# **Global Commodity Markets**

COMMODITIES TEAM OF DECPG, WORLD BANK

monthly update

october 1999

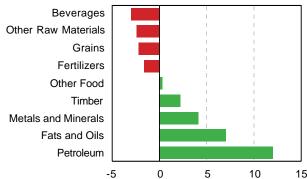
nergy and metals prices continued to rally in September, while agricultural prices remained depressed. The rebound in commodity prices appears to be picking up steam, with many commodities finding a reason to rally despite weak fundamentals.

Petroleum prices were up 12% in September, following a 6.7% increase in August. As anticipated, OPEC decided in September not to raise quotas before its next meeting in March 2000, which fueled the rally. Prices receded from their peak of around \$24/bbl on investment fund liquidation, but higher prices are expected this winter in the absence of higher oil production. Stocks are declining, particularly for crude oil, and could fall significantly over the peak-demand winter season.

Metals and minerals prices rose 4.1% in September, with nearly all metals and minerals prices higher. The increases were due to a number of supply reductions and anticipation of rising demand in Asia. Nickel prices rose 9% due to a strike in Canada and problems bringing on new capacity in Australia. Copper prices increased a further 6% because of announced supply cutbacks, but prices have receded from their peak as stocks remain near record levels. Gold prices soared above \$325/toz in early October, following an agreement by European central banks to limit their gold sales over the next five years.

## **Percentage Change in Price Indices**

August 1999 - September 1999

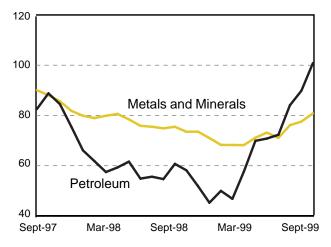


**Fertilizer prices were lower**, with phosphate fertilizer prices down significantly for the second consecutive month due to weak demand and large excess capacity. DAP prices were down 6% and TSP prices were down 2.5% in September. Other fertilizer prices remained largely unchanged.

Agricultural prices were up 0.2%, with wide variability in their price changes. Beef, coffee, and rice prices fell sharply, while palm oil, soybean meal, and sugar prices increased sharply. The wide variations in price changes reflect the uncertain nature of the outlook for agricultural commodities. Sugar, for example, had the largest price increase this month due in large part to the severe decline in prices over the past year.

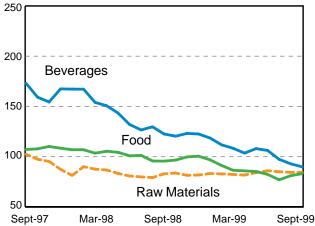
#### **Petroleum and Metals Price Indices**

September 1997 - 99 (1990 = 100)



### **Agriculture Price Indices**

September 1997 - 99 (1990 = 100)



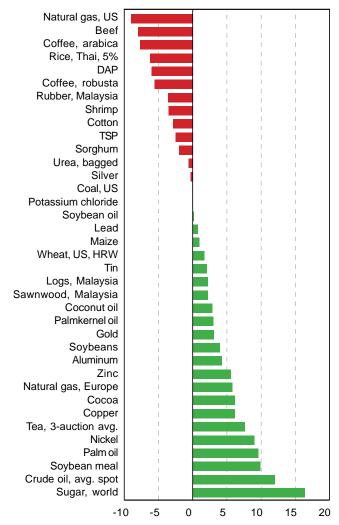
## **Major Movers in September**

**Arabica** and **robusta coffee** prices were down this month by 7.7% and 5.6%, respectively, mainly because the coffee markets are expecting another surplus in 1999/00. Production is estimated to reach 104 million bags, while consumption is expected to be around 99 million bags.

**Cocoa** prices went up 6.2% this month, following the 6-year low in August. It appears that cocoa prices have finally reached bottom, although recovery is unlikely any time soon since the market is still in surplus.

**Copper** prices rose a further 6% following announced cutbacks in the US this summer. Despite the improved market balance, stocks remain near record levels, and prices receded from their peak in mid-September on investment fund liquidation.

### Percentage Change in Price August 1999 - September 1999



**Crude oil** prices reached \$24/bbl during September, up more than 120% from February. OPEC's compliance has held up fairly well but reportedly slipped to 86% in September. Crude oil stocks continued to decline, and the main uncertainty is whether OPEC will raise output over the winter, when stocks are expected to decline sharply.

