BMO Global Farm to Market Conference
Gregory Heckman
Kenneth Zaslow

Kenneth Zaslow
Greg, thank you so much for taking the time to be with us today.

Over the last several years, I've referenced your 30-plus years of experience in agriculture, energy and food processing industries in my introduction.

As important as your past experience is, what you've accomplished at Bunge is remarkable. In three years, you've engineered one of the greatest turnarounds I've seen in my 20-year career by transforming Bunge's operations across every facet of its business, including its portfolio mix, operational execution, risk management and capital allocation. Now you and your team have laid the foundation to create sustainable earnings growth and fully realize Bunge's earnings power in coming years.

We're happy to have you with us today in person and grateful for the opportunity to get greater insight into how you will be able to continue to guide Bunge's future direction.

Questions And Answers

Kenneth Zaslow
With that, I'll open it up. When you first started -- I don't know if you remember, you and I had a conversation about generating 200 basis points above cost of capital. And to be fair, you did say it was just a milestone and not an endpoint. Last quarter, Bunge generated about 21% return on invested capital.

How much of that improvement in return on invested capital will be derived from internal changes such as supply chain risk management? And how much is derived from the structural changes from the operating environment? How do you think about the sustainability of that return on invested capital?

Gregory Heckman
All right. Well, first, thanks for the kind comments, and great to be here with you in person. It’s been a couple of years since we sat down, and great to see everybody.

Yes. One, I couldn't be more proud of what we've been doing at Bunge. It's just a great team, great team eff ort. And it's really a little bit of everything, Ken, that we've been able to touch. I mean we got really focused about running the portfolio where we were really relevant. We're the largest global oilseed crusher. We need to lead like an industry leader and have the origination and the distribution capabilities to support that and then really lean into our platforms around specialty fats and oils, our growing plant proteins business and then, of course, renewable feedstocks, and we'll talk more about all that.

But to do that, we had to get thoughtful about how we're going to run the right set of assets, and we're going to get the operating model in the right place. We're going to make sure our incentives are aligned, and the investor is first. And we're going to have the right discipline around the key financial drivers, and that's the deployment of long-lived capital and the daily risk management, managing the earnings at risk in our assets.

And big fixed assets like to run really hard, and that's getting the commercial teams and the risk teams and industrial teams working hand in glove in thinking about managing the risk appropriate with the earnings power that exists in that asset base as well as the environment that we're operating in because they both matter. And you get to keep those things. Those things are what we keep going forward.

We've improved the systems and the processes around that. And the new operating model got us completely focused externally. So we're not negotiating with ourselves. We're focused on our customers. And our customers exist at both ends of the supply chain. We've got the farmer on the one end, and we've got the consumer of food, feed and fuel on the other end, and that's whether it's B2B or B2C. And that focus is one that we're going to keep.

We are definitely in a better environment. And I'm glad we did a lot of that heavy lifting early on. And I can't say enough about the team when you think about -- I knew there was a trade war when we started the journey, as we talked about, but we didn't see ASF. We sure didn't see a pandemic.

And when you thought, well, nothing could get worse, and now we're dealing with war, something most people have never seen and inflation that most people have never seen. And I think it says something about the resilience of the global footprint of Bunge and what we've put in place from an operating model and a team to be able to perform in all of those while continuing to improve the asset base.

So I think I feel best when I hear a long-lived employee say, you know what, the environment is better. But if we hadn't made these changes, we would have never been able to perform like this. We never would have been able to solve these supply chain problems for our customers at both ends of the supply chain. We would have never been as agile and able to react and deliver for shareholders the way that we have. So super proud.

There's no doubt the cycles will always go up and down in these industries, but what we're going to make sure is that we can perform as well or better than anyone regardless of the cycle.

Kenneth Zaslow
Staying with the returns, the returns across the industry are phenomenal. Are you concerned about how high Bunge and the industry's return on invested capital are? Does it create more entrants into the industry? Does it create new capacity that can't be absorbed? And where do you think -- if there's new capacity, where it's going to come from? Is it going to come from outside the U.S., inside the U.S.? How do you think about that?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. As you started on the ROIC, and we're always chasing how -- for it to be better, but that's so that we can reinvest in the business, right? And it's now sending the signal – and you don't invest on spot margins, right? These are long-lived assets. They're going to run for decades. And so you've got to believe that the S&Ds are right to make those investments back in to serve the customers.

