

Evidence on the Negative Impact of Commodity Speculation by Academics, Analysts and Public Institutions

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Note: This list is constantly being updated and revised. It only collects evidence that supports a critical view of commodity speculation in general or certain elements of it.

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A) Academic peer reviewed journal articles

1) [Baffes, John \(The World Bank\) \(2011\): „The long-term implications of the 2007–08 commodity-price boom. *Development in Practice*, Vol. 21, Issue 4-5, pages 517-525.](#) „Demand by emerging economies is unlikely to put additional pressure on the prices of food commodities, although it may create such pressure indirectly through energy prices. The effect of biofuels on food prices has not been as great as originally thought, but the use of commodities by investment funds may have been partly responsible for the 2007–08 spike.“

2) [Chevallier, Julien \(University of Paris\) \(2012\): *Price relationships in crude oil futures: new evidence from CFTC disaggregated data. *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies*, August 2012.*](#) „we are able to highlight the influence of the CFTC “Money Managers” net position category (as a proxy of speculative trading) on the oil price at reasonable statistical confidence levels. (...) The policies being considered by the CFTC to put aggregate position limits on futures contracts and to increase the transparency of futures markets are moves in the right direction.“

3) [Cifarelli, Giulio \(University of Florenz\) / Paladino, Giovanna \(LUISS University / BIS\) \(2010\): *Oil price dynamics and speculation: A multivariate financial approach. *Energy Economics*, Vol. 32, Issue 2, March 2010, pages 363–372.*](#) „...we identify a significant role played by speculation in the oil market.“

4) [Du, Xiaodong / Yu, Cindy L. / Hayes, Dermott J. \(Iowa State University\) \(2011\): *Speculation and Volatility Spillover in the Crude Oil and Agricultural Commodity Markets: A Bayesian Analysis. *Energy Economics*, Vol. 33, Issue 3, May 2011, pages 497–503.*](#) „Speculation, scalping, and petroleum inventories are found to be important in explaining oil price variation.“

5) [Gilbert, Christopher \(Trento University\) \(2010\): *How to understand high food prices. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 61, Issue 2, pages 398–425.*](#) „By investing across the entire range of commodity futures, index-based investors appear to have inflated food commodity prices.“

6) [Gutierrez, Luciano \(University of Sassari\) \(2012\): *Speculative bubbles in agricultural commodity markets. *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 2012, pages 1-22.*](#) „We investigate whether commodity prices during the spike of 2007–2008 might have deviated from their intrinsic values based on market fundamentals. To do this, we use a bootstrap methodology to compute the finite sample distributions of recently proposed tests. Monte-Carlo simulations show that the bootstrap methodology works well, and allows us to identify explosive processes and collapsing bubbles for wheat, corn and rough rice. There was less evidence of exuberance in soya bean prices.“

7) [Kaufmann, Robert K. \(University of Boston\) \(2011\): *The role of market fundamentals and speculation in recent price changes for crude oil. *Energy Policy*, Volume 39, Issue 1, January 2011, Pages 105-115.*](#) „Although difficult to measure directly, I argue for the role of speculation based on the following: (1) a significant increase in private US crude oil inventories since 2004; (2) repeated and extended break-downs (starting in 2004) in the cointegrating relationship between spot and far month future prices that are inconsistent with the law of one price and arbitrage opportunities; and (3) statistical and predictive failures by an econometric model of oil prices that is based on market fundamentals. These changes are related to the behavior and impact of noise traders on asset prices to sketch mechanisms by which speculative expectations can affect crude oil prices.“

8) [Mayer, Jörg \(UNCTAD\) \(2012\): *The Growing Financialisation of Commodity Markets: Divergences between Index Investors and Money Managers. *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 48, Issue 6, pages 751-767.*](#) „During 2006–2009, index trader positions had a price impact for some agricultural commodities, as well as oil. During 2007–2008, money managers impacted prices for non-agricultural commodities, especially copper and oil.“

9) [Newman, Susan A. \(University of the Witwatersand\) \(2009\): *Financialization and Changes in the Social Relations along Commodity Chains: The Case of Coffee. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pages 539-559.*](#) „It is argued that increased financial investment on international commodity exchanges, together with market liberalization, have given rise to opportunities and challenges for actors in the coffee industry. Given the heterogeneity of market actors, these tend to exacerbate inequalities already present in the structure of production and marketing of coffee.“

10) [Nissanke, Machiko \(University of London\) \(2012\): *Commodity Market Linkages in the Global Financial Crisis: Excess Volatility and Development Impacts. *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 48, Issue 6, pages 732-750.*](#) „This article (...) suggests that a significant portion of the closely synchronised price dynamics in commodity and financial markets is explained by market liquidity cycles in global finance, as financial investors manage their portfolio at ease through ‘virtual’ stock holdings of commodities in derivatives dealings and markets.“