**Gold** prices shot up above \$325/toz in early October following an agreement by 15 European central banks to limit gold sales to 2,000 tons over the next five years, with annual sales held to about 400 tons per year. They also agreed notto expand their leasing of gold or derivative market activity. Short sellers were caught by surprise, and large short covering contributed significantly to the price rise.

**Natural gas** prices in **Europe** were up 6% because of the sharp rise in oil prices this year. European contract prices of imported gas are indexed to petroleum product prices, but with a lag of several months. Prices should escalate further in the coming months.

**Natural gas** prices in the **US** fell 9% in September, following the sharp weather-related increase in August. Inventories are below last year's high levels, but are relatively large by historical standards and should be ample heading into the winter season.

**Nickel** prices were up 9% as demand continues to outstrip supply and LME stocks fall further. Supply shortfalls have created the deficit although steel demand is also on the rise. A strike at Inco's Manitoba operations in Canada remains unsettled, and there have been problems bringing on new capacity in Australia.

**Palm oil** prices rebounded to \$388/ton in September, a 9.6% increase over August. Demand has finally picked up with India emerging as the dominant palm oil importer this season; it is expected to import 2.75 million tons, a record high.

**Rice** prices fell to \$229.3/ton on the surprise announcement that Indonesia was banning private sector imports of low and medium quality rice because of concerns that the private sector was selling imported rice to the domestic price support program.

**Rubber** prices went down another 3.6% this month, a new record low following good productions prospects combined with INRO's inability to intervene.

**Sugar** prices rose 16.4% in September, with most of the increase occurring at the end of August on higher than expected imports by Russia. Investment fund buying contributed to the price increase. However, large stocks and a record Brazilian crop preclude a sustained increase.

**Zinc** prices rose 6% on rising demand, relatively tight supplies, and falling LME stocks. New capacity in Australia has been delayed temporarily because of a strike.