And that's what we're seeing. There is going to be investment by the industry. We're seeing a lot of that already announced in the U.S. and Canada. North America is going to get more than its share of that with what's going on in renewable diesel specifically and biofuels globally. But it's a place where we deserve to play.

We've got a network to plug our assets into. That lowers the risk. We should be able to build things as cheaply as anyone, and we should be able to commercialize them around the origination or around the marketing of the meal and oil versus a stand-alone plant. So the financial risk of doing that and the returns of plugging into a network, whether it's a greenfield or a brownfield, is very different for ourselves or the other big incumbents thana one-off .

Kenneth Zaslow
Just flipping a little bit. Your refined oil profitability started at like $300 million, then moved to $390 million, then moved into a -- now it's a run rate of $600 million. What changed? And is this a sustainable run rate? Or is this something that we would start to contract if capacity comes online in that -- in the pretreatment?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. We definitely feel like this is a new level and one that is sustainable for the next 2 to 3years. It may moderate some. But until pretreatment can be built by the industry and there's been a couple of projects canceled lately, it's not clear how fast it'll be built or how much. But there's a number of things that have improved across our business as well. Yes, we've seen some new demand from renewable diesel, but it's a pretty small amount of the volume so far. It hasn't really even ramped up yet.

The majority of our volume still goes to the food industry. So while refining premiums have improved, we've also improved our business, right? We've been thoughtful about the customers that we're serving. We're thoughtful about the SKUs at which products that we're operating, our SKUs on packaging.

All those things have simplified, have taken costs out and have opened capacity in this higher environment so that we can run at higher capacity utilization, run higher volumes and run at higher margins. So there's a lot of systemic change in our business that isn't just the external environment. And again, we'll get to keep that.

Kenneth Zaslow
Bunge announced a couple of quarters ago that it will accelerate growth CapEx to around$1.3 billion over the next 3 years. What are the key projects? What is the timing? And is it fair to assume a 15% return? And if I do that, it seems to be another $1 EPS over time. Does that appear correct? So a lot of questions rolled up there. You can unpack it however you like.

Gregory Heckman
That is your brand, Ken. I just want to be clear. That is your brand. Look, yes, you're in the ballpark. And I think what John would tell you, our CFO, as we look at deploying this capital, you've got to think about it a little differently. A de-bottlenecking project, right, may be in the high 20s. And a very strategic project that has lower risk might be in the low double digits. In total, we want to try to hit around that 15%. So you can get a little slippage in the kind of mid to slightly lower than mid-double digits or in the teens.

The projects that we've got, really, they're across all 4 platforms. And that's one of the big changes we made, right? It isn't putting money out to the regions and letting each region do the best project. We bring all the money to the center. And we've got all our businesses competing for the best project and where we put that to work.

And with, of course, what's happening on the renewable feedstock side, we'll continue to do some things. We'll add crush on both soy and soft. We're doing some things in our distribution network around the improving our origination and the distribution of meals and oils. There's going to be a lot of dislocation as the oil market adjusts to renewable diesel demand in the U.S. And being basic in all oils is shifting those global flows. That'll be a real opportunity for us. And then, of course, in our specialty fats and oils and plant protein businesses, continuing to grow with customers there. So...

Kenneth Zaslow
What I also like is that you're doubling capacity for the Chevron JV, but I don't think you’re putting any capital in there. So I'm assuming that is infinite returns, I guess. I don't know how to put it, but is that also a key contributor that will start to contribute to how you think about -- in your growth algorithm, say, 2023, 2024?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. We're super excited about the joint venture with Chevron. We just closed. Of course, now we're open book, and we're working end-to-end with them and looking at from the farmer in what we do, working with what they call the industrial plants kit, what we do to run our kit until we get to that veg oil of renewable feedstock. And then when they take it from there all the way to the retail fuel user, what they do in their kit and now starting to understand how working end-to-end the different levers that we can pull, how we create value together.