11) [Morana, Claudio \(University of Milano, Bicocca\) \(2012\): *Oil price dynamics, macro-finance interactions and the role of financial speculation. *Journal of Banking & Finance*, in press.*](#) „While we then find support to the demand side view of real oil price determination, we however also find a much larger role for financial shocks than previously noted in the literature.“

12) [Tokis, Damir \(ESC Rennes\) \(2011\): *Rational destabilizing speculation, positive feedback trading, and the oil bubble of 2008. *Energy Economics*, Vol. 39, Issue 4, April 2011, pages 2051–2061.*](#) „institutional investors that invest in crude oil to diversify their portfolios and/or hedge inflation can destabilize the interaction among commercial participants and liquidity-providing speculators.“

B) Research papers published by universities and public institutions

1) [Adämmer, Philipp / Bohl, Martin T. / Stephan, Patrick M. \(University of Münster\) \(2011\): *Speculative Bubbles in Agricultural Prices.*](#) „The empirical evidence is favorable for speculative bubbles in the corn and wheat price over the last decade.“

2) [Anderson, David et al. \(Texas University\) \(2008\): *The effects of ethanol on Texas food and feed.*](#) „Speculative fund activities in futures markets have led to more money in the markets and more volatility. Increased price volatility has encouraged wider trading limits. The end result has been the loss of the ability to use futures markets for price risk management due to the inability to finance margin requirements.“

