

#### 招商银行全资附属机构 A Wholly Owned Subsidiary Of China Merchants Bank

# **WH Group (288 HK)**

# 3Q19 NP +79%, China's packaged meat and fresh pork margins could continue in 4Q19E

3Q19 net profit surged 79% YoY to US\$357mn (vs -17% YoY in 1H19), driven by turnaround of US hog production and OP margin improvement of China's packaged meat and fresh pork segments. We think 3Q19 NP is better than market expectation (our FY19E NP is 8% above consensus). Management expects China market's high margins of packaged meat and fresh pork in 3Q19 could continue in 4Q19E. US hog production could be profitable in 4Q19E with hedging. Maintain BUY. Our TP is lifted from HK\$9.20 to HK\$9.60, based on 14.7x P/E.

- US market OP jumped 172% YoY to US\$207mn. (1) Hog production: Thanks to hedging, the segment turned around in 3Q19 with US\$88mn OP (vs 62mn loss in 1H19). (2) Fresh pork: the segment had slight loss of US\$5mn (vs US\$17mn OP in 3Q18). (3) Packaged meat: segment OP dropped 4% YoY as OP margin slightly narrowed 0.3ppt to 8.6%.
- China market OP rose 18% YoY to US\$284mn. (1) Packaged meat: though hog price surged, the segment saw 6% OP growth due to use of low-cost pork inventory and 4% price hike for >70% products in July. OPM recovered from 16.4% in 2Q19 to 21.6% in 3Q19 (-0.1ppt YoY). (2) Fresh pork: segment OP rocked 123% YoY as OP per head increased from RMB56 to RMB180. Although hog processed volume fell 28% due to slump of hog balance in China, the sales of low-cost inventory significantly improved OP.
- 4Q19E outlook. Management expects the high margins of China's fresh pork and packaged meat in 3Q19 could maintain in 4Q19E attributable to price increase in Nov/Dec and use of low-cost inventory. Shuanghui's inventory value further increased 8% QoQ in 3Q19. In US, hog production could be profitable with hedging in 4Q19. Price of US pork carcass trades at 73% discount to China's. China could import more pork so profitability of fresh pork could improve.
- 2020E outlook. Management anticipates China's hog price in 1H20 could be higher than 2H20, fresh pork profitability could be lower in FY20E due to higher hog price. In US, hog production's OP per head could be around US\$9-12 based on current futures prices. Management expects improvement in US fresh pork profitability in 2020E driven by China's pork import demand, investment in factory automation and improvement of factory work flow.
- Maintain Buy. We fine-tuned our FY19-21E adjusted net profit by 1% to factor in better packaged meat and fresh pork margins in China but lower hog production margin in US. Our SOTP-based TP is lifted from HK\$9.20 to HK\$9.60, represents 14.7x FY19E P/E. Catalyst: China reduces import tariffs or increases pork imports on US pork. Risk: Packaged meat and fresh pork margins below expectation.

#### **Earnings Summary**

<u> </u>					
(YE 31 Dec)	FY17A	FY18A	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E
Revenue (US\$ mn)	22,379	22,605	24,100	24,697	24,877
Net profit (US\$ mn)	1,127	1,047	1,231	1,325	1,356
Adj. net profit (US\$ mn)	1,090	1,046	1,231	1,325	1,356
Adj. EPS (US\$)	0.075	0.071	0.084	0.090	0.092
YoY growth (%)	1.0	(4.9)	17.5	7.5	2.3
Adj. P/E (x)	13.4	14.0	12.0	11.1	10.9
P/B (x)	0.27	0.20	0.29	0.32	0.32
Yield (%)	3.5	2.6	3.8	4.0	4.1
Adj. ROAE (%)	15.8	13.8	15.1	14.7	13.9
Net gearing (%)	22	30	24	16	9
Source: Company data, CMBIS	estimates				

# **BUY (Maintain)**

Target Price HK\$9.60 (Previous TP HK\$9.20)
Up/Downside +23%
Current Price HK\$7.82

#### **China Staples Sector**

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#### Stock Data

Mkt Cap (HK\$ mn)	115,038
Avg 3 mths t/o (HK\$ mn)	328.27
52w High/Low (HK\$)	9.95/ 5.27
Total Issued Shares (mn)	14,664.2
Source: Bloomberg	