And then we think about the needs of that industry for the next 10 to 15 years as renewable feedstocks that they can do at scale are a big part of the liquid fuels transition for the energy companies and for Chevron. And we want to be part of that journey by engaging with Chevron in the energy industry.

So yes, they put the $600 million of cash, and we'll use that to double the capacity. It is a JV. We do have to share some profits with them. But we're excited about where that relationship can go and things that we'll begin to look to do maybe other places in the globe.

Kenneth Zaslow
Not to put extra pressure on you, but you do have more cash than you thought you would have, right? So does this mean that you would accelerate some of the Capex projects? Or is it, hey, we have labor constraints, we have shortages. It's just tough out there. We'd like to do it, but we can't? Like how do you kind of think about the extra cash that you have in your pocket? And how can you deploy it quicker?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. We're really excited about the position that we put the company in. One, we’ve shown we can execute. So I think people trust us now to start to put that capital to work. Two, we're not going to lose discipline. We're going to be very thoughtful. But as we’ve turned from clean up the portfolio, making divestments, we're focused on growth, and we’ve turned the team to that. And we've got the best slate of projects of organic growth and acquisitive targets that we've ever had.

And so as we think about putting that to work, everything is available to us, right? You saw we just raised the dividend 19%. We can buy back stock where we think that makes sense. And then, of course, the de-bottlenecking projects are already on the run. We're looking at brownfields and greenfields and then, of course, any M&A. And of course, as I went down that path, the dividends or the stock buybacks shift right now. The brownfields take little longer. The greenfields take the longest.

So even if we believe that margins will moderate in 2 to 3 years, we'll start to see the benefits of even the brownfields and the greenfields out there on that time horizon. And I know you've been asking, and so soon, we'll start to give you some more clarity and a little finer point on that, but that is why it's important that we put that capital to work.

And then the last would be around M&A. So if we see the right opportunities, a plant can come in quickly and be tucked right into our system. Something bigger, of course, it would be getting through regulatory before we start to see the benefit of that. But we think we'll have to pull all the levers. And we think we've not only got the cash on the balance sheet, but we've improved the credit status of the company. And so we've got a lot of dry powder also to unlock there in the debt side.

Kenneth Zaslow
Today, we've heard a lot about acquisitions. It sounds like we went through a very, very expensive period of time. That's why a lot of acquisitions didn't get done. Are you seeing any easing on valuations? Are you seeing more assets becoming available? I know there's one in South America, I think from the South Korean company, there's some other. Is there more M&A out there? Or is it just kind of like not that -- the valuation are too rich?

Gregory Heckman
I think one of the things that we saw in late 2008, 2009, 2010, when we went through maybe a similar time of very high price, very high price volatility, and one of the reasons that we are not in a rush to deploy all our capital, one, because it's a pretty dynamic environment and there's a lot of embedded optionality that we're able to mine out of our global network, and that's what we've been doing. We want to make sure we've got the liquidity and the working capital to do that.

Beyond that, that when we get in one of these cycles, as we've seen historically, there starts to become assets available. And assets at prices that make sense. But you're right, we're in a cycle, you need to keep your discipline. But there start to be people that have different things that they want to do. One, they've seen a period where it's difficult to operate. That'll have some people looking at that.

You'll have some families that are at positions that they want to do different things. You've got some people that have had success and want to take the money to the bank. And you've had other folks that maybe strategically haven't been able to see through and do the second stage of things they want, and it's a difficult operating environment they may exit. So I think we'll -- we are and we'll see more projects. I mean the stress creates opportunity.

Kenneth Zaslow
How far from your core competencies would you go? Like how -- does it have to be right down the fairway in terms of the things that you already do? Would you go one level out? Like how far would you be willing to explore on acquisitions?