- 3) [Algeri, Bernardina \(Bonn University\) \(2012\): Price Volatility, Speculation and Excessive Speculation in Commodity Markets: Sheep or Shepherd Behaviour?](#): „...this study shows that excessive speculation drives price volatility, and that often bilateral relationships exist between price volatility and speculation. (...) excessive speculation has driven price volatility for maize, rice, soybeans, and wheat in particular time frames, but the relationships are not always overlapping for all the considered commodities.“
- 4) [Baffes, John \(The World Bank\) / Haniotis, Tassos \(European Commission\) \(2010\): Placing the 2006/08 Commodities Boom into Perspective. World Bank Research Working Paper 5371](#): “We conjecture that index fund activity (one type of “speculative” activity among the many that the literature refers to) played a key role during the 2008 price spike. Biofuels played some role too, but much less than initially thought. And we find no evidence that alleged stronger demand by emerging economies had any effect on world prices.“
- 5) [Bass, Hans H. \(University of Bremen\) \(2011\): Finanzmärkte als Hungerverursacher? Studie für Welthungerhilfe e.V.](#): „Das Engagement der Kapitalanleger auf den Getreidemärkten führte nach unseren Berechnungen in den Jahren 2007 bis 2009 im Jahresdurchschnitt zu einem Spielraum für Preisniveauerhöhungen von bis zu 15 Prozent.“
- 6) [Basu, Parantap / Gavin, William T. \(Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis\) \(2011\): What explains the Growth in Commodity Derivatives?](#): “Banks argue that they need to use commodity derivatives to help customers manage risks. This may be true, but the recent experience in commodity futures did not reduce risks but exacerbated them just at the wrong time.“
- 7) [Belke, Ansgar \(IZA/University Duisburg-Essen\) / Bordon, Ingo G. \(University Duisburg-Essen\) / Volz, Ulrich \(German Development Institute\) \(2012\): Effects of Global Liquidity on Commodity and Food Prices](#): “Over the period that we observed, 1980-2011, food and commodity price inflation were apparently driven by monetary expansion in the world’s major economies. Our results can be seen as supporting the view of a “financialisation of commodities” (...) Policy makers should take into account the negative side effects of loose monetary policy and consider stricter regulation of food and commodity markets –such as the imposition of tighter limits on speculative positions in food commodities – to prevent a further flow of liquidity into these markets.“
- 8) [Bicchetti, David / Maystre, Nicolas \(UNCTAD\) \(2012\): The synchronized and long-lasting structural change on commodity markets: evidence from high frequency data](#): „we document a synchronized structural break, characterized by a departure from zero, which starts in the course of 2008 and continues thereafter. This is consistent with the idea that recent financial innovations on commodity futures exchanges, in particular the high frequency trading activities and algorithm strategies have an impact on these correlations.“
- 9) [Boos, Jaap W.B. \(Universität Maastricht, School of Business and Economics\) / van der Moolen, Maarten \(Rabobank\) \(2012\): A Bitter Brew? Futures Speculation and Commodity Prices](#): “speculation is an important part of the coffee price generation process.“
- 10) [Borin, Alessandro / Di Nino, Virginia \(Bank of Italy\) \(2012\): The role of financial investments in agricultural commodity derivatives markets](#): „this result gives some support to the idea that swap dealers, whose growing weight in the regulated exchanges tends to reflect the large exposures of “commodity index investors” in the OTC markets, may have a destabilizing impact on futures prices, at least in the short run. On the contrary, the activity of more traditional speculators seems to favour price stability, probably enhancing market liquidity.“
- 11) [Büyüksahin, Bahattin \(International Energy Agency\) / Robe, Michel A \(American University\) \(2010\): Speculators, Commodities and Cross-Market Linkages](#): “We then show that the correlations between the returns on investable commodity and equity indices increase amid greater participation by speculators generally and hedge funds especially.“
- 12) [Cheng, Ing-Haw \(University of Michigan\) / Kirilenko, Andrei \(CFTC\) / Xiong, Wei \(Princeton University\) \(2012\): Convective Risk Flows in Commodity Futures Markets](#): „We find that CITs and hedge fund positions reacted negatively to the VIX during the recent financial crisis... Consistent with theories suggesting this is related to the distress of financial institutions, we
- find that CITs with high CDS spreads are more sensitive to movements in the VIX. Contrary to the hedging pressure hypothesis, we do not find that hedgers increased their hedges as the VIX rose. Finally, the findings show that the reactions of all trader groups were persistent over time. This evidence suggests that during times of distress, there was a flow of risk away from financial institutions back towards commercial hedgers.“
- 13) [Cooke, Bryce / Robles, Miguel \(IFPRI\) \(2009\): Recent Food Prices Movements. A Time Series Analysis](#): “Overall, our empirical analysis mainly provides evidence that financial activity in futures markets and proxies for speculation can help explain the observed change in food prices; any other explanation is not well supported by our time series analysis.“
- 14) [Dorfman, Jeffrey H. / Karali, Berna \(University of Georgia\) \(2012\): Have Commodity Index Funds Increased Price linkages between Commodities?](#): “In combination with our results on correlation coefficients and non-stationarity, these empirical results are indicative, but not fully convincing, of the growth of commodity index funds impacting commodity futures market linkages over the last eight years.“
- 15) [Doroudian, Ali / Vercammen, James \(University of British Columbia\) \(2012\): First and Second Order Impacts of Speculation and Commodity Price Volatility](#): „Both of these results are consistent with the theoretical arguments that speculation which involves large-scale institutional investment can have first and second order impacts on commodity price volatility.“
- 16) [Eckaus, R.S. \(MIT\) \(2008\): The Oil Price Really Is A Speculative Bubble](#): “Since there is no reason based on current and expected supply and demand that justifies the current price of oil, what is left? The oil price is a speculative bubble.“
- 17) [Einloth, James T. \(FDIC\) \(2009\): Speculation and Recent Volatility in the Price of Oil](#): “The paper finds the evidence inconsistent with speculation having played a major role in the rise of price to \$100 per barrel in March 2008. However, the evidence suggests that speculation did play a role in its subsequent rise to \$140.“
- 18) [Gilbert, Christopher \(Trento University\) \(2010\): Speculative Influences on Commodity Futures Prices](#): “The results ... indicate that index-based investment in commodity futures may have been responsible for a significant and bubble-like increase of energy and non-ferrous metals prices, although the estimated impact on agricultural prices is smaller.“
- 19) [Gilbert, Christopher / Pfuderer, Simone \(University of Trento\) \(2012\): Index Funds Do Impact Agricultural Prices](#): „We use Granger-causality methods to re-examine the data analyzed in Sanders and Irwin (2011a). Our analysis supports their conclusion that no impacts are discernible for the four grains markets they consider. However, Granger-causality is established in the less liquid soybean oil and livestock markets. We conjecture that index investment does also have price impact in liquid markets but that market efficiency prevents the detection of this impact using Granger-causality tests.“
- 20) [Girardi, Daniele \(University of Siena\) \(2011\): Do financial investors affect commodity prices? The case of Hard Red Winter Wheat](#): “Our empirical analysis suggests that financial investors played an important role in affecting wheat price fluctuations in recent years. In particular they seem to have linked wheat price dynamics to US equity market returns and to oil price movements.“
- 21) [Ghosh, Jayati \(Jawaharlal Nehru University\) \(2010\): Commodity speculation and the food crisis](#): “Thus international commodity markets increasingly began to develop many of the features of financial markets, in that they became prone to information asymmetries and associated tendencies to be led by a small number of large players. Far from being ‘efficient markets’ in the sense hoped for by mainstream theory, they allowed for inherently ‘wrong’ signalling devices to become very effective in determining and manipulating market behaviour. The result was the excessive price volatility that has been displayed by important commodities over the recent period – not only the food grains and crops mentioned here, but also minerals and oil.“
- 22) [Goyal, Ashima / Tripathi, Shruti \(Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research\) \(2012\): Regulations and price discovery: oil spot and futures markets](#): „The results show expectations mediated through financial markets did not lead to persistent deviations from fundamentals. (...) But there is stronger evidence

