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Neuberger Berman Commodities Fund

PORTFOLIO MANAGERS: HAKAN KAYA, PHD AND DAVID WAN

Past performance does not predict future returns.

PERFORMANCE (%) ¹	1m ²	3m ²	YTD ²	1y ²	3y ³	5y ³	10y ³	SI ^{3,4}
USD I Accumulating Class	3.84	-0.18	5.92	1.28	-	-	-	4.00
Benchmark (USD)	4.86	0.68	5.86	0.96	-	-	-	0.84

12 MONTH PERIODS (%) ¹	Sep14 Sep15	Sep15 Sep16	Sep16 Sep17	Sep17 Sep18	Sep18 Sep19	Sep19 Sep20	Sep20 Sep21	Sep21 Sep22	Sep22 Sep23	Sep23 Sep24
USD I Accumulating Class	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.00	1.28
Benchmark (USD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1.30	0.96

CALENDAR (%)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 ⁵	2023	2024 ⁶
USD I Accumulating Class	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12.00	-6.52	5.92
Benchmark (USD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.89	-7.91	5.86

The fund is actively managed, which means that the investments are selected at the discretion of the investment manager. The Benchmark is used for performance comparison purposes. The fund's investment policy restricts the extent to which the fund's holdings may deviate from the benchmark, but the fund is not exclusively limited to the securities of the benchmark.

¹Performance to latest month end. YTD - Year to Date, SI - Since Inception, m – month, y - year. 12 month period based on month end NAVs.

²Returns for these periods are cumulative.

³Returns are annualised for periods longer than one year.

⁴Returns from 09 February 2022 to latest month end.

⁵Data shown since the share class inception date.

⁶Performance for the current calendar year is the year to date.

Fund performance is representative of the USD I Accumulating Class and has been calculated to account for the deduction of fees. Investors who subscribe in a currency other than the base currency of the fund should note that returns may increase or decrease as a result of currency fluctuations. **Fund performance does not take account of any commission or costs incurred by investors when subscribing for or redeeming shares.**

Commodities Set for a Rebound: US Rate Cuts and Chinese Stimulus to Drive Demand Amid Low Inventories and Rising Geopolitical Risks

Key points:

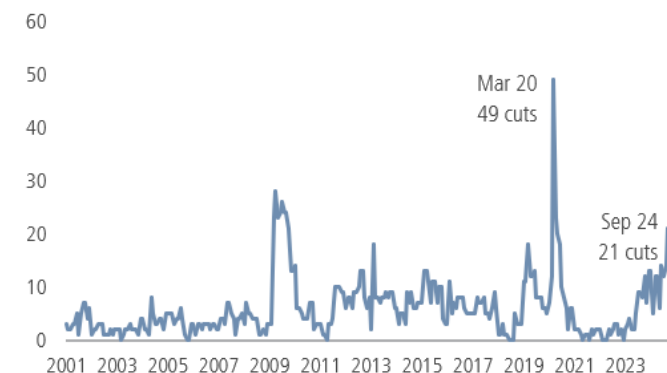
- **Monetary Policy Shift:** Realized and anticipated rate cuts and potential quantitative easing by the Federal Reserve are expected to boost liquidity, making commodities an attractive investment option.
- **Historical Trends:** Broad based commodities, especially gold, have historically performed well during late-cycle rate-cutting periods, serving as a hedge against inflation and monetary policy mistakes.
- **China's Policy Shifts:** Recent proactive measures by China to combat deflation are likely to increase demand for raw materials, supporting commodity markets.
- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Current Middle East conflicts highlight the volatility in the energy sector, suggesting potential opportunities as oil markets may rebound from pessimistic sentiment.
- **U.S. Elections Impact:** Regardless of the election outcome, continued populist policies are expected to drive inflationary pressures, enhancing the appeal of commodities as a hedge.
- **Trump vs. Harris Presidency:**
 - **Trump:** Potential focus on sanctions and Fed independence could boost gold as a safe-haven and oil as a speculative asset.
 - **Harris:** Acceleration of green initiatives may increase demand for metals like copper and silver while restricting shale oil supply.
- **Investment Strategy:** Diversifying portfolios with commodities is recommended to capitalize on macroeconomic and geopolitical developments.