Gregory Heckman
What's really important to us is we've got to be relevant to our customers, okay, to our customers at both end of the supply chain. And that says that you've got to be at a certain scale, especially in today's operating environment, as difficult as it is. So look, we're going to stay to what we're really, really good at. That's global oilseed crushing, that's origination, that's

distribution, the associated processing of some of the corn and wheat products where we can have scale to be relevant.

And then, of course, the platforms that we talked about, the specialty fats and oils, our lipids business, which is in place, the plant proteins, which is a growing business. And we grow hand in glove with our plant lipids business with the plant proteins. Those come together on the products. And then as we talked, the renewable feedstocks.

But those are, right, they're either in there or one ring of adjacency next to. And I think the thing we're really excited about in the renewable feedstocks, we don't even know what all the products and services are going to be there, right? We're doing things now on CoverCress, cover crop and developing that. And I think we're going to see a number of other things where this demand is going to be in place and sustained, and long-lived capital will be willing to go to work.

Innovation will go to work. Part of the demand will be solved by seed technology, some of it by expanding current industry. And ultimately, it's about the feed, food and fuel customers all want lower carbon index scores on their products. And eventually, we've got to get that value from the consumer back down and send the right signals to the producer and help the producer manage that risk and get the money to the producers, so they can change their practices at the farm gate, and we can share that value along the chain. And that's going to be exciting. And that is developing.

Kenneth Zaslow
So Bunge has been discussing its outlook based on mid-cycle earnings baseline. Never my favorite, to be honest with you. Even when the things are below, it's just never my favorite. What is the validity of assessing Bunge's outlook based on that? But more importantly, one of your competitors has framed its outlook more in terms of long-term growth potential rather than around the baseline EPS. Why do you believe the way you did it is the right way? Why do you not transition? How does this all work out? Because it becomes ahead scratcher for us on the other side.

Gregory Heckman
Yes. Well, there's no doubt, right, we had just made a lot of changes to the company, and we were right at the front end of Covid. And people wanted some guidance. They said, well, how should we think about the portfolio you're running now, the way that you say you're going to run it and the changes you've made, what should it make? So remember, it's an earnings framework, all right? So we put that framework in place and said based on this history, historical crush margins, here's what -- how you should think about it.

If you remember, it was $5 right then. Then as we begin to get some benefit of running it and kind of saw how Covid was going to play out, we've quickly moved it to $7. Again, a framework. The other thing was it had no growth Capex in it, right? So as we now are in an environment where we said, look, we're going to perform well above the $7 baseline in that earnings framework, so you got to adjust the framework for we've got higher soy crush margins that will be higher year-over-year again.

We've got higher soft seed crushing margins, and they'll be higher year-over-year again. We have refining premiums that we've given the visibility to that have improved not only in North America but now globally. And that's giving us the run rate for the next 2, 3 years in our refined specialty oils business. And now we're starting to see, of course, from the environment as well.

So as we now start to layer in those investments, then we'll start to communicate then what that does, the next step in the framework, what that investment based on the return, when it's commercialized, when it comes online, and how to think about that earnings going forward. And so you'll hear more from that -- from us on that soon. Soon to be defined.

Kenneth Zaslow
That's fair. But it does make sense to what we were kind of going at with all this capital spending, and there's a line underneath whatever as the cycles are going.

Gregory Heckman
Absolutely.

Kenneth Zaslow
And that's kind of what I was trying to get to. You did actually say that we just started the renewable diesel side of it. We've barely got any in the ground at this point. How long does this last? Does this current environment at all make it more likely that it lasts longer? Does it shorten it? How do you think of the renewable diesel's revolution or whatever you want to call it relative to where you thought about it 6 to 12 months ago?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. I think being the largest global oilseed crusher, we've had the benefit of talking with all the energy companies. And the one thing that is absolutely certain is that they see renewable feedstocks and vegetable oil as one of the levers that they can pull in the transition to a lower carbon business over the next 10 to 15 years in liquid fuels. And they've got real line of sight around the over-the-road fuels today.