of short-term or collapsing bubbles in mature market futures compared to Indian, although mature markets have a higher share of hedging. Indian regulations such as position limits may have mitigated short duration bubbles. It follows leverage due to lax regulation may be responsible for excess volatility.“

- 23)** [Greenberger, Michael \(University of Maryland\) \(2010\): The Relationship of Unregulated Excessive Speculation to Oil Market Price Volatility:](#) “When speculators make up too large a share of the futures market, they have the potential to upset the healthy tension between consumers and producers and resulting adherence of prices to market fundamentals. The resulting volatility makes it more difficult for commercial consumers and producers to successfully hedge risk, because prices do not reflect market fundamentals, and so they abandon the futures market and risk shifting—thereby further destabilizing the price discovery influence of these markets.”
- 24)** [Hamilton, James \(University of California\) \(2009\) Causes and Consequences of the Oil Shock of 2007-08:](#) „With hindsight, it is hard to deny that the price rose too high in July 2008, and that this miscalculation was influenced in part by the flow of investment dollars into commodity futures contracts.”
- 25)** [Hamilton, James D. \(University of California\) / Wu, Cynthia \(University of Chicago\) \(2011\): Risk Premia in Crude Oil Futures Prices:](#) “We document significant changes in oil futures risk premia since 2005, with the compensation to the long position smaller on average but more volatile in more recent data. This observation is consistent with the claim that index-fund investing has become more important relative to commercial hedging in determining the structure of crude oil futures risk premia over time.”
- 26)** [Henderson, Brian J. \(George Washington University\) / Pearson, Neil D. / Wang, Li \(University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign\) \(2012\): New Evidence on the Financialization of Commodity Markets:](#) “Commodity-Linked Notes (CLNs) ... issuers hedge their liabilities by taking long positions in the underlying commodity futures on the pricing dates. These hedging trades are plausibly exogenous to the contemporaneous and subsequent price movements, allowing us to identify the price impact of the hedging trades. We find that these hedging trades cause significant price changes in the underlying futures markets, and therefore provide direct evidence of the impact of “financial” trades on commodity futures prices.“
- 27)** [Hong, Harrison \(Princeton University\) / Yogo, Motohiro \(University of Pennsylvania\) \(2009\): Digging into Commodities:](#) „Since 2004 ... commodity prices have appreciated considerably, and aggregate basis has fallen (if anything), suggesting that futures prices have responded at least (if not more than) one-for-one with spot-price shocks. This could reflect the belief among investors that these price shocks are permanent or highly persistent. This is however unprecedented since even during the energy crisis of the seventies, one did not see such a striking movement in futures prices. This finding could instead reflect the conventional wisdom that lots of new indexed money flowed into commodity futures (as opposed to the spot market), chasing returns during this period.“
- 28)** [Inamura, Yasunari / Kimata, Tomonori / Takeshi, Kimura / Muto, Takashi \(Bank of Japan\) \(2011\): Recent Surge in Global Commodity Prices – Impact of financialization of commodities and globally accommodative monetary conditions:](#) „While the strong increase in commodity prices has been driven by global economic growth propelled by emerging economies, speculative investment flows into commodity markets have amplified the intensity of the price surge. (...) global commodity markets have become more sensitive to portfolio rebalancing by financial investors, which has made commodity markets more correlated with other asset markets, including major equity markets.“
- 29)** [Jickling, Mark / Austin, Andrew D. \(Congressional Research Service\) \(2011\): Hedge Funds Speculation and Oil Prices:](#) “A statistically significant correlation is evident between changes in positions held by “money managers” (a category of speculators that includes hedge funds) and the price of oil. In other words, during weeks when money managers have been net buyers of oil futures and options (or increased the size of their long positions), the price has tended to rise. Price falls, conversely, have tended to coincide with reductions in money managers’ long positions.”
- 30)** [Juvenal, Luciana / Ivan, Petrella \(Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis\) \(2011\): Speculation in the Oil Market:](#) „We find that the increase in oil prices in the last decade is mainly due to the strength of global demand, consistent with previous studies. However, financial speculation significantly contributed to the oil price increase between 2004 and 2008.“