Macro: What Happened? What Now?

Investing in commodities is becoming an increasingly attractive option, thanks to the prospect of improving liquidity driven by anticipated rate cuts. The Federal Reserve is expected to transition from its current tight policy to lower interest rates and potentially reintroduce quantitative easing. This shift would inject crucial liquidity into the global economy, making it cheaper and easier to finance commodity investments. With more dollars circulating, there will likely be an increase in capital flow into trade finance and emerging markets, boosting demand for commodities. This environment sets the stage for a significant rally in commodity prices.

FIGURE 1: SEPTEMBER 2024 IS THE BIGGEST MONTH OF MONETARY EASING SINCE APRIL 2020

Monthly global central bank policy rate cuts

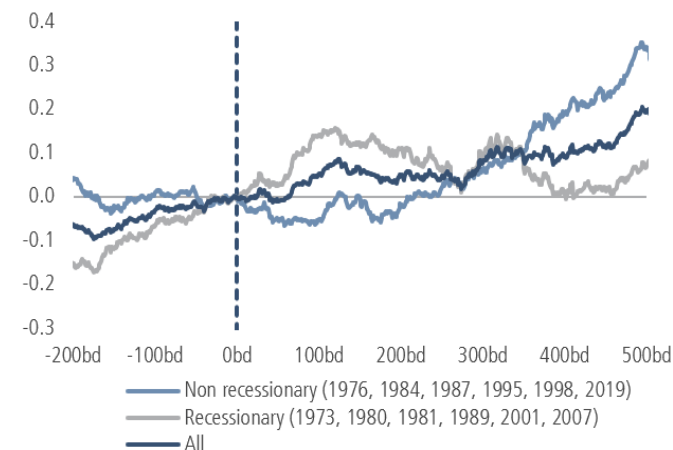


Source: BofA, Bloomberg

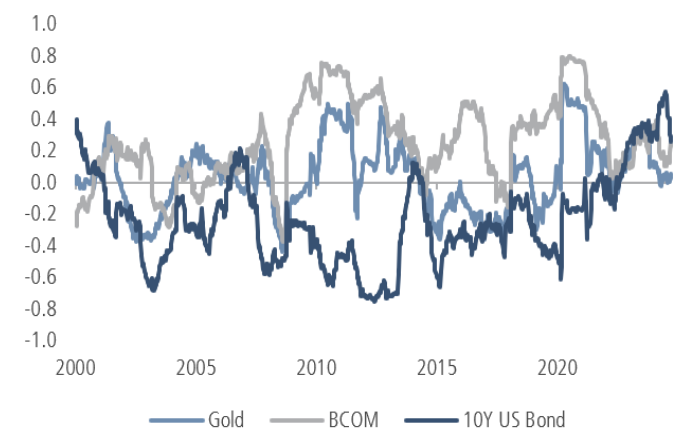
FIGURE 2: COMMODITIES BENEFIT FROM FED CUTTING CYCLES BUT WHICH COMMODITY DEPENDS ON GROWTH

Commodity performance around Fed cutting cycles is particularly sensitive to growth

S&P GSCI log performance, rebased to start day of Fed cutting cycles (since 1971)



Commodities can help diversify in the event of a rate shock and policy risks
12-month rolling correlation with S&P 500



Source: Bloomberg

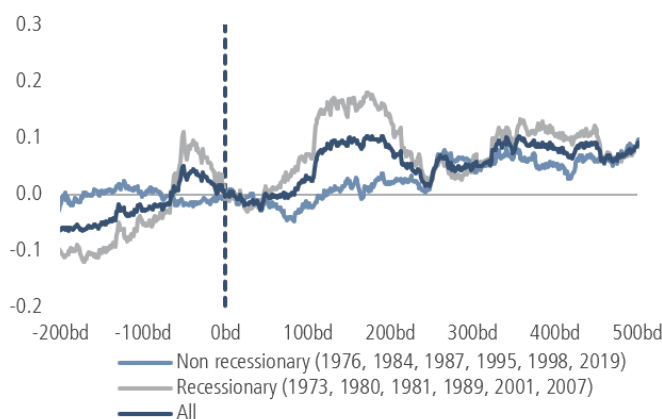
When we look to history for guidance, allocating to commodities during late-cycle phases shows clear benefits. As illustrated in Figure 2, broad-based commodities typically trend upward during late-cycle rate-cutting periods. Interestingly, when we separate these rate-cutting regimes into those with and without accompanying recessions, we find that commodities tend to perform exceptionally well when no recession is present.

