China | Industrials | Chemicals

20 May 2015

Jefferies

Bloomberg HKSE: 546 HK Reuters: 0546.HK Price target HK\$7.75 (from HK\$7.10) Price HK\$6.59

Fufeng Group Limited (546 нк) Second Price Increase in Two Months

Key Takeaway

Fufeng has adjusted its MSG prices again, the second time since late April. Excluding VAT, the current price of MSG is now between Rmb7,300/t and Rmb7,500/t, some 2% to 3% higher than the previous ASP. Unlike last month, the price increase was not in response to rising costs, implying an expansion in margins. We have increased our net profit forecasts by 9.9%, 7.9% and 7.3% for 2015E, 2016E and 2017E, respectively. We raise our target price to HK\$7.75.

Our recent discussion with Fufenq's management revealed that the company had just raised prices for MSG over the past couple of days. Excluding VAT, the current price of MSG is now between Rmb7,300/t and Rmb7,500/t. This compares to the previous range (set a month ago in April) of between Rmb7,180/t and Rmb7,265/t. In other words, the new ASP is some 2% to 3% higher than the previous ASP.

This is the second price increase in the past month, with the last increase occurring just a month ago. Previously, the company raised prices in line with the increase in the price of corn and hence the effect on margins was negligible. However, given that there was no large increase in corn prices recently (less than 0.5% increase over the last month), we believe this price increase would lift margins. Our 1H15 margin assumption is raised to 22.0% from 20.2%.

Valuation/Risks

We have increased our net profit forecasts by 9.9%, 7.9% and 7.3% for 2015E, 2016E and 2017E respectively. We retain our target multiple of 13x 2015E EPS. This 13x target multiple reflects the top end of Fufeng's historical one year forward PE trading range. Our new target price is HK\$7.75 compared to our previous target price of HK\$7.10. We maintain our Buy recommendation. The biggest risk to our forecasts is if the price increase does not stick and falls back to the previous levels.

Financial Summary	
Net Debt (MM):	Rmb3,554
Market Data	
52 Week Range 546 HK:	HK\$6.60 - HK\$2.63
Total Entprs. Value (MM) 546 HK:	HK\$18,196.4
Market Cap. (MM) 546 HK:	HK\$13,757.3
Shares Out. (MM) 546 HK:	2,087.6

RMB	Prev.	2014A	Prev.	2015E	Prev.	2016E	Prev.	2017E
Rev. (MM)		11,297.7	12,863.7	12,963.5	13,420.2	13,513.9	13,835.2	13,934.5
EBITDA (MM)		1,882.5	2,412.5	2,534.4	2,690.1	2,806.5	2,887.3	3,009.4
Net Profit		626.4	999.9	1,098.6	1,199.3	1,293.5	1,347.7	1,446.5
Dividend		0.06	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.13	0.14
Div. Yield		1.14%		2.08%		2.27%		2.65%
EPS								
H1		0.13	0.23	0.26	0.28	0.32	0.32	0.35
H2		0.16	0.20	0.21	0.23	0.24	0.26	0.27
FY Dec		0.29	0.43	0.47	0.51	0.55	0.57	0.61
FY P/E		18.2x		11.2x		9.6x		8.6x

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Scenarios

Target Investment Thesis

- Prices to remain at the current levels for the rest of the year. Selling volumes are forecast to grow at 7% YoY due to a low base in FY14 from plant relocation.
- Xanthan gum prices flat with current levels, with selling volumes falling 7% YoY
- Corn prices increasing by 5% YoY
- 2015FD EPS: Rmb0.47; Target Multiple: 13x; Target Price HK\$7.75

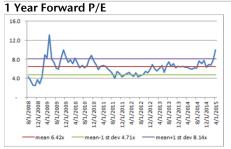
Upside Scenario

- In 2H15, the duopoly raises MSG prices by more than expected (5% from current levels) and Fufeng being able to produce 5% more MSG.
- In 2H15, xanthan gum prices increasing 5% from current levels and volumes flat with 2H14 levels
- Corn prices falling 20% YoY in 2H15.
- 2015 FD EPS: Rmb0.77; Target Multiple: 13x; Target Price: HK\$12.65

Downside Scenario

- Recent MSG price hike fails to stick and fall back to previous levels and Fufeng fails to regain the lost sales volumes form 2H14.
- Xanthan gum prices falling 10% from current levels but selling volumes falling 15% YoY.
- Corn prices increasing another 5% from current levels.
- 2015 FDEPS: Rmb0.27 Target Multiple: 13x Target Price: HK\$4.48

Long Term Analysis



Source: Bloomberg, Jefferies estimates

Long Term Financial Model Drivers

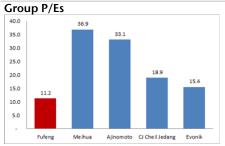
LT Earnings CAGR	32.2%
Organic Revenue Growth	7.2%
Acquisition Contribution	0%
Operating Margin Expansion	5.6ppt

Note: our LT earnings CAGR & organic revenue growth and operating margin expansion figures are calculated from FY14-17E.