- 31)** [Kawamoto, Takuji / Kimura, Takeshi / Morishita, Kentaro / Higashi, Masato \(Bank of Japan\) \(2011\): What has caused the surge in global commodity prices and strengthened cross-market linkage?:](#) “Moreover, we find quantitative evidence that an increase in cross-market linkage between commodity and stock markets was caused by the markets’ increased comovements due to large fluctuations in the global economy during the financial crisis as well as by the “financialization of commodities,” that is, financial investors are increasingly treating commodities as an investment asset class.“
- 32)** [Khan, Mohsin S. \(Petersen Institute\) \(2009\): The 2008 Oil Price “Bubble”:](#) “While market fundamentals obviously played a role in the general run-up in the oil prices from 2003 on, it is fair to conclude by looking at a variety of indicators that speculation drove an oil price bubble in the first half of 2008. Absent speculative activities, the oil price would probably have been in the \$80 to \$90 a barrel range.”
- 33)** [Lagi, Marco / Bar-Yam, Yavni / Bertrand, Karla Z. / Bar-Yam, Yaneer \(New England Complex Systems Institute, Cambridge MA\) \(2011\): The Food Crises A Quantitative Model of Food Prices Including Speculators and Ethanol Conversion:](#) “The two sharp peaks in 2007/2008 and 2010/2011 are specifically due to investor speculation, while an underlying upward trend is due to increasing demand from ethanol conversion. The model includes investor trend following as well as shifting between commodities, equities and bonds to take advantage of increased expected returns. Claims that speculators cannot influence grain prices are shown to be invalid by direct analysis of price setting practices of granaries.”
- UPDATE (2012):** “we extend the food prices model to January 2012, without modifying the model but simply continuing its dynamics. The agreement is still precise, validating both the descriptive and predictive abilities of the analysis.”
- 34)** [Lammerding, Marc / Stephan, Patrick / Trede, Mark / Wilfling, Bernd \(University of Münster\): Speculative bubbles in recent oil price dynamics: Evidence from a Bayesian Markov-switching state-space approach:](#) “we find robust evidence for the existence of speculative bubbles in recent oil price dynamics.“
- 35)** [Lombardi, Marco J. / Van Robays, Ine \(European Central Bank\) \(2011\): Do financial investors destabilize the oil price?:](#) “We find that financial investors in the futures market can destabilize oil spot prices, although only in the short run. Moreover, financial activity appears to have exacerbated the volatility in the oil market over the past decade, particularly in 2007-2008. However, shocks to oil demand and supply, remain the main drivers of oil price swings.“
- 36)** [Luciani, Giacomo \(Gulf Research Center Foundation\) \(2009\): From Price Taker to Price Maker? Saudi Arabia and the World Oil Market:](#) “The inflow of liquidity, the increasing role played by the futures market (paper barrels) over the spot (wet barrels), and the proliferation of derivatives which encourage betting on price changes rather than on the absolute level of prices all contribute to worsen the situation, amplifying price oscillations.”
- 37)** [Mayer, Jörg \(UNCTAD\) \(2009\): The Growing Interdependence between Financial and Commodity Markets:](#) “The increasing importance of financial investment in commodity trading appears to have caused commodity futures exchanges to function in such a way that prices may deviate, at least in the short run, quite far from levels that would reliably reflect fundamental supply and demand factors. Financial investment weakens the traditional mechanisms that would prevent prices from moving away from levels determined by fundamental supply and demand factors – efficient absorption of information and physical adjustment of markets. This weakening increases the proneness of commodity prices to overshooting and heightens the risk of speculative bubbles occurring.”
- 38)** [Medlock, Kenneth B. / Jaffe, Amy M. \(Rice University\) \(2009\): Who is in the Oil Futures Market and How Has It Changed?:](#) “...trading strategies of some financial players in oil appears to be influencing the correlation between the value of the U.S. dollar and the price of oil. (...) We also find that the correlation between movements in oil prices and the value of the dollar against the trade-weighted index of the currencies of foreign countries has

increased to 0.82 (a significant measure) for the period between 2001 and the present day, compared to a previously insignificant correlation of only 0.08 between 1986 and 2000."