				COM	MODIT	Y PRIC	CE	DAT	A					
			Quarterly Averages —			<del></del> -		Monthly Averages —				— Changes (%)—		
		Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep		Jul	Aug	Sep	Q3 '99/	Q3 '99/	Sep '99/	
Commodity	Unit	1998	1998	1999	1999	1999		1999	1999	1999	Q3 '98	Q2 '99	Aug '99	Sep '98
Energy														
Coal, Australia	\$/mt	27.76	26.43	26.10	26.10	26.10		26.10	26.10	26.10	-6.0	0.0	0.0	
Coal, US	\$/mt	34.04	33.50	33.50	33.17	33.00		33.00	33.00	33.00	-3.1	-0.5	0.0	
Crude oil, avg. spot*	\$/bbl	13.01	11.85	11.79	16.10	20.65		18.99	20.27	22.70	58.7	28.3	12.0	
Crude oil, Brent*	\$/bbl	12.42	11.09	11.24	15.40	20.54		19.01	20.22	22.40	65.4	33.4	10.8	67.
Crude oil, Dubai*	\$/bbl	12.41	11.56	11.07	15.26	19.69		17.88	19.34	21.84	58.7	29.0	12.9	67.
Crude oil, W. TX Int'I*	\$/bbl	14.16	12.90	13.05	17.66	21.73		20.07	21.25	23.86	53.5	23.0	12.3	59.
Natural gas, Europe	\$/mmbtu	2.37	2.15	1.99	1.89	2.09		2.00	2.08	2.20	-11.8	10.6	5.8	-5.
Natural gas, US	\$/mmbtu	2.01	1.91	1.81	2.23	2.55		2.31	2.79	2.54	26.9	14.3	-9.0	26.
Non-Energy Commodities	S													
Agriculture														
Beverages														
Cocoa**	¢/kg	169.5	159.1	139.4	113.6	105.7		111.3	99.8	106.1	-37.6	-6.9	6.2	-37.
Coffee, arabica**	¢/kg	259.2	252.4	238.0	235.5	198.8		209.1	201.4	185.9	-23.3	-15.6	-7.7	-24.
Coffee, robusta**	¢/kg	173.5	179.7	172.7	149.1	135.4		135.7	139.1	131.3	-22.0	-9.2	-5.6	-25.
Tea, Calcutta auctions**	¢/kg	214.5	190.0	162.3	223.4	223.6		241.4	212.5	217.0	4.2	0.1		
Tea, Colombo auctions**	¢/kg	197.3	181.4	160.3	145.9	168.2		160.3	167.8	176.6	-14.7	15.3	5.2	
Tea, Mombasa auctions**	¢/kg	171.2	164.6	180.3	175.1	175.8		166.5	166.4	194.5	2.7	0.4	16.9	
Food	3													
Fats and Oils														
Coconut oil**	\$/mt	662.0	740.3	736.0	832.3	681.3		656.0	684.0	704.0	2.9	-18.1	2.9	8.0
Copra	\$/mt	404.7	459.3	457.7	521.3	433.7		449.0	431.0	421.0	7.2	-16.8	-2.3	
Groundnut meal	\$/mt	108.0	105.0	102.3	n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a
Groundnut oil**	\$/mt	862.7	857.7	808.0	755.7	781.7		766.0	782.0	797.0	-9.4	3.4		
Palm oil**	\$/mt	679.3	679.3	563.3	458.7	353.7		319.0	354.0	388.0	-47.9	-22.9	9.6	
Palmkernel oil	\$/mt	694.3	741.0	704.7	729.0	656.7		571.0	689.0	710.0	-5.4	-22.7 -9.9	3.0	
Soybean meal**	\$/mt	149.0	160.7	145.7	140.0	152.3		138.0	152.0	167.0	2.2	8.8	9.9	15.2
,	\$/mt	606.3	606.3	492.3	426.7	406.3		392.0	413.0	414.0	-33.0	-4.8	0.2	