However, it's important to highlight a potential risk: traditional assets can be vulnerable during these times. The reason? As growth resumes, long-term interest rates can rise, which may negatively impact bonds and interest rate-sensitive sectors like Tech.

So, even if it seems like the fight against inflation is over, it's not time to celebrate just yet. Commodities can serve as a valuable portfolio hedge against unexpected growth-driven inflation episodes.

FIGURE 3: GOLD CAN BE A PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE PORTFOLIO OVERLAY FOR A PRO-RISK ASSET ALLOCATION RIGHT NOW – IT TENDS TO PERFORM STRONGLY DURING FED CUTTING CYCLES WITH POOR GROWTH OUTCOMES

Fed cutting cycles can be supportive for gold if followed by weaker growth
Log performance of spot gold, rebased to start day of Fed cutting cycles (since 1971)



Precious metals' returns per the last three Fed cutting cycles

	May '00 – Mar '04	Jun '06 – Aug '11	Nov '18 – Aug '20
Gold ¹	+57%	+235%	+69%
Silver ²	+65%	+318%	+101%
Platinum ³	+71%	+87%	+63%
Palladium ⁴	+94%	+161%	+146%
S&P 500	-14%	+1%	+25%
Bloomberg U.S. Agg.	+41%	+42%	+19%

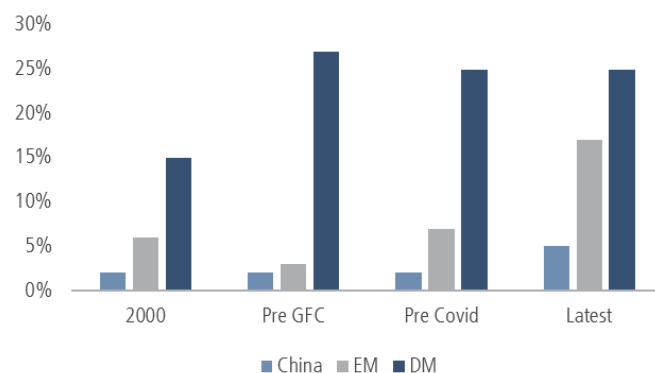
Source: Bloomberg, GSIR. ¹ Bloomberg gold price returns 5/25/2000–3/31/2004, 6/19/2006–8/22/2011, and 11/30/2018–8/6/2020. ² Bloomberg silver price returns 5/24/2000–4/6/2004, 6/15/2006–8/19/2011, and 11/19/2018–8/10/2020. ³ Bloomberg platinum price returns 5/23/2004–4/12/2004, 6/13/2006–3/5/2008, and 12/13/2018–2/15/2021. ⁴ Bloomberg palladium price returns 5/25/2000–1/26/2001, 6/20/2006–2/16/2011, and 12/3/2018–5/3/2021.

While broad-based commodities have proven beneficial during rate-cutting cycles, it's crucial to distinguish precious metals, especially gold, from the rest. As shown in Figure 3, gold provides strong protection against high inflation driven by losses in central bank credibility and geopolitical supply shocks, which could include trade tariffs in future scenarios. In such situations, the market anticipates that rate cuts might boost liquidity and money velocity significantly. This surge can be substantial and front-loaded, potentially leading to a monetary misstep. Gold stands out as a reliable asset to hedge against this risk to monetary credibility just like they did past three rate cutting cycles.

