A recent study from LIMRA found that 75% of variable annuity buyers, 83% of indexed annuity buyers and 86% of traditional fixed annuity buyers are satisfied with their purchase, according to its own release. Of those who claimed to be satisfied, 61% of the variable annuity households (61% for indexed and 50% for traditional fixed) own two or more annuities. The study also revealed that five out of six deferred annuity buyers would recommend an annuity to their friends or family.

The drought in the U.S. has revived the commodities trade following a sluggish start to 2012. The Standard & Poor's GSCI Index of 24 raw materials has jumped 21% from this year's lowest close on June 21, according to Bloomberg. Historically speaking, a gain of 20% of more qualifies as a bull market. Due to the drought, the grains have experienced the biggest jump in prices year-to-date with soybeans, wheat and corn up 45.0%, 36.9% and 27.7%, respectively, according to the CBOT. When you factor in the latest message from government leaders in China claiming that they now have the flexibility to stimulate their economy via monetary policy since inflation has eased, it could mean this rally has legs. For the week ended August 14, hedge fund managers were bullish on 18 U.S. futures and options contracts, according to data from the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The U.S. consumer credit default rate is currently at its lowest point since late 2007, which was just before the start of the financial crisis. Auto loan and second mortgage defaults are at their lowest levels since 2004. Bankcard and first mortgage defaults have not been this low since the second half of 2007. S&P Capital IQ believes these improvements are particularly encouraging considering the economic recovery has been a modest one.

International Data Corporation (IDC) estimates that 367 million PCs will be shipped globally in 2012, up 0.8% over units shipped in 2011, according to FoxBusiness.com. IDC estimates that worldwide PC shipment growth will average 7.1% from 2013-2016. PC sales have been under pressure as more consumers have opted for tablets and/or smartphones. Demand for PCs also softened due to a slowdown in global economic growth, especially in Q2'12. Sales are expected to remain subdued until Windows 8 products hit the shelves in Q4'12.