But the things they are really looking at is where does it go with sustainable aviation fuel. Where does it go with private fleets that want to change to a green fuel because they can talk to their customers about it? And so they're making investments in assets, and it is gaining momentum. This is in place. It's more -- I think the more we learn, the more respect we have for it. And we're excited to have a great partner like Chevron. It's really opened our eyes to have that kind of partnership. It's not a supply relationship. We're partners.

Kenneth Zaslow
How do you think the renewable diesel will affect soybean oil? I mean -- or vegetable oil, I guess, is a better way of saying it. If you do the math, it looks like we would actually physically run out of vegetable oil, right, I mean, or the biodiesel facilities would have to go bankrupt. Something would have to give. It doesn't seem like this is a very likely -- we can't build and have this renewable diesel. There's not enough vegetable oil. How does it work? Do we have just more capacity being built? Do we have -- there's not enough land in the world. How is this resolved? How does this get resolved over the next 4 to 5 years?

Gregory Heckman
It's going to take a little bit of everything, right? We're going to add capacity in soy. There'll be soft seed capacity added. Cover crops will be developed. We believe some of the existing seeds will probably be technology changed to be able to grow soft seeds indifferent areas. You'll see expansion there. You may see some of the existing seeds at higher percent oil. And oil is going to carry a higher percent of the crush than it has. And you can reverse some flows, right? North America is not going to be an exporter. North America is going to be an

importer. You can see reformulation in food into different oils. So there's no one silver bullet, but there will be investment, and there will be innovation. And the price signals will be there, and the market will do its work.

Kenneth Zaslow
Look, the war in Ukraine is obviously horrible and -- but I kind of need to go through this. It seems like the inflation was obviously started by renewable diesel and you could say South American crop. But this Ukraine probably created an accelerant to it. Can you talk about how does it change the duration and magnitude of the ag cycle? Is there any thought of the duration of how long this cycle is going to last? And what will -- how many crops does it take to just fill this void that we don't even know how big it is?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. If we work backwards on that, we think we definitely need to make a big crop in North America this year, and then I think we need a big crop in South America next year. So I think we need 2 good cycles to start to alleviate some of the pressure. And I think the market is sending the signal to the farmers. Historically, if you look, farmers have responded with production, and we'll start to curb some demand, and we'll pull stock out. So market's starting to do its work there.

You're right, this definitely started with better demand. This was a demand-led market to begin with, and then we had the South America crop trimmed a little bit with weather. Canadian crop trimmed a little bit with weather. We've seen stronger China demand that looks like it's sustainable. And now the war, which is a horrible, horrible situation. We’ve got over 1,100 employees over there, and our thoughts are with them in the -- it's just spectacular what they've been able to do over there to -- all our facilities, of course, are shut down.

But where we can, we're trying to run a little bit and supplying vegetable oil for humanitarians, supplying wheat for -- to flour millers to create bread for humanitarian efforts and, of course, trying to open up some of the export lanes to the west on truck and rail, but it's a trickle, probably less than 10% as an industry. So let's -- that's not going to solve the problem. So that dislocation, until it is solved, definitely makes a tighter global situation.

Sun oil has been the most -- an already tight global situation on veg oils. The sun oil hole that, that's left has been probably the biggest shock and now feed grains and wheat as well. So it will elongate the tightness, the cycle of volatility and elevated prices. Can’t predict how -- when Ukraine will come back online. It will, long term. It's an important part of the world that's got to feed the world. It's going to be important production. And when it does, we'll have to assess what state the infrastructure is in, that we're already being able to produce beyond what the infrastructure was there.

So there's definitely been damage to roadways, railways, bridges. Luckily, not much -- it looks like not much damage in ports yet, but there will be a period of time to get it back up to speed in the investments and just untangling -- getting the mines out of the ports and untangling the logistical logjam of all the vessels that are there. So it's many months to get it back to not full capacity once we can assess that, and then there'll be investment in -- over time, and there'll be more visibility to how that will unfold.

Kenneth Zaslow
Is it fair to say it's -- you said two crops, but all this stuff , is it -- does it mean -- do you think it’s about a year to two years? Or I'm not holding you to it, but just trying to put a framework.