Other Considerations

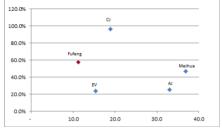
Should the Chinese government change its corn reserve policy, we could expect Fufeng to benefit from the expansion of its gross margins. That said, a reduction in corn prices could also entice producers who have exited, back into the market, which could drive MSG prices down. However, Fufeng should have a window of 6-12 months of super normal margins as these producers ramp up production in old lines.

Peer Group



Source: Bloomberg, Jefferies estimates

Earnings Growth vs P/E



Source: Bloomberg, Jefferies estimates

Recommendation / Price Target

<i>Ti</i> cker	Rec.	PT		
546 HK	Buy	HK\$7.75		
600873 CH	Hold	Rmb9.90		

Catalysts

- Another price hike, which may come in 3Q15
- 1H15 results announcement in April 2105 could draw market attention to the expansion in margins.
- The Chinese government may give more clarity to its corn reserve policy in 13Q15

Company Description

Fufeng is the world's largest manufacturer of monosodium glutamate (MSG). It is also diversifying into other biochemical products.

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Second price increase ahead of expectations

Our recent discussion with Fufeng's management revealed that the company had just raised prices for MSG over the past couple of days. Excluding VAT, the current price of MSG is now between Rmb7,300/t and Rmb7,500/t. This compares to the previous range (set a month ago in April) of between Rmb7,180/t and Rmb7,265/t. In other words, the new ASP is some 2% to 3% higher than the previous ASP.

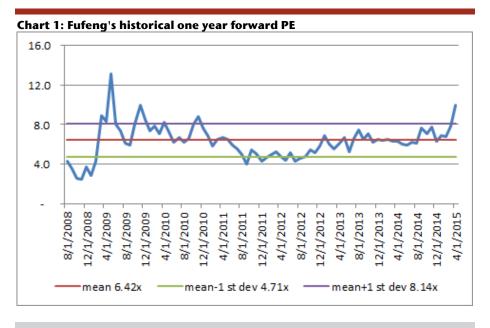
This is the second price increase in the past month, with the last increase occurring just a month ago. Previously, the company had raised prices in line with the increase in the price of corn and hence the effect on margins was negligible. However, given that there was no large increase in corn prices recently (less than 0.5% increase over the last month), we believe this price increase would lift margins.

Our 1H15 ASP assumption for MSG had been Rmb7,015/t and our gross margin forecast was 20.2%. Our new 1H15 ASP assumption is Rmb7,294/t and our gross margin forecast increases to 22.0%. This is also keeping in line with management's guidance of gross margins at between 20% and 22% for 2015. We note that although there may be an opportunity for another price increase later this year, we are not building it into our forecasts. Our 2H15 ASP assumption for MSG is Rmb7,398/t.

The ASP for Xantham gum was about Rmb18,000/t compared to our 1H15 forecast of Rmb19,568/t. We take this opportunity to adjust our ASP assumption.

Increasing our earnings forecasts and TP

We have increased our net profit forecasts by 9.9%, 7.9% and 7.3% for 2015E, 2016E and 2017E respectively. We retain our target multiple of 13x 2015E EPS. This 13x target multiple reflects the top end of Fufeng's historical one year forward PE trading range which we felt was appropriate given the earnings growth (75.4% YoY growth in 2105E) and the increasing liquidity from Chinese investors. Our new target price is HK\$7.75 compared to our previous target price of HK\$7.10. We maintain our Buy recommendation.



Source: Jefferies, Bloomberg

Target | Estimate Change

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Table 1: Summa	y or our ear	FY15E		-	Y16E			FY17E	
	New	Previous	Chg	New	Previous	Chg	New	Previous	Chg
Revenues	12,964	12,864	0.8%	13513.862	13,420	0.7%	13,935	13,835	0.7%
MSG	11,852	11,678	1.5%	12397.164	12,210	1.5%	12,795	12,601	1.5%
Xanthan Gum	1,111	1,186	-6.3%	1116.6986	1,210	-7.7%	1,139	1,234	-7.7%
Gross profit	2,860	2,729	4.8%	3,215	3,089	4.1%	3,447	3,315	4.0%
MSG	2,498	2,293	8.9%	2,859	2,641	8.2%	3,080	2,854	7.9%
Xanthan Gum	363	436	-16.8%	357	448	-20.4%	367	460	-20.3%
Gross margin	22.1%	21.2%		23.8%	23.0%		24.7%	24.0%	
MSG	21.1%	19.6%		23.1%	21.6%		24.1%	22.7%	
Xanthan Gum	32.6%	36.7%		31.9%	37.0%		32.2%	37.3%	
Other income	140	140	0.0%	140	140	0.0%	140	140	0.0%
Selling and distribution costs	(732)	(727)	0.8%	(784)	(778)	0.7%	(808)	(802)	0.7%
Gen and admin expenses	(480)	(476)	0.8%	(541)	(537)	0.7%	(557)	(553)	0.7%
Other expenses	(52)	(51)	0.8%	(54)	(54)	0.7%	(56)	(55)	0.7%
Operating profit	1,736	1,614	7.5%	1,977	1,861	6.3%	2,166	2,044	6.0%
Interest expense	(380)	(380)	0.0%	(380)	(380)	0.0%	(380)	(380)	0.0%
Pre-tax profit	1,356	1,234	9.9%	1,597	1,481	7.9%	1,786	1,664	7.3%
Tax	(258)	(235)	9.9%	(303)	(281)	7.9%	(339)	(316)	7.3%
Net profit	1,099	1,000	9.9%	1,294	1,199	7.9%	1,447	1,348	7.3%
FD EPS (Rmb)	0.472	0.431	9.4%	0.552	0.513	7.5%	0.614	0.574	7.1%