In recent letters, we've discussed the growing trend of central bank demand for gold. What was missing from the picture was the demand from Western investors. Until late May this year, they were net sellers, but they've now joined central banks in buying. This shift creates an interesting dynamic: with fewer willing sellers, as gold prices rise, gold proxy bets are likely to follow. We've seen evidence of this in the silver market, which jumped in price alongside gold. We anticipate that investors will soon turn their attention to other precious metals like platinum and palladium. These metals not only offer relative value compared to now expensive gold and silver but also have increased sensitivity to global growth, especially through demand from green infrastructure projects.

FIGURE 4: WESTERN INVESTMENT DEMAND FOR GOLD IS INCREASING BUT WHO IS WILLING TO SELL GOLD?

Gold reserves of China and other emerging markets are growing



Gold-backed ETP holdings vs gold price



Source: GSIR, World Gold Council, Vaneck, Bloomberg

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FIGURE 5: ARE WE WITNESSING CHINA'S WHATEVER IT TAKES MOMENT TO COMBAT DEFLATION TO MEET GROWTH TARGETS?

China GDP Deflator



China average real bank lending rate



China GDP growth rate vs. target



This brings us to the mother of all risks for commodities, China which as you can see from Figure 5 has been in a track to miss its growth target for the first time in a non-extraordinary year (2020 and 2022 were extraordinary in the sense that the economy was impacted by COVID). With that background, China's recent policy shifts are truly remarkable and signal a significant change from past approaches. The People's Bank of China has made unexpected moves by cutting policy rates and injecting substantial support into the stock market. This pivot marks a decisive shift from a cautious stance to actively combating deflation, setting the stage for

economic growth and increased commodity demand. These actions are unprecedented in recent history, highlighting the urgency and commitment of Chinese policymakers. By focusing on achieving their GDP growth target and stabilizing the housing market, they're creating ideal conditions for commodities to thrive. The anticipated increase in infrastructure projects and local government funding is likely to boost demand for raw materials, benefiting commodity markets. This proactive stance is not only addressing social and economic stability but also paving the way for a robust recovery. The scale and coordination of these measures are unlike anything seen in recent years, suggesting a strong potential for growth. As a result, we believe growth sensitive commodities from metals to energy are well-positioned to play a crucial role in China's economic resurgence, offering exciting opportunities for investment.

FIGURE 6: EXTREME PESSIMISM IN OIL PRICING AND ENERGY POSITIONING MAY NOT BE JUSTIFIED

Real WTI crude oil price (current \$)



Total Managed Money positioning in Energy (WTI crude, Brent, heating oil, gasoil and gasoline)



Given all this upward potential on macro backdrop, let's talk about oil. Right now, the negative sentiment around it is the most intense we've seen in thirteen years. Money managers haven't been this down on oil prices since 2011. By September 10th, they held only 92,344 long contracts. To give you some perspective, during the European Debt Crisis in 2011, they held 196,000 contracts.

In the 2014 crash, it was 228,000, and during the 2020 COVID lockdowns, 183,000. Historically, when sentiment hits such lows, oil prices have rebounded, with an average return of 25% trough to peak over the next six months. Smart contrarian investors have often taken advantage of these situations, going long when everyone else is pessimistic. This extreme positioning suggests a potential opportunity in the current market. Typically, investors allocate at least a small portion to energy as a hedge against geopolitical tensions or trade disruptions. The current low levels of oil ownership indicate that these usual hedges are temporarily being overlooked.

The energy sector remains crucial for hedging unexpected jumps in inflation, especially amidst the ongoing geopolitical tensions and market dynamics. Recent developments have underscored the importance of energy in both global politics and economic stability. The assassination of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah by Israel has introduced significant uncertainty in the region. This event, coupled with covert attacks and airstrikes, has raised questions about a potential Israeli ground invasion of southern Lebanon. Such geopolitical tensions can have profound effects on energy markets, influencing supply and demand dynamics across the globe.

Iran, a key player in the region, has shown reluctance to become directly involved in the Lebanon conflict. This is partly due to concerns that such involvement could provoke attacks on its nuclear facilities and vital economic assets, including oil infrastructure. The election of President Masoud Pezeshkian, who prioritizes economic improvement and sanctions relief, further supports this cautious stance. However, despite Iran's current restraint, the situation remains volatile.