Gregory Heckman
I think we need two good crops in a row, and I think that's whether Ukraine is online or not. It's even -- there's less wiggle room depending on at what percent capacity Ukraine is online and being able to get the stocks out that are there now and to get the next crop, one, to produce the crop, what gets planted, what gets harvested, what are the yields and what can get out of the country. So a lot of flags, a lot of variables to watch.

Kenneth Zaslow
We've had a little debate on Brazilian margins. You guys have been a little cautious and saying, hey, look, we don't have the forward curve as much. It keeps on -- the margins seem to be pretty good, at least in the spot and even on the forward curve. So what are you seeing in the Brazilian market in the crush margin? Is it a little bit more sustainable than you thought? Is it the same as you think that you're just going to take the idea of like let's just keep to see how it goes? Is there anything that you're seeing specifically that should raise some warnings or anything like that to what we're seeing right this second?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. No doubt, with Ukraine offline, South America is even more important. And as you know, it's a big important part of our portfolio. We're in Brazil and Argentina. A couple of things have happened that, one, the demand that now is needing to be fed from that area, and the other with China in a slowdown right now because of Covid, which has actually taken some pressure off the global S&Ds, but that's allowed some additional bean supply in Brazil right now in South America, which has been helpful for margins. And so since we were together for Q1, margins out on the curve have improved a little bit in Brazil.

Kenneth Zaslow
And also on the Canadian and European side, how are you viewing those margin structure? I think we're still waiting for a rapeseed crop? Or how do you think about that in terms of the expectations?

Gregory Heckman
Sure. In Europe, soft seed margins have improved. And again, that's the tightness with the sun crush not running in Ukraine. And then margins have been better than we expected in Canada, even though there was a short crop. And then I think it's a case where the market set the price signals very early. Export was kept at home for the crushing industry.

Those sales were either washed out or replaced from other origins other than Canada. And so margins have been better than we expected. And then, of course, we need to have that canola crop produced. But if so, when we get the new crop, Q3 and Q4 should look pretty good on canola margins.

Kenneth Zaslow
What are your expectations for the sugar asset? We talked about it for a little bit, kind of been a little quiet. I think you're in that point that you have freedom now to do whatever you want with the asset, I believe, right? You've reached all the milestones and the checkpoints and the regulations and stuff like that. What's the thought on that? And how do we think about that?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. One, thanks to the team down there. They're doing a great job the way that the Bunge and BP teams have come together to be one team. They've got a better environment, and they're doing a great job running the business and it's performing very well. With the environment being better and their great performance, it's time to finish the second part of that strategy, which was to sell the asset.

So we'll continue to move forward. We're not going to change our view of that. We will divest of our half of that at the right time and at the right price. We don't have to have the last dollar. It's a strategic decision, but the environment is pretty good, and then we'll bring that cash back into the mother ship and put it to work.

Kenneth Zaslow
Would there be a designation into what it would be? I mean, again, we go back to the very first -- beginning of the conversation. You have more cash than you can deploy. Would that mean there would be an acceleration of either share repurchases or something that would not be -- because if you can't move the CapEx, is there a parallel of, hey, we get this much money, we have to deploy it right away? Or is it going to be, hey, let it sit on the balance sheet?

Gregory Heckman
No. I think it depends where we're at on the environment at the time and where we stand on the projects. But it goes back into the same capital allocation framework and decision-making. It just shows us how many -- how much dry powder we have to go to work with. So it's the debate we constantly have and think about which of the levers to pull, whether it's share buyback, whether it's dividend, whether it's a special dividend, if it's M&A. And quite frankly, the projects -- we're executing the projects as fast as we can.

Our limitation today is the same as everyone else, right? It's labor. It's our own internal resources. It's the human capital to execute the projects. It's the external resources to hire on engineering or labor to get projects done as well as the cost and other supply chain challenges. So we're sure not immune to the challenges all of you are facing.

Kenneth Zaslow
Wheat milling has always been one of those businesses that I kind of think about. Do you think this is a core competency? Do you need this asset? What's the long-term game here?

