and Russell 2000 are unmanaged common stock indices used to measure and report performance of various sectors of the stock market; direct investment in indices is not available. Baird is exempt from the requirement to hold an Australian financial services license. Baird is regulated by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, FINRA, and various other self-regulatory organizations and those laws and regulations may differ from Australian laws. This report has been prepared in accordance with the laws and regulations governing United States broker-dealers and not Australian laws.

Other Disclosures
The information and rating included in this report represent the research analyst’s views based on a time horizon of 12 months, as described above, unless otherwise stated. In our standard company-specific research reports, the subject company may be designated as a “Fresh Pick”, representing that the research analyst believes the company to be a high-conviction investment idea based on a subjective review of one or more fundamental or quantitative factors until an expiration date specified by the analyst but not to exceed nine months. The Fresh Pick designation and specified expiration date will be displayed in standard company-specific research reports on the company until the occurrence of the expiration date or such time as the analyst removes the Fresh Pick designation from the company in a subsequent, standard company-specific research report. The research analyst(s) named in this report may, at times and at the request of clients or their Baird representatives, provide particular investment perspectives or trading strategies based primarily on the analyst’s understanding of the individual client’s objectives. These perspectives or trading strategies generally are responsive to client inquiries and based on criteria the research analyst considers relevant to the client. As such, these perspectives and strategies may differ from the research analyst’s views contained in this report.
Baird and/or its affiliates may provide to certain clients additional or research supplemental products or services, such as outlooks, commentaries and other detailed analyses, which focus on covered stocks, companies, industries or sectors. Not all clients who receive our standard company-specific research reports are eligible to receive these additional or supplemental products or services. Baird determines in its sole discretion the clients who will receive additional or supplemental products or services, in light of various factors including the size and scope of the client relationships. These additional or supplemental products or services may feature different analytical or research techniques and information than are contained in Baird’s standard research reports. Any ratings and recommendations contained in such additional or research supplemental products are consistent with the research analyst’s ratings and recommendations contained in more broadly disseminated standard research reports. Baird disseminates its research reports to all clients simultaneously by posting such reports to Baird’s password-protected client portal, https://bol.rwbaird.com/Login/ (“BairdOnline”). All clients may access BairdOnline and at any time. All clients are advised to check BairdOnline for Baird’s most recent research reports. After research reports are posted to BairdOnline, such reports may be emailed to clients, based on, among other things, client interest, coverage, stock ownership and indicated email preferences, and electronically distributed to certain third-party research aggregators, who may make such reports available to entitled clients on password-protected, third-party websites. Not all research reports posted to BairdOnline will be emailed to clients or electronically distributed to such research aggregators. To request access to Baird Online, please visit https://bol.rwbaird.com/Login/RequestInstLogin or contact your Baird representative.

Dividend Yield. As used in this report, the term “dividend yield” refers, on a percentage basis, to the historical distributions made by the issuer relative to its current market price. Such distributions are not guaranteed, may be modified at the issuer’s discretion, may exceed operating cash flow, subsidized by borrowed funds or include a return of investment principal.

United Kingdom (“UK”) disclosure requirements for the purpose of distributing this research into the UK and other countries for which Robert W. Baird Limited holds a MiFID passport.
The contents of this report may contain an “investment recommendation”, as defined by the Market Abuse Regulation EU No 596/2014 (“MAR”). This report does not contain a “personal recommendation” or “investment advice”, as defined by the Market in Financial Instruments Directive 2014/65/EU (“MiFID”). Please therefore be aware of the important disclosures outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, this report was completed and first disseminated at the date and time provided on the timestamp of the report. If you would like further information on dissemination times, please contact us. The views contained in this report: (i) do not necessarily correspond to, and may differ from, the views of Robert W. Baird Limited or any other entity within the Baird Group, in particular Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated; and (ii) may differ from the views of another individual of Robert W. Baird Limited.
This material is distributed in the UK and the European Economic Area (“EEA”) by Robert W. Baird Limited, which has an office at Finsbury Circus House, 15 Finsbury Circus, London EC2M 7EB and is authorized and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (“FCA”) in the UK.
For the purposes of the FCA requirements, this investment research report is classified as investment research and is objective. This material is only directed at and is only made available to persons in the EEA who would satisfy the criteria of being "Professional" investors under MiFID and to persons in the UK falling within Articles 19, 38, 47, and 49 of the Financial Services and Markets Act of 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005 (all such persons being referred to as “relevant persons”). Accordingly, this document is intended only for persons regarded as investment professionals (or equivalent) and is not to be distributed to or passed onto any other person (such as persons who would be classified as Retail clients under MiFID).

All substantially material sources of the information contained in this report are disclosed. All sources of information in this report are reliable, but where there is any doubt as to reliability of a particular source, this is clearly indicated. There is no intention to update this report in future. Where, for any reason, an update is made, this will be made clear in writing on the research report. Such instances will be occasional only.

Please note that this report may provide views which differ from previous recommendations made by the same individual in respect of the same financial instrument or issuer in the last 12 months. Information and details regarding previous recommendations in relation to the financial instruments or issuer referred to in this report are available at https://baird.bluematrix.com/sellside/MAR.action.

Robert W. Baird Limited or one of its affiliates may at any time have a long or short position in the company or companies mentioned in this report. Where Robert W. Baird Limited or one of its affiliates holds a long or short position exceeding 0.5% of the total issued share capital of the issuer, this will be disclosed separately by your Robert W. Baird Limited representative upon request.

Investment involves risk. The price of securities may fluctuate and past performance is not indicative of future results. Any recommendation contained in the research report does not have regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation and the particular needs of any individuals. You are advised to exercise caution in relation to the research report. If you are in any doubt about any of the contents of this document, you should obtain independent professional advice.

Robert W. Baird Limited and Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated have in place organisational and administrative arrangements for the prevention, avoidance, and disclosure of conflicts of interest with respect to research recommendations. Robert W. Baird Limited’s Conflicts of Interest Policy, available here, outlines the approach Robert W. Baird Limited takes in relation to conflicts of interest and includes detail as to its procedures in place to identify, manage and control conflicts of interest. Robert W. Baird Limited and or one of its affiliates may be party to an agreement with the issuer that is the subject of this report relating to the provision of services of investment firms. Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated’s policies and procedures are designed to identify and effectively manage conflicts of interest related to the preparation and content of research reports and to promote objective and reliable research that reflects the truly held opinions of research analysts. Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated’s research analysts certify on a quarterly basis that such research reports accurately reflect their personal views.

This material is strictly confidential to the recipient and not intended for persons in jurisdictions where the distribution or publication of this research report is not permitted under the applicable laws or regulations of such jurisdiction.

Robert W. Baird Limited is exempt from the requirement to hold an Australian financial services license and is regulated by the FCA under UK laws, which may differ from Australian laws. As such, this document has not been prepared in accordance with Australian laws.

Copyright 2020 Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated

This information is prepared for the use of Baird clients and may not be redistributed, retransmitted or disclosed, in whole or in part, or in any form or manner, without the express written consent of Baird. Any unauthorized use or disclosure is prohibited. Receipt and review of this information constitutes your agreement not to redistribute, retransmit, or disclose to others the contents, opinions, conclusion, or information contained in this information (including any investment ratings, estimates or price targets) without first obtaining expressed permission from an authorized officer of Baird.