The potential for conflict escalation always looms, with elements within the Revolutionary Guard possibly advocating for a more aggressive response. Additionally, Iran's nuclear advancements, as indicated by the International Atomic Energy Agency's report, suggest a possible sprint towards obtaining nuclear weapons. These developments could have significant implications for energy markets, as they might lead to increased volatility and potential supply disruptions.

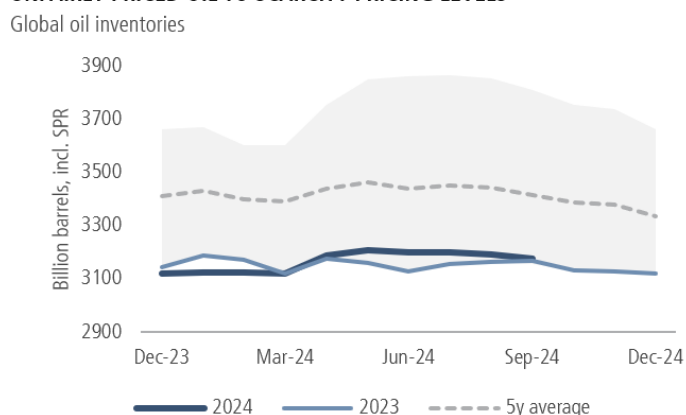
In light of these geopolitical risks, energy investments offer both challenges and opportunities. The sector's inherent volatility can be unsettling, yet it is this very volatility that can create lucrative investment opportunities.

We suspect that some oil market participants will look past this escalation given that there still has not been a major physical supply disruption and Iran has not demonstrated any appetite to enter this nearly year-long conflict. And yet, it is extremely difficult to see where this regional conflict is headed, and whether this is the

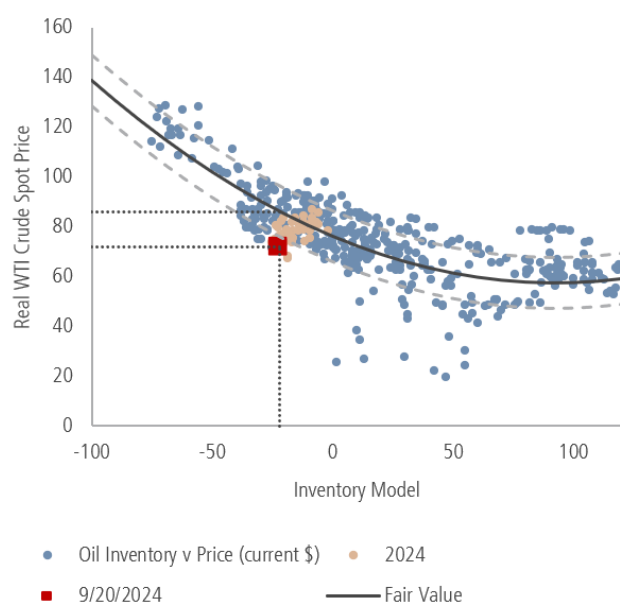
beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning.

We believe that investors should consider staying invested in energy through a properly diversified, volatility-managed basket due to its vital role in global economies and potential for significant returns amidst geopolitical uncertainty. While the next moves of Israel, Iran, or other players are unpredictable, preparation is key. As commodity portfolio managers, despite price-based pessimism, we see it as our duty to include geopolitically sensitive energy exposure in our portfolios to support investors' hedging strategies within their multi-asset portfolios especially when such a protection is cheap now as can be seen from our inventory based fair pricing projection below.

FIGURE 7: ANY UPTICK IN GLOBAL GROWTH OR SUPPLY LOSS WILL MEET ABNORMALLY LOW INVENTORIES WHICH CAN PROPEL UNFAIRLY PRICED OIL TO SCARCITY PRICING LEVELS



Fair value model of real WTI crude oil spot prices [points to \\$85 value](#)