Table 2: Sumn	nary of our ke	y assumption	ons						
	FY15			FY16			FY16		
	New	Previous	Chg	New	Previous	Chg	New	Previous	Chg
MSG price (Rmb/t)	7,345	7,171	2.4%	7,621	7,438	2.5%	7,774	7,587	2.5%
MSG sales volumes (t)	994,745	994,745	0.0%	1,014,639	1,014,639	0.0%	1,034,932	1,034,932	0.0%
xanthan gum price (Rmb/t)	18,336	19,568	-6.3%	18,062	19,568	-7.7%	18,062	19,568	-7.7%
xanthan gum sales volumes (t)	60,612	60,612	0.0%	61,824	61,824	0.0%	63,061	63,061	0.0%

Source: Jefferies estimates

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Table 3: P&L statement year endi	FY12A	FY13A	FY14E	FY15E	FY16E	FY171
Revenues	11,112	11,367	11,298	12,964	13,514	13,935
MSG	10,046	9,912	9,950	11,852	12,397	12,795
Xantham Gum	1,066	1,454	1,348	1,111	1,117	1,139
	,	•	,	,		•
Cost of sales	(9,474)	(9,267)	(9,131)	(10,103)	(10,298)	(10,487)
Gross profits	1,637	2,099	2,167	2,860	3,215	3,447
MSG	1,146	1,252	1,456	2,498	2,859	3,080
Xantham Gum	491	848	710	363	357	367
Gross margins	14.7%	18.5%	19.2%	22.1%	23.8%	24.7%
MSG	11.4%	12.6%	14.6%	21.1%	23.1%	24.1%
Xantham Gum	46.0%	58.3%	52.7%	32.6%	31.9%	32.2%
Other income	129	152	193	140	140	140
Sales of waste products	76	61	58	60	60	60
Amortization of deferred income	38	50	57	60	60	60
Government grants relating to expenses	2	18	3	-	-	
Interest income	6	7	-	-	-	
Gain of disposal	-	3	46	-	-	
Foreign exchange	-	-	7	-	-	
Others	8	14	22	20	20	20
Selling and marketing expenses	(570)	(710)	(706)	(732)	(784)	(808)
Administrative expenses	(440)	(541)	(458)	(480)	(541)	(557)
Other operating expenses	(37)	(76)	(75)	(52)	(54)	(56)
Other gain	16	1	-	-	-	
Operating profit	735	925	1,120	1,736	1,977	2,166
ОРМ	6.6%	8.1%	9.9%	13.4%	14.6%	15.5%
EBITDA	1,230	1,574	1,882	2,534	2,807	3,009
EBITDA margins	11.1%	13.8%	16.7%	19.6%	20.8%	21.6%
Finance costs -net	(245)	(290)	(346)	(380)	(380)	(380)
Pretax income	490	635	774	1,356	1,597	1,786
Income tax expense	(64)	(129)	(148)	(258)	(303)	(339)
income tax rate	13.0%	20.3%	19.1%	19.0%	19.0%	19.0%
Profit attributable to shareholders	427	506	626	1,099	1,294	1,447
YoY changes	-29.4%	18.7%	23.8%	75.4%	17.7%	11.8%
Basic EPS	0.247	0.251	0.300	0.526	0.619	0.692
FD EPS	0.246	0.221	0.286	0.472	0.552	0.614
DPS	_	0.048	0.059	0.105	0.124	0.138

Source: Jefferies estimates, company data

Please see important disclosure information on pages 6 - 9 of this report.

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Company Description

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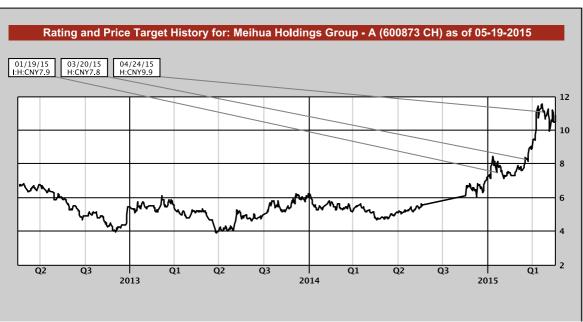
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			IB Serv./Past 12 Mos.		
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