

Tractor Supply shares are up $\mathbf{3 0 \%}$ since the end of 2006. There's still roughly since the retailer's second-quarter $\$ 22$ million left from a prior $\$ 200$ million earnings announcement. Investors were repurchase authorization. Another \$200 pleased with the tight expense control, million program was approved in early Au-well-managed inventories (down 12.2\% on gust with a December 2011 expiration a per-store basis compared to last J une), date. We believe the company will be an and good sales of core consumables, in- opportunistic purchaser (TSCO bought cluding animal and pet related products. about 738,000 shares in the J une quarter, Full-year earnings confirmation, despite paying nearly \$34 a share), and have facthe challenging economy, also bolstered tored in annual earnings increases from the stock.
A modest reduction in the store open-
ing plans doesn't concern us. At the be ing plans doesn't concern us. At the beginning of 2008, TSCO's target was the addition of $95-100$ units. The current outlook is for 88 to 93 ribbon-cutting ceremonies. The initial 2009 goal is a similar 90-95 new locations. Thus, the 2008-2009 store unit growth will likely be in the stillvigorous $11 \%-12 \%$ range, contrasted with a $13 \%$ rate in the last five years. Tractor's strong finances would enable it to expand at a moderately faster pace if real estate opportunities became available. Note: Many retailers have substantially cut the size of their store-opening programs.
buybacks in our projections through 2011.
E-commerce is being ramped up. The current 11,000 SKU's will be expanded in 2008's second half, so TSCO can begin leveraging this operation in 2009.
Store managers are staying with the company. Through the first half, the store manager turnover rate was 2\% less than 2007's record low. Established relationships help boost customer traffic and profits.
Timely TSCO stock is a worthwhile 3to 5-year holding. This assessment is based on annual double-digit increases in Tractor Supply likes its own shares. product mix (see Business Blurb). The share count has been cut nearly $10 \%$ J erome H. Kaplan October 3, 2008
(A) Fiscal year ends on the Saturday closest to December 31st.