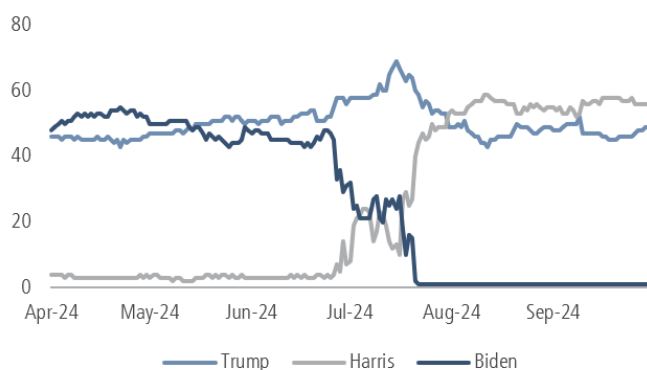
Source: Neuberger Berman, Bloomberg, EIA

This brings us to our final topic of US elections. Of course, predicting a winner in the upcoming U.S. elections is challenging, but both potential outcomes could be favorable for commodities. Regardless of the victor, the populist agendas seen under Trump and continued by Biden—focusing on social needs, economic protectionism, and wealth inequality—are likely to persist. Such policies typically involve increased spending on social needs, which can be inflationary. This inflationary environment often drives investors towards tangible assets like commodities as hedges.

If either party sweeps both the White House and Congress, markets might begin to factor in the risks of increased debt burdens. This could lead to inflationary pressures under potential financial repression, making commodities an attractive hedge. In a potential Trump presidency, while some expect a swift end to the Russia-Ukraine war, boosting energy supplies, this outcome is uncertain. The departure of Western expertise from Russia has already reduced its future energy production potential. Furthermore, Trump might enforce sanctions on Iranian and Venezuelan oil, which the current administration has overlooked, potentially keeping energy prices high. Additionally, there could be concerns about the Federal Reserve's independence under Trump. He might not retain Powell, and any new appointment could risk the Fed's credibility. In such a scenario, gold could serve as an excellent hedge.

FIGURE 8: US ELECTION RESULTS CAN MARGINALLY BENEFIT COMMODITIES IRRESPECTIVE OF THE WINNER

2024 election winning candidate betting odds



Source: Predictit, Bloomberg

Conversely, a Harris presidency could see a return to environmentally protective policies. While a Democratic administration might continue a lenient stance on sanctions without engaging Iran directly, local green policies could further limit shale production growth under the potential of reduced drilling permits. Moreover, a Democratic sweep might accelerate green capital expenditures on electric vehicles, grid infrastructure, and other renewable technologies without imposing tariffs that restrict global trade. This scenario could boost demand for metals like copper and silver, essential for these technologies, and biofuels.

Historical trends indicate a positive outlook for commodities

following elections. Gold, in particular, has often performed well due to investor uncertainty. Additionally, geopolitical tensions, such as potential U.S. engagement with Iran alongside Israel under a Trump presidency, could drive up prices for both gold and oil.

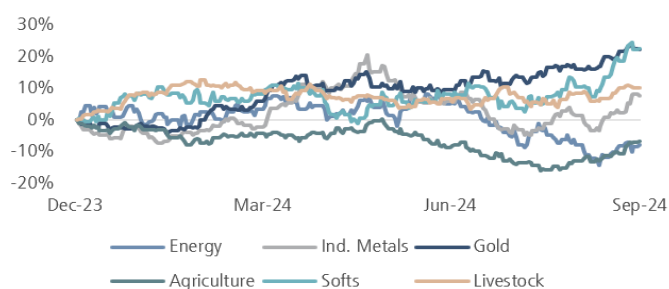
In conclusion, while the election outcome remains uncertain, both potential scenarios present risks and opportunities for commodities. Key winners could include gold, due to its safe-haven status; copper and silver, driven by green technology demand; and possibly energy commodities, depending on geopolitical developments and policy implementations.