Gregory Heckman
Absolutely. It's a core competency. We're -- we've got a great milling asset base and customer base in South America. We're relevant there. We're of scale. And so you'll see us in wheat milling, where we can be relevant, where we can be of scale and where we‘re connected to the value chain.

So a big part of that, of course, is our farmer customer that we're buying wheat from in Brazil as well as in Argentina. A lot of that's important to our Argentine farmer that we're already buying a lot of soybeans and corn from. So that's -- we have a right to play there because we're relevant with the farmer customer on the origination and with the flour customers.

Kenneth Zaslow
And just staying with that for a second. You did divest a couple of businesses. As you kind of look through the portfolio, is there much more to do? Is there even a little bit of tweaking that still needs to be done in terms of asset sales? Or have you gotten your base to exactly where you want it? And as we talked about, the next step is really Capex and acquisitions?

Gregory Heckman
Yes. We did announce the sale of the Mexican milling business. It doesn't have all the same characteristics for us that I talked about in South America. That deal is yet to close after it gets through regulatory. We expect that to close this year. But then everything that we've announced is done with that in sugar.

Now look, we're in continuous improvement, but we're running the asset base we want. It's really about growth. We've turned to there. We'll always challenge our businesses, the least strategic and the lowest returning, to improve, right, to be more relevant, to be more strategic, to improve the returns. But that's that continuous improvement mindset. But it is really about the growth now. It's about putting the capital to work.

Kenneth Zaslow
Let me ask you this. I'll ask you but I'll ask again. Look, you've actually course corrected Bunge's ship. That was kind of what you were brought in to do. You're really there to kind of make this thing a better operation. It is there. What gets you excited? And what is your plan as part of the CEO beyond the year or two?

Gregory Heckman
Well, I'd tell you what gets me excited is our people and our customers and our investors, all the stakeholders, and helping this company get close to its full potential and then raising the bar and chasing the next one. It's been fun, right? It's been fun because our customers that we've been able to raise how they think about us. It's been fun because whether it's debt or equity, we've changed how people think about us and where we are in their rank and how they want to interact. It's exciting because our employees are really proud.

Our employees are really passionate about being Bunge and the changes that we've been able to make. And then the environment that we've made it are because of this great workforce, the people and how proud they are and the success that they're having. And they've got a taste for success and winning, and they like that. And nothing makes me happier than hearing that from long-lived employees that they're proud.

They see us, we're going to be the industry consolidator. We're going to be the person customers want to call before they do something. So what I get excited about is seeing how good we can really be, and we're not done. We're just getting started as we move into the growth phase and really looking forward to it.

Kenneth Zaslow
My last question I'll ask is, are you set up in a way that you'll have a legacy after -- not that we want you to leave anytime soon. But are there processes in place that somebody can walk in and continue the Bunge movement? Or do you think there is too much concentration of risk to a management team? How do you think about that? Because we've seen that over and over again through the years of as soon as the management team leaves, the processes aren't set

up. So are you setting up processes or it's kind of like, look, we just fixed the ship and now we got to just figure that out first?

Gregory Heckman
No. This is absolutely about creating the systemic change at Bunge, that this is about the culture and putting in the processes in the system that aren't as people dependent that frankly, it's always the people, but people need to have the tools to be able to help the business perform and serve customers the way that we need to.

So -- and then it's about creating an environment where we can continue to not only retain our best talent, but attract and develop the best talent and have it so when it's next person up, you don't feel the change. And it's our responsibility to have the right successors in place and to leave the company in the next -- the hands of the next people in better shape than we found it. So we're working really hard on that.

And the other thing we're doing, we're spending some real money now on digital and taking this 200-year-old company and taking it towards the future. And it's everywhere from managing our own information and putting information at people's fingertips to make decisions to help manage our earnings at risk. It's in the facilities and how to run them more efficiently.

And we're through AI and machine learning, and -- that the plant can make decisions faster than our best operator. And we're at the front end of those things. But there's real step change coming. And so we're going to continue to transform this company and make the investments that need to be to take it forward and really get it set for the next 200 years.

Kenneth Zaslow
Great. That's awesome. Thank you very much. That was fantastic.

Thank you.