Soybean oil** Soybeans**	\$/IIIt \$/mt	224.3	229.0	210.3	200.0	196.3		183.0	199.0	207.0	-33.0 -12.5	-4.o -1.8	4.0	
	<b>Ф/III</b> L	224.3	229.0	210.3	200.0	190.3		103.0	199.0	207.0	-12.3	-1.0	4.0	-4.2
Grains Maize**	¢/mt	01.4	04.5	95.9	93.4	OF 4		04.0	0E 7	0/ F	4.0	0.4	1.0	0.1
	\$/mt	91.6	96.5			85.4		84.0	85.7	86.5	-6.8	-8.6		
Rice, Thai, 5%**	\$/mt	322.3	282.2	278.7	244.5	244.3		259.0	244.5	229.3	-24.2	-0.1		
Rice, Thai, 25%	\$/mt	273.7	257.7	239.6	211.6	217.9		231.0	220.3	202.5	-20.4	3.0		
Rice, Thai, 35%	\$/mt	262.1	251.6	232.9	205.9	212.7		225.0	215.3	197.8	-18.8	3.3		
Rice,Thai, A1.Special	\$/mt	225.6	238.5	214.2	189.5	201.1		216.0	202.8	184.5	-10.9	6.1		
Sorghum**	\$/mt	90.5	90.0	90.9	87.6	79.5		76.9	81.6	80.0	-12.1	-9.2		
Wheat, Canada	\$/mt	153.0	164.7	160.7	148.2	148.2		146.8	147.6	150.1	-3.2	-0.1		0.0
Wheat, US, HRW**	\$/mt	111.6	127.7	119.9	112.8	109.2		103.0	111.3	113.2	-2.2	-3.2		4.9
Wheat, US, SRW	\$/mt	95.3	109.0	99.5	96.4	93.4		85.3	92.8	102.1	-2.0	-3.1	10.0	5.9
Other Food														
Bananas**	\$/mt	456.5	520.1	479.3	444.0	406.4		411.6	412.1	395.5	-11.0	-8.5		
Beef**	¢/kg	166.7	166.2	177.1	175.6	192.5		179.6	207.3	190.7	15.5	9.7	-8.0	
Fishmeal	\$/mt	670.3	601.3	453.3	343.3	369.3		355.0	371.0	382.0	-44.9	7.6	3.0	
Lamb	¢/kg	251.1	264.2	247.0	263.2	267.1		264.0	269.2	268.0	6.4	1.5	-0.5	
Oranges**	\$/mt	516.3	415.1	420.3	458.6	474.8		460.3	492.4	471.9	-8.0	3.5	-4.2	-5.
Shrimp	¢/kg	1574	1427	1413	1470	1485		1499	1505	1452	-5.6	1.0	-3.5	-3.
Sugar, EU, domestic**	¢/kg	58.59	60.88	59.72	58.78	58.55		57.54	58.75	59.35	-0.1	-0.4	1.0	-0.4
Sugar, US, domestic**	¢/kg	49.10	48.27	49.45	49.88	47.01		49.82	46.85	44.36	-4.3	-5.8	-5.3	-8.3
Sugar, world**	¢/kg	17.92	17.34	15.40	12.63	13.06		11.86	12.63	14.70	-27.1	3.4	16.4	-7.8
Raw Materials														
Timber														
Logs, Cameroon	\$/cum	279.4	295.9	282.3	255.3	247.2		243.8	250.5	n.a.	-11.5	-3.2	n.a.	n.a
Logs, Malaysia**	\$/cum	140.7	162.0	175.3	178.4	195.9		186.5	198.4	202.8	39.2	9.8	2.2	35.0
Plywood	¢/sheet	344.3	395.2	426.4	429.9	443.4		423.6	441.8	464.8	28.8	3.1	5.2	
Sawnwood, Cameroon	\$/cum	519.2	532.0	461.5	424.4	441.8		424.7	444.4	456.2	-14.9	4.1	2.7	-14.0
Sawnwood, Malaysia**	\$/cum	465.5	519.8	544.3	582.8	632.9		625.9	629.4	643.4	35.9	8.6	2.2	
Woodpulp	\$/mt	507.5	458.3	447.6	491.5	510.1		507.4	511.5	511.5	0.5	3.8		
e e preside	44 4 <del>4</del>	207.0	.50.0			2.3				20	3.0	3.0		Continued