#### **Shareholding Structure**

Rise Grand	35.94%
Source: HKEx	

#### Share Performance

	Absolute	Relative
1-mth	10.1%	7.1%
3-mth	-6.6%	-0.5%
6-mth	-13.3%	-3.7%

Source: Bloomberg

## 12-mth Price Performance



Source: Bloomberg

#### **Auditor: EY**

#### **Related Reports**

- "WH Group NDR takeaways; China market is improving in 3Q19E" – 25 Sep 2019
- 2. "WH Group US hog futures rallied as trade tensions ease" 14 Sep 2019
- 3. "WH Group Expect a better 2H19" 14 Aug 2019
- 4. "WH Group 1H19 preview; expect a better 2H19" 24 Jul 2019
- "WH Group US ham price up after Mexico dropped tariff" – 24 May 2019
- "WH Group 1Q19 net profit fell but earnings outlook still positive" – 30 Apr 2019



Figure 1: Earnings revision

	New				Old		Diff (%)			
US\$ mn	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	
Revenue	24,100	24,697	24,877	23,217	24,240	24,268	4%	2%	3%	
Gross Profit	4,596	4,942	5,013	4,604	4,958	5,008	0%	0%	0%	
Operating Profit	2,000	2,135	2,194	1,980	2,126	2,184	1%	0%	0%	
Adj. net profit	1,231	1,325	1,356	1,215	1,317	1,347	1%	1%	1%	
Gross Margin	19.1%	20.0%	20.1%	19.8%	20.5%	20.6%	-0.7ppt	-0.5ppt	-0.5ppt	
Operating Margin	8.3%	8.6%	8.8%	8.5%	8.8%	9.0%	-0.2ppt	-0.2ppt	-0.2ppt	
Net Margin	5.1%	5.4%	5.5%	5.2%	5.4%	5.6%	-0.1ppt	flat	-0.1ppt	

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates

Figure 2: CMBI estimates vs consensus

		CMBI			Consensus		Diff (%)			
US\$ mn	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	
Revenue	24,100	24,697	24,877	23,610	24,906	25,753	2%	-1%	-3%	
Gross Profit	4,596	4,942	5,013	4,608	4,893	5,185	0%	1%	-3%	
Operating Profit	2,000	2,135	2,194	1,815	1,972	2,087	10%	8%	5%	
Net profit	1,231	1,325	1,356	1,126	1,216	1,362	9%	9%	0%	
Gross Margin	19.1%	20.0%	20.1%	19.5%	19.6%	20.1%	-0.4ppt	+0.4ppt	flat	
Operating Margin	8.3%	8.6%	8.8%	7.7%	7.9%	8.1%	+0.6ppt	+0.7ppt	+0.7ppt	
Net Margin	5.1%	5.4%	5.5%	4.8%	4.9%	5.3%	+0.3ppt	+0.5ppt	+0.2ppt	

Source: Bloomberg, CMBIS estimates

Figure 3: SOTP-based valuation

Segment	FY19 P/E	FY19 net profit (US\$mn)	Valuation (US\$mn)	Remarks
US & Europe businesses	12.0	627.5	7,530	12x FY19E P/E
China business	17.6	603.5	10,622	30% discount on HK listed peers' average 25.1x FY19 P/E
Total			18,152	
Value per share (HK\$)			9.6	
Implied FY19 P/E			14.7	

Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIS estimates

Figure 4: P/E band



Source: Bloomberg, Company data, CMBIS estimates



Figure 5: 3Q19 results review

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Y/E Dec (US\$mn)	3Q19	3Q18	% change
Revenue by market	2 272	1 001	050/
China revenue	2,372	1,891	25%
Packaged meat	969	908	7%
Fresh pork	1,267	907	40%
Hog production	0	2	-100%
Others	136	74	84%
US revenue	3,093	3,052	1%
Packaged meat	1,793	1,813	-1%
Fresh pork	1,076	1,136	-5%
Hog production	224	103	117%
Europe revenue	601	473	27%
Packaged meat	245	222	10%
Fresh pork	258	165	56%
Hog production	15	10	50%
Others	83	76	9%
OP by market			
China OP	284	240	18%
Packaged meat	209	197	6%
Fresh pork	69	31	123%
Hog production	(3)	2	-250%
Others	9	10	-10%
US OP	207	76	172%
Packaged meat	155	162	-4%
Fresh pork	(5)	17	-129%
Hog production	88	(80)	-210%
Others	(31)	(23)	35%
Europe OP	39	25	56%
Packaged meat	19	12	58%
Fresh pork	(11)	(3)	267%
Hog production	30	13	131%
Others	1	3	-67%
Packaged meat margin (%)			
China	21.6	21.7	(0.1)
US	8.6	8.9	(0.1)
Europe	7.8	5.4	2.3
Revenue	6,066	5,416	400/
EBITDA	699	3,416 472	<b>12%</b>
	530	341	48%
Operating profit			55% 70%
Net profit Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMB	357	199	79%

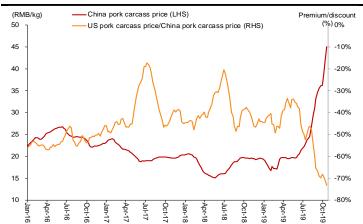
Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIS estimates



Figure 6: The discount of US pork carcass price to China's widened to 73% on 20 Oct 2019



Figure 7: The discount of US hog price to China's widened to 69% on 9 Oct 2019



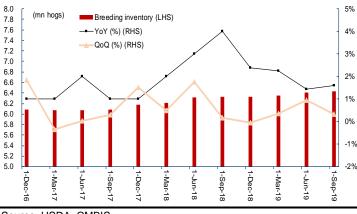


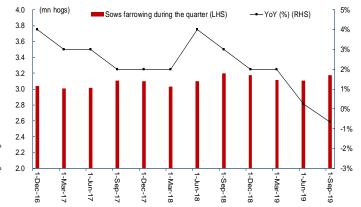
Source: Bloomberg, CMBIS

Source: Bloomberg, CMBIS

Figure 8: Growth of US breeding hog inventory was 2% in the quarter ended 1 Sep 2019

Figure 9: Number of sows farrowing during the quarter ended 1 Sep 2019 fell 1%

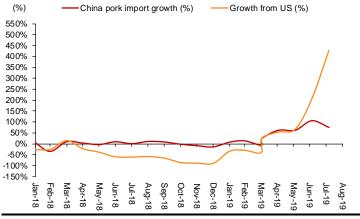


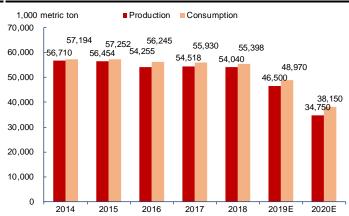


Source: USDA, CMBIS

Source: USDA, CMBIS

Figure 10: China's pork import from US jumped 426.5% Figure 11: China's pork import is estimated to grow by YoY in Aug 2019 67% and 35% in 2019E and 2020E



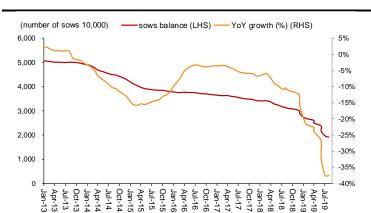


Source: WIND, CMBIS

Source: USDA

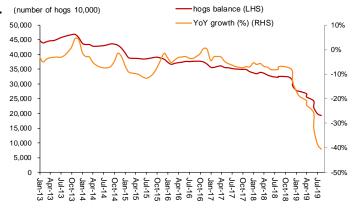


Figure 12: Sows balance in China fell 37% YoY in Sep 2019



Source: WIND, CMBIS

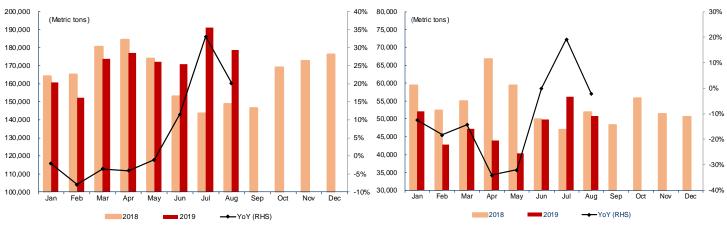
Figure 13: Hogs balance in China fell 41% YoY in Sep 2019