- 39) [Mou, Yiqun \(Columbia University\) \(2010\): Limits to Arbitrage and Commodity Index Investment: Frontrunning the Goldman Roll](#): "This paper focuses on the unique rolling activity of commodity index investors in the commodity futures markets and shows that the price impact due to this rolling activity is both statistically and economically significant."
- 40) [Naylor, Rosamund L. / Falcon, Walter P. \(Stanford University\) \(2010\): Food Security in an Era of Economic Volatility](#): „Uncertainty surrounding exchange rates and macro policies added to price misperceptions, as did flurries of speculative activity in organized futures markets. Events since 2005 - including the most recent period of price variability in 2010 - underscore the point that uncertainty and expectations can be as important as or even more important than actual changes in grain demand and supply in driving price variability.“
- 41) [Nissanke, Machiko \(University of London\) \(2011\): Commodity Markets and Excess Volatility. Sources and Strategies to Reduce Adverse Development Impacts](#): "Thus, commodity prices, as prices of any assets traded globally, can be largely influenced by market liquidity cycles in global finance. From this particular perspective, we can have a plausible narrative of the recent episode of commodity price cycle. (...) Clearly, trading activities in world commodity markets have undergone some fundamental change, as the links between activities in commodity and financial markets has further intensified."
- 42) [Phillips, Peter C. B. \(Yale University\) / Yu, Jun \(Singapore University\) \(2010\): Dating the Timeline of Financial Bubbles During the Subprime Crisis](#): "a bubble first emerged in the equity market during mid-1995 lasting to the end of 2000, followed by a bubble in the real estate market between September 2000 and June 2007 and in the mortgage market between August 2005 and July 2007. After the subprime crisis erupted, the phenomenon migrated selectively into the commodity market and the foreign exchange market, creating bubbles which subsequently burst at the end of 2008, just as the effects on the real economy and economic growth became manifest."
- 43) [Pollin, Robert / Heintz, James \(University of Massachusetts\) \(2011\): How Wall Street Speculation is Driving Up Gasoline Prices Today](#): "A major additional factor is the rapid growth in large-scale speculative trading around oil prices through the oil commodities futures market. Indeed, we estimate that, without the influence of large-scale speculative trading on oil in the commodities futures market, the average price of gasoline at the pump in May would have been \$3.13 rather than \$3.96."
- 44) [Ray, Darryl E. / Schaffer, Harwood D. \(University of Tennessee\) \(2010\): Index funds and the 2006-2008 run-up in agricultural commodity prices](#): "the fundamentals and/or expectations in the energy and mineral markets rein supreme—grains are along for the ride with little-to-no regard to what is happening in the grain sector. Worries during the period about the availability of oil drove up the price of crude, which caused index funds to rebalance their portfolios by making additional purchases of the other commodities to maintain the specified balance. Since the resulting price increases in agricultural commodities had virtually nothing to do with their market conditions, the record level of activity in the futures market by index funds would seem to make index funds a logical source of possible price overshooting."
- 45) [Robles, Miguel / Torero, Maximo / Braun, Joachim von \(IFPRI\) \(2009\): When speculation matters](#): „Changes in supply and demand fundamentals cannot fully explain the recent drastic increase in food prices. Rising expectations, speculation, hoarding, and hysteria also played a role in the increasing level and volatility of food prices."
- 46) [Schulmeister, Stephan \(Vienna University\) \(2009\): Trading Practices and Price Dynamics in Commodity Markets](#): "Based on the "bullishness" in commodity derivatives markets, short-term oriented speculators reacted much stronger to news in line with the expectation of rising prices than to news which contradicted the "market mood". Hence, they put more money into long positions than into short positions and held long positions longer than short positions. Due to this trading behavior, upward commodity price runs lasted longer in recent years than downward runs causing prices to rise in a stepwise process. Commodity price runs were lengthened by the use of trend-following trading systems of technical analysis. These systems try to exploit price runs by producing buy (sell) signals in the early stage of an upward (downward) run. The aggregate trading signals then feed back upon commodity prices."
- 47) [Schulmeister, Stephan \(Vienna University\) \(2012\): Technical Trading and Commodity Price Fluctuations](#): "If one aggregates over the transactions and open positions of the 1,092 technical models, it turns out that technical commodity futures trading exerts an excessive demand (supply) pressure on commodity markets."
- 48) [Silvennoinen Annastiina \(Queensland University\) / Thorp, Susan \(Sydney University\) \(2010\): Financialization, crisis and commodity correlation dynamics](#): „We observe higher and more variable correlations between commodity futures and stock returns from mid-sample, with many series showing a structural break in the conditional correlation processes from the late 1990s."
- 49) [Singleton, Kenneth J. \(Stanford University\) \(2010\): The 2008 Boom/Bust in Oil Prices](#): „In my view, while spot-market supply and demand pressures were influential factors in the behavior of oil prices, so were participation in oil futures markets by hedge funds, long-term passive investors, and other traders in energy derivatives."
- 50) [Singleton, Kenneth J. \(Stanford University\) \(2011\): Investor Flows And The 2008 Boom/Bust in Oil Prices](#): "there was an economically and statistically significant effect of investor flows on futures prices...The intermediate-term growth rates of index positions and managed-money spread positions had the largest impacts on futures prices."
- 51) [Tang, Ke \(Princeton University\) / Xiong, Wei \(Renmin University\) \(2011\): Index Investment and the Financialization of Commodities](#): "concurrent with the rapid growing index investment in commodities markets since early 2000s, futures prices of different commodities in the US became increasingly correlated with each other and this trend was significantly more pronounced for commodities in the two popular GSCI and DJUBS commodity indices. This finding reflects a financialization process of commodities markets and helps explain the synchronized price boom and bust of a broad set of seemingly unrelated commodities in the US in 2006-2008. In contrast, such commodity price comovements were absent in China, which refutes growing commodity demands from emerging economies as the driver."
- 52) [Timmer, C. Peter \(Center for Global Development, Washington\) \(2009\): Peter Timmer: Peter Timmer: Did Speculation Affect World Rice Prices?](#): „Speculative money seems to surge in and out of commodity markets, strongly linking financial variables with commodity prices during some time periods. But these periods are often short and the relationships disappear entirely for long periods of time."
- 53) [Tse, Yiuman / Williams, Michael \(University of Texas at San Antonio\) \(2011\): Does Index Speculation Impact Commodity Prices?](#): "We conclude that speculative pressures exerted by commodity index investors can impact non-index commodities. These results are likely not due to speculative pressure itself, but rather the subsequent price destabilizing trades of uninformed, positive feedback traders."
- 54) [Van der Molen, Maarten \(University of Utrecht\) \(2009\): Speculators invading the commodity markets: a case study of coffee](#): „The results indicate that index speculators frustrated the futures market in the period between 2005 and 2008. This conclusion is based on the following indications: fundamentals have a lower impact on the price, the volume of index speculators has increased and their ability to influence the futures market has increased."
- 55) [Vansteenkiste, Isabel \(European Central Bank\) \(2011\): What is driving oil price futures? Fundamentals versus Speculation](#): "We find that for the earlier part of our sample (up to 2004) that fundamentals have been the key driving force behind oil price movements. Thereafter, trend chasing patterns appear to be better in capturing the developments in oil futures markets."
- 56) [Varadi, Vijay Kumar \(ICRIER\) \(2012\): An evidence of speculation in Indian commodity markets](#): "results exhibit that speculation has played decisive role in the commodity price bubble during the global crisis in India."