			COM	MODIT	Y PRI	CE D	ATA (con						
			Quarterly Averages — Mon							Changes (%)			
Commodity	Unit	Jul-Sep 1998	Oct-Dec 1998	Jan-Mar 1999	Apr-Jun 1999	Jul-Sep 1999	Jul 1999	Aug 1999	Sep 1999	Q3 '99/ Q3 '98	Q3 '99/ Q2 '99	Sep '99/ Aug '99	Sep '99 Sep '98
Non-Energy Commodities	(continued)											3	
Agriculture (continued)													
Other Raw Materials													
Cotton**	¢/kg	150.2	127.5	123.9	129.4	113.8	120.0	112.4	109.1	-24.2	-12.1	-2.9	-25
Jute	\$/mt	260.0	270.0	250.0	260.0	295.0	290.0	290.0	305.0	13.5	13.5	5.2	17
Rubber, Malaysia**	¢/kg	68.0	70.6	68.0	59.7	55.6	56.6	56.2	54.2	-18.1	-6.9	-3.6	-20
Rubber, NY	¢/kg	86.1	87.0	83.7	77.5	74.6	74.1	74.1	75.7	-13.4	-3.7	2.1	-11
Rubber, Singapore	¢/kg	68.3	69.0	65.5	59.9	55.9	55.9	54.9	56.9	-18.2	-6.7	3.7	-16
Sisal	\$/mt	850.0	850.0	779.2	731.7	647.5	680.0	650.0	612.5	-23.8	-11.5	-5.8	-27
Wool	¢/kg	313.0	307.2	301.4	307.8	309.0	310.0	316.5	300.6	-1.3	0.4	-5.0	5
Fertilizers	, i												
DAP	\$/mt	209.5	204.4	199.3	189.7	173.9	182.3	175.0	164.5	-17.0	-8.3	-6.0	-21
Phosphate rock**	\$/mt	43.0	43.0	44.0		44.0	44.0	44.0	44.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	
Potassium chloride	\$/mt	116.5	118.1	119.1		122.5	122.5	122.5	122.5	5.2	0.0	0.0	
TSP**	\$/mt	175.0	168.9	164.1	162.6	150.9	153.9	151.3	147.5	-13.8	-7.2	-2.5	
Urea, E. Europe, bagged	\$/mt	102.3	88.0	79.5		77.4	74.8	78.9	78.4	-24.4	1.9	-0.6	
Urea, E. Europe, bulk	\$/mt	84.8	68.3	67.6	64.6	66.1	63.6	68.0	66.7	-22.1	2.3	-1.9	
Metals and Minerals													
Aluminum**	\$/mt	1321	1283	1196	1306	1443	1404	1431	1492	9.2	10.5	4.3	11.
Copper**	\$/mt	1640	1545	1407		1679	1640	1648	1750	2.4	14.5	6.2	
Gold	\$/toz	288.7	293.9	286.8		259.2	256.1	256.7	264.7	-10.2	-5.2	3.1	
Iron ore**	¢/dmtu	29.69	29.69	26.96		26.96	26.96	26.96	26.96	-9.2	0.0	0.0	
Lead**	¢/kg	53.4	49.6	50.5		50.2	49.6	50.3	50.7	-6.0	-3.3	0.8	
Nickel**	\$/mt	4169	3961	4635		6392	5700	6449	7028	53.3	22.2	9.0	
Silver	¢/toz	522.0	495.8	530.2		526.7	522.8	529.4	527.9	0.9	2.2	-0.3	
Steel products (8) index***		73.4	69.0	64.1		70.4	68.5	70.7	72.1	-4.0	6.1	2.0	
Steel-cold rolled coilsheet		360.0	320.0	306.7	328.3	350.0	340.0	350.0	360.0	-2.8	6.6	2.9	
Steel-hot rolled coilsheet		270.0	236.7	206.7	223.3	263.3	240.0	270.0	280.0	-2.5	17.9	3.7	
Steel, rebar	\$/mt	233.3	240.0	230.0		240.0	240.0	240.0	240.0	2.9	4.3	0.0	
Steel, wire rod	\$/mt	336.7	326.7	293.3		290.0	290.0	290.0	290.0	-13.9	0.0	0.0	
Tin**	¢/kg	561.0	538.9	524.6		526.8	523.0	523.0	534.3	-6.1	-3.1	2.1	
Zinc**	¢/kg	102.3	95.6	99.3		113.2	107.2	113.1	119.4	10.6	11.0	5.6	
World Bank Commodity F	J						107.2	113.1	117.4	10.0	11.0	3.0	17.
Petroleum	TICC IIIdiccs	56.9	51.8	51.5		90.3	83.0	88.6	99.2	58.8	28.3	12.0	64
Non-Energy Commodities	5	95.2		89.8		86.3	85.6	86.2	87.2	-9.3	-1.7	1.1	
Agriculture		102.6	102.7	97.6		89.0	88.7	89.1	89.3	-13.2	-4.7	0.2	
Beverages		129.0	124.9	116.0		97.2	101.0	96.7	93.8	-24.7	-11.1	-3.0	
Food		101.1		95.3		84.6	81.3	85.2	87.2	-16.4	-4.5	2.4	
Fats and Oils		127.2	131.5	115.6		96.7	89.3	97.1	103.9	-24.0	-8.7	7.0	
Grains Other Food		98.3 81.4	96.5 82.4	94.3 79.3		83.8 75.1	84.3 73.1	84.4 75.9	82.6 76.2	-14.8 -7.7	-3.5 -0.3	-2.2 0.3	
Raw Materials		81.4	86.4	79.3 86.9		75. I 88. 7	89.1	88.5	76.2 88.6	4.5	-0.3	0.3	
Timber		86.3	96.7	101.7		117.7	115.8	117.3	119.9	36.3	8.8	2.2	
Other Raw Materials		83.9	79.4	76.8		68.9	70.8	68.8	67.2	-17.9	-7.2	-2.4	
Fertilizers		123.0	120.1	118.7	118.0	112.3	113.8	112.5	110.7	-8.7	-4.8	-1.6	
Metals and Minerals		74.5	72.0	67.7	71.2	77.3	75.3	76.7	79.9	3.7	8.6	4.1	6.

<sup>\*</sup>Included in the petroleum index. \*\*Included in the non-energy index. \*\*\*Steel not included in the non-energy index. \$ = U.S. dollar \$ = U.S. cent bbl = barrel cum = cubic meter dmtu = dry metric ton kg = kilogram mmbtu = million British thermal units mt = metric ton toz = troy ounce