Source: WIND, CMBIS

Figure 14: US total pork export volume is recovering

Figure 15: US pork export volume to Mexico, its largest export destination, has recovered since 20% tariff eliminated in May 2019

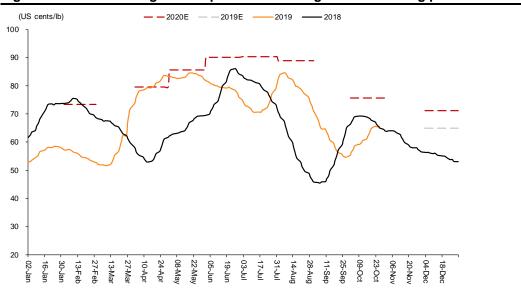


Source: US meat export federation

Source: US meat export federation



Figure 16: 2020E US hog futures prices are trading above 2019 hog price



Source: Bloomberg, CMBIS estimates

Figure 17: US fresh pork margin could be better YoY in Oct 2019



Source: Bloomberg



Figure 18: Major assumptions for US market

(US\$mn)	FY17	FY18	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E
Packaged meat segment					
External revenue	7,807	7,773	7,807	7,964	8,124
growth %	9.6%	-0.4%	0.4%	2.0%	2.0%
Sales volume (mn metric tons)	1.45	1.46	1.45	1.46	1.47
growth %	3.3%	0.9%	-0.5%	0.5%	1.0%
ASP (US\$/ton)	5,395	5,324	5,377	5,458	5,512
growth %	6.1%	-1.3%	1.0%	1.5%	1.0%
OP margin	9.3%	10.1%	10.7%	11.1%	11.3%
Fresh pork segment					
External revenue	4,961	4,790	5,021	5,325	5,085
growth %	11.7%	-3.4%	4.8%	6.0%	-4.5%
Hog processed (mn heads)	34.43	33.95	34.46	34.80	34.80
growth %	8.0%	-1.4%	1.5%	1.0%	0.0%
OP/head (US\$)	12.6	1.4	1.0	2.0	4.6
Hog production segment					
External revenue	510	619	689	724	695
growth %	-35.8%	21.4%	11.3%	5.1%	-4.0%
Hog produced (mn heads)	16.38	16.47	17.13	17.47	17.47
growth %	4.8%	0.5%	4.0%	2.0%	0.0%
OP/head (US\$)	(4.2)	(8.9)	4.0	14.0	5.0
Total external revenue	13,278	13,182	13,517	14,013	13,904
Packaged meat	7,807	7,773	7,807	7,964	8,124
Fresh pork	4,961	4,790	5,021	5,325	5,085
Hog production	510	619	689	724	695
Segment profit	923	615	846	1,097	1,056
growth %	3.9%	-33.4%	37.6%	29.6%	-3.7%
Packaged meat	726	785	836	884	919
Fresh pork	433	48	34	70	160
Hog production	(68)	(147)	69	245	87
Others	(168)	(71)	(92)	(102)	(110)
Segment profit margin	7.0%	4.7%	6.3%	7.8%	7.6%

Segment profit margin 7.0%
Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates



Figure 19: Major assumptions for China market

(US\$mn)	FY17	FY18	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E
Packaged meat segment					
External revenue	3,312	3,458	3,513	3,761	3,952
growth %	-1.0%	4.4%	1.6%	7.1%	5.1%
Sales volume (mn metric tons)	1.58	1.60	1.58	1.60	1.63
growth %	-1.4%	1.1%	-1.0%	1.0%	2.0%
ASP (Rmb/ton)	14,126	14,303	15,518	16,450	16,943
growth %	2.2%	1.3%	8.5%	6.0%	3.0%
OP margin %	20.9%	20.6%	18.9%	17.5%	20.0%
Fresh pork segment					
External revenue	3,888	3,584	4,361	3,943	3,767
growth %	<i>-7.3%</i>	-7.8%	21.7%	-9.6%	-4.5%
Hog processed (mn heads)	14.27	16.31	13.53	10.83	11.37
growth %	15.5%	14.3%	-17.0%	-20.0%	5.0%
OP/head (Rmb)	48.8	72.7	130.0	75.0	50.0
Hog production segment					
External revenue	11	8	7	7	7
growth %	-21.4%	-27.3%	-7.0%	0.8%	-9.0%
Hog produced (mn heads)	0.31	0.29	0.27	0.26	0.26
growth %	0.0%	-6.1%	-9.0%	-4.0%	0.0%
OP/head (Rmb)	498.0	113.0	-300.0	-200.0	-150.0
Total external revenue	7,446	7,328	8,224	8,087	8,139
Packaged meat	3,312	3,458	3,513	3,761	3,952
Fresh pork	3,888	3,584	4,361	3,943	3,767
Hog production	11	8	7	7	7
Others	235	278	342	376	414
Segment profit	525	922	942	809	912
growth %	-36.2%	75.6%	2.2%	-14.1%	12.8%
Packaged meat	692	712	664	658	790
Fresh pork	103	179	251	116	81
Hog production	23	5	(11)	(7)	(5)
Others	(293)	26	38	42	46
Segment profit margin	7.1%	12.6%	11.5%	10.0%	11.2%

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates



Figure 20: Major assumptions for Europe market

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(US\$mn)	FY17	FY18	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E
Packaged meat segment					
External revenue	658	916	971	1,072	1,163
growth %	8.4%	39.2%	6.0%	10.5%	8.5%
Sales volume (mn metric tons)	0.24	0.29	0.30	0.32	0.34
growth %	11.6%	18.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
ASP (EUR/ton)	3,105	3,818	3,627	3,881	4,075
growth %	-0.5%	23.0%	-5.0%	7.0%	5.0%
OP margin	2.6%	5.5%	5.7%	6.2%	6.7%
Fresh pork segment					
External revenue	677	762	909	993	1,086
growth %	24.7%	12.6%	19.3%	9.3%	9.4%
Hog processed (mn heads)	5.09	5.83	6.70	7.37	8.11
growth %	0.6%	14.6%	15.0%	10.0%	10.0%
OP/head (EUR)	2.5	3.9	-2.5	-4.5	-2.0
Hog production segment					
External revenue	51	61	70	73	70
growth %	41.7%	19.6%	14.1%	5.3%	-4.6%
Hog produced (mn heads)	3.53	4.17	4.34	4.47	4.60
growth %	8.9%	18.0%	4.0%	3.0%	3.0%
OP/head (EUR)	32.4	8.2	19.0	23.0	16.0
Total external revenue	1,655	2,095	2,359	2,598	2,834
Packaged meat	658	916	971	1,072	1,163
Fresh pork	677	762	909	993	1,086
Hog production	51	61	70	73	70
Others	269	356	409	458	514
Segment profit	135	113	133	150	147
growth %	75.3%	-16.3%	17.8%	13.0%	-2.5%
Packaged meat	17	50	55	67	78
Fresh pork	11	19	(15)	(29)	(14)
Hog production	101	29	73	89	62
Others	6	15	20	24	20
Segment profit margin	8.2%	5.4%	5.6%	5.8%	5.2%