- 57) [Von Braun, Joachim \(Bonn University\), Tadesse, Getaw \(IFPRI\) \(2012\): Global Food Price Volatility and Spikes: An Overview of Costs, Causes and Solutions](#): "The general conclusion on price spikes is that they were driven by excessive volumes of futures trading more than by demand side (oil price) and supply side shocks."
- 58) [Windawi, A. Jason \(Columbia University\) \(2012\): Speculation, Embedding, and Food Prices. A Cointegration Analysis](#): „The Wheat Granger test results show a clustering of speculative financial influences on wheat prices in the period from early 2006 through June of 2010, with a particularly strong increase in the four subperiods beginning with the first drop in prices. (...) Like the wheat tests, the Granger results for Corn ... were clustered around the first wave of the food crisis..."
- 59) [Wray, Randall L. \(University of Missouri-Kansas City\) \(2008\) The Commodities Market Bubble – Money Manager Capitalism and the Financialization of Commodities](#): "There is adequate evidence that financialization is a big part of the problem, and there is sufficient cause for policymakers to intervene with sensible constraints and oversight to reduce the influence of managed money in these markets."
- 9) [Gheit, Fadel / Katzenberg, Daniel \(2008\) \(Oppenheimer & Co.\): Surviving lower oil prices](#): "The investment banks that hyped oil prices using voodoo economics have suddenly reversed their position and now expect much lower oil prices. They helped cause excessive speculation, create the oil bubble, and contributed to the global financial crisis. They have changed their tune in exchange for a government bailout, not because of changes in market fundamentals."
- 10) [Hunt, Simon \(Simon Hunt Strategic Services\) \(2011\)](#): "Slowly, the truth on whether the global copper market is really tight is coming out. It illustrates just how large an involvement the financial institutions have become to the copper industry. It shows, too, that by throwing money at a market, prices can be driven higher. In the process, however, the delicate balance between supply and the industry's requirements for a basic material used to produce a range of essential products is destroyed. In short, copper is becoming a financial asset in place of its historic role as an industrial metal."
- 11) [Kemp, John \(Reuters\) \(2008\): Crisis remakes the commodity business](#): "It does not alter the fact most of the upsurge in futures and options turnover on commodity exchanges and in OTC markets over the last five years has come from investment-related rather than trade-related business."
- 12) [Korzenik, Jeffrey \(CIO, Caturano Wealth Management\) \(2009\): Fundamental Misconceptions in the Speculation Debate](#): "'Overspeculation' or 'excessive speculation' exists when speculators become primary drivers of price. When this happens, commodities are no longer efficiently allocated – if prices are driven below the point where commercial supply and demand meet, shortages result."
- 13) [Lines, Thomas \(commodity consultant\) \(2010\): Speculation in food commodity markets](#): "These are the main problems that are caused by long-only index trading: It pushes prices up, irrespective of the market situation. It disrupts the rolling over of futures contracts when the nearest month expires."
- 14) [Masters, Michael W. \(Masters Capital\)/ White, Adam K. \(White Knight Research\) \(2008\): The Accidental Hunt Brothers](#): "Index Speculators have bought more commodities futures contracts in the last five years than any other group of market participant. They are now the single most dominant force in the commodities futures markets. And most importantly, their buying and trading has nothing to do with the supply and demand fundamentals of any single commodity. They pour money into commodities futures to diversify their portfolios, hedge against inflation or bet against the dollar."
- 15) [Morse, E. \(former Lehman Brothers chief energy economist\) \(2008\): Oil Dotcom, Research Note](#): "Fundamental changes cannot explain sudden, severe price or curve movements. (...) Our conclusion from this study is that we are seeing the classic ingredients of an asset bubble."
- 16) [Newell, J. \(Probability Analytics Research\) \(2008\): Commodity Speculation's "Smoking Gun"](#): "Real market forces in these diverse markets are largely independent of one another, and therefore price changes should be essentially uncorrelated. This was clearly true historically; from 1984 through 1999 average correlation between all commodities was only 7%. In the last 12 months this average rose to 64%. Correlation with the GSCI was 23% historically, and rose to 76% in the last year. Index speculation has swamped real market forces."
- 17) [Petzel, Todd E. \(Offit Capital Advisors\) \(2009\): Testimony before the CFTC](#): "I believe these investors in aggregate have had a material impact on price levels, price spreads and the level of inventories being held."
- 18) [Soros, George \(2008\): Interview with Stern](#): "Speculators create the bubble that lies above everything. Their expectations, their gambling on futures help drive up prices, and their business distorts prices, which is especially true for commodities. It is like

