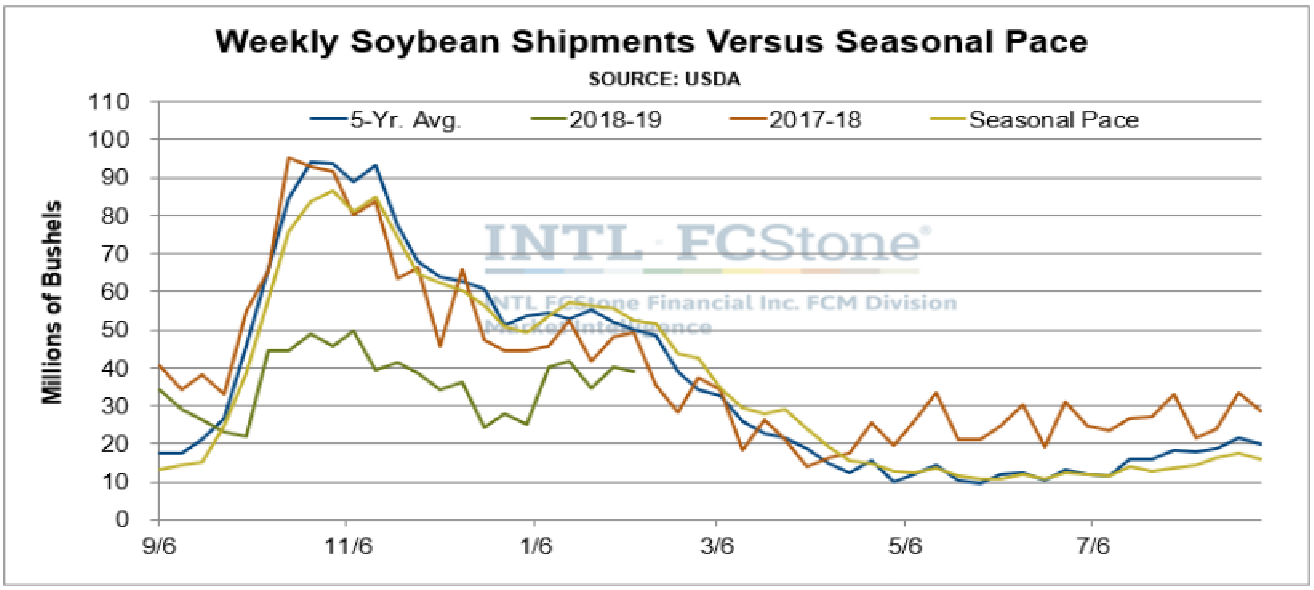
So we've arrived at the middle of this week and are already on the doorstep of the middle of February. You'll all be moving planters to the front of the shop for prep before we know it.

Grain markets continue to stay range bound, though the volatility from day to day seems to have escalated lately. We watched the grain market stage a pretty significant rally on Tuesday this week. The strength began in reaction to technical/chart signals being bought after previous lows held on Monday. Then trading confidence seemed to grow as the latest tweets and "unofficial" comments appear to favor good progress with China and on ideas that a solution was in hand that would avoid another government shutdown on Friday. Firming crude oil futures also helped support commodities.

The picture below paints the picture on the current soybean export shipment balances. As you can see, the US still has a lot of ground to make up and we're quickly moving into the time frame when South America becomes the world's origin of choice for soybeans.



Grain traders continue to keep a watchful eye on the corn/soybean new crop price ratios. The market has certainly not done anything that would jolt producers from normal rotation tendencies or from increasing soybean acres this spring. New crop beans above $9 continue to look like a good sale today.

Corn continues to enjoy the strongest long term fundamentals and there is little room for any major weather setbacks this spring, but near term, we've still got comfortable supplies and traders continue to hang their hopes on a large commitment from China for corn purchases. Producers need to be pro-active with their target offers for both old and new crop corn sales.