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates



# **Financial Summary**

Income statement						Cash flow summary					
YE 31 Dec (US\$ mn)	FY17A	FY18A	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	YE 31 Dec (US\$ mn)	FY17A	FY18A	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E
Revenue	22,379	22,605	24,100	24,697	24,877	Profit before tax	1,501	1,411	1,795	1,964	2,025
China	7,446	7,328	8,224	8,087	8,139	Depreciation and amortization	394	441	469	501	514
US	13,278	13,182	13,517	14,013	13,904	Change in working capital	(321)	(570)	(341)	(65)	(2)
EUR	1,655	2,095	2,359	2,598	2,834	Others	(62)	(27)	(359)	(372)	(428)
Cost of sales	(17,766	(18,103	(19,504	(19,756	(19,864	Net cash from operating	1,512	1,255	1,564	2,028	2,109
Gross profit	4,613	4,502	4,596	4,942	5,013						
						Capex & investments	(530)	(811)	(800)	(600)	(600)
Other income and gains	113	98	86	88	95	Interest received	12	6	17	15	20
SG&A expenses	(2,753)	(2,871)	(2,683)	(2,895)	(2,914)	Others	(266)	(412)	(58)	(57)	(56)
Operating profit	1,973	1,729	2,000	2,135	2,194	Net cash from investing	(784)	(1,217)	(841)	(642)	(636)
Finance cost	(198)	(115)	(132)	(112)	(111)	Change of borrowings	64	4	0	(200)	(300)
Other expenses	(326)	(74)	(74)	(74)	(74)	Dividend paid	(668)	(795)	(447)	(728)	(790)
Other gains/(losses)	7	(21)	0	0	0	Others	13	1	0	0	0
Share of profit of associate	8	8	3	3	4	Net cash from financing	(591)	(790)	(447)	(928)	(1,090)
Share of profit of JV	14	23	18	20	22	_					
Profit before tax	1,478	1,550	1,815	1,973	2,035						
Income tax	(165)	(293)	(377)	(429)	(442)	Net change in cash	137	(752)	276	458	383
Non-controlling interests	(186)	(210)	(208)	(218)	(237)	Cash at the beginning	1,123	1,279	484	760	1,218
Net profit	1,127	1,047	1,231	1,325	1,356	Exchange difference	19	(43)	0	0	0
Adj. net profit	1,090	1,046	1,231	1,325	1,356	Cash at the end	1,279	484	760	1,218	1,601
-						Bank and cash balance	1,371	525	801	1,259	1,642
						Bank overdraft	(92)	(41)	(41)	(41)	(41)

Balance sheet						Key ratios					
YE 31 Dec (US\$ mn)	FY17A	FY18A	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E	YE 31 Dec	FY17A	FY18A	FY19E	FY20E	FY21E
Non-current assets	9,592	9,838	10,191	10,313	10,425	Sales mix (%)					
PPE	5,037	5,300	5,644	5,756	5,855	China	33.3	32.4	34.1	32.7	32.7
Goodwill	3,580	3,581	3,572	3,563	3,554	US	59.3	58.3	56.1	56.7	55.9
JV/associates	295	352	374	397	423	EUR	7.4	9.3	9.8	10.5	11.4
Others	680	605	601	597	593						
						P&L ratios (%)					
Current assets	5,666	5,460	6,305	6,848	7,256	Gross profit margin	20.6	19.9	19.1	20.0	20.1
Cash and pledged deposits	1,440	579	842	1,313	1,696	Operating profit margin	8.8	7.6	8.3	8.6	8.8
Inventory	1,905	2,022	2,505	2,538	2,552	Net profit margin	5.0	4.6	5.1	5.4	5.5
Trade receivables	989	1,135	1,210	1,240	1,249	Adj. net profit margin	4.9	4.6	5.1	5.4	5.5
Others	1,332	1,724	1,748	1,757	1,760	Payout ratio	44.7	40.0	45.0	45.0	45.0
Current liabilities	3,499	3,328	3,591	3,630	3,645	Balance sheet ratios					
Borrowings	901	860	960	960	960	Current ratio (x)	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.9	2.0
Trade payables	1,076	977	1,053	1,066	1,072	Receivables turnover days	15	17	18	18	18
Other payables	1,472	1,430	1,541	1,561	1,569	Payables turnover days	20	21	19	20	20
Others	50	61	38	43	44	Inventory turnover days	37	40	42	47	47
						Asset turnover (x)	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4
Non-current liabilities	3,537	3,552	3,496	3,313	3,019	Net gearing ratio (%)	22	30	24	16	9
Borrowings	2,297	2,259	2,159	1,959	1,659						
Deferred revenue	601	695	739	756	762	Returns (%)					
Others	639	598	598	598	598	Adj. ROAE	15.8	13.8	15.1	14.7	13.9
						Adj. ROAA	8.8	8.2	9.1	9.2	9.1
Minority Interest	777	672	808	846	885						
Total net assets	8,222	8,418	9,409	10,218	11,018	Per share data					
Shareholders' equity	7,445	7,746	8,602	9,373	10,132	Adj. EPS (US\$)	0.075	0.071	0.084	0.090	0.092
						DPS (HK\$)	0.27	0.20	0.29	0.32	0.32
						BVPS (US\$)	0.51	0.53	0.58	0.64	0.69

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates



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