Market Overview

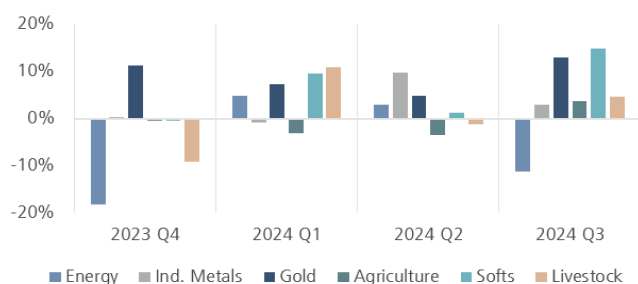
Global equities continued to rise in the third quarter of 2024, with both the MSCI World Index and the S&P 500 reaching new highs. This advance was fueled by the Federal Reserve finally joining the global rate-cutting cycle with a 50-basis points cut in September. And this occurred despite a sharp sell-off and heightened volatility in August, partly triggered by the Bank of Japan raising interest rates for the second time in 17 years coupled with weak economic data throughout the quarter. The U.S. economy grew at a 2.8% annualized pace in the second quarter of 2024 supported by strong consumer and government spending, nonresidential fixed investment, and a buildup of inventories. On the inflation front, the core PCE price index year-over-year ticked up slightly to 2.7% in August, still near its slowest pace in nearly three years. The Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index rose 5.20%. Meanwhile, the Bloomberg Commodity Index rose 0.68%, primarily fueled by gold, though all sectors besides energy rose on the quarter.

FIGURE 9: COMMODITIES HIGHER IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR

Bloomberg Commodity Index Sector Performance: January 2024 – September 2024



Bloomberg Commodity Index Sector: Last Four Quarters (As of September 30, 2024)



Source: Bloomberg. The underlying indices are based on the Bloomberg Commodity (BCOM) Index Total Return series for each sector.

Energy prices fell over the quarter. The Fund's overweight position in the energy sector contributed negatively to relative performance, primarily due to overweight positions across all subsectors of the energy complex, except for an underweight in natural gas, which positively contributed to relative performance.

Industrial metals prices rose over the quarter. The Fund benefited from excellent contract selection, which offset the negative impact of an allocation in the sector relative to the benchmark. Overweight positions in copper provided the most significant contributions within the sector. Although an underweight position in lead detracted, this was offset by solid contract selection in the commodity.

Precious metals surged over the quarter on an absolute basis. Sector allocation detracted from relative performance, particularly due to an underweight exposure to silver and an out-of-benchmark position in platinum.

Agricultural commodity prices declined over the quarter. The Fund benefited from an underweight exposure in corn and wheat which were sufficient to offset the negative contributions from overweight positions in Kansas wheat and bean oil.

Soft commodity prices rose over the quarter and was the best performing sector on an absolute basis. The Fund's overweight position in the sector was additive to relative performance despite suboptimal contract selection. The out-of-benchmark position in cocoa was the biggest contributor to relative performance within the sector.

Finally, livestock prices rose over the quarter. Despite an overweight position in the sector, relative performance was flat, offset by suboptimal contract selection in lean hogs.

Commodities: Your Strategic Hedge in a Volatile World

In conclusion, the current macroeconomic and geopolitical landscape presents a compelling case for investing in commodities. Anticipated rate cuts and potential shifts in U.S. monetary policy are poised to inject much-needed liquidity into the global economy, enhancing the attractiveness of commodities as an investment. Historical trends reveal that commodities, particularly gold, perform well during late-cycle rate-cutting periods, providing a hedge against inflation and monetary instability. Additionally, China's recent policy shifts signal a proactive approach to combating deflation, potentially boosting demand for raw materials and further supporting commodity markets.

Geopolitical tensions, especially in the Middle East, underscore the volatility and opportunity within the energy sector. Despite current pessimism around oil, historical patterns suggest a potential rebound, making energy investments a strategic hedge against geopolitical disruptions. Meanwhile, the U.S. elections add another

layer of complexity and opportunity. Regardless of the outcome, populist policies are expected to persist, driving inflationary pressures and enhancing the appeal of commodities as a hedge.

Both a Trump or Harris presidency could bring unique dynamics to the market. A Trump administration might focus on enforcing sanctions and questioning the Fed's independence, which could elevate gold's status as a hedge. Conversely, a Harris administration could accelerate green initiatives, boosting demand for metals like copper and silver. Thus, investors should consider diversifying their portfolios with commodities, given their potential to capitalize on these evolving economic and political conditions.

Keep it real with commodities!

NB Commodity Investment Team

Hakan Kaya

David Wan

David Waugh

Raphael Mettle

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