C) Research papers and testimonies by analysts and traders

- 1) [Berg, Ann \(former CBoT trader and director, now FAO advisor\) \(2011\): The rise of commodity speculation: from villainous to venerable](#): "Structural changes in global commodity markets have greatly contributed to rising prices and increased price variability. These fundamental trends toward higher prices have been a key lure for increased speculative activity on the major futures exchanges."
- 2) [Cooper, Marc \(Consumer Federation of America\) \(2011\): Excessive Speculation and Oil Price Shock Recessions: A Case of Wall Street "Déjà vu all over again"](#): "the paper shows that excessive speculation, not market fundamentals caused the spike in oil prices. The movement of trading and prices in the three years since the speculative bubble in oil burst in 2008 provides even stronger evidence that excessive speculation is a major problem that afflicts the oil market and the economy."
- 3) [Deutsche Bank Research \(2009\): Do speculators drive crude oil prices? Dispersion in beliefs as price determinants](#): "The econometric estimates can reject the null hypotheses that the dispersion in beliefs of speculators has no influence on the crude oil price and its volatility. Both the Granger causality tests and the distributed lag models, which also include lagged regressors that measure the dispersion in beliefs of speculators, confirm moreover the role of speculation as a precursor to price movements."
- 4) [Dicker, Dan \(former NYMEX trader\) \(2011\)](#): "I wrote Oil's Endless Bid to show how the treatment of oil as a stock by investors, far more than any number of globally significant competing factors, causes the dramatically higher prices that we've seen in recent years. I've witnessed seismic changes to the oil markets during my many years as a trader, and it's the everyday consumer who shoulders the burden."
- 5) [Goldman Sachs \(2011\): Global Energy Weekly March 2011](#): "We estimate that each million barrels of net speculative length tends to add 8-10 cents to the price of a barrel of oil."
- 6) [Evans, Tim \(Citigroup energy analyst\) \(2008\): The Official Demise of the Oil Bubble \(Wall Street Journal article\)](#): "This is a market that is basically returning to the price level of a year ago which it arguably should never have left. (...) We pumped up a big bubble, expanded it to an impressive dimension, and now it is popped and we have bubble gum in our hair."
- 7) [Frenk, David \(Better Markets Inc.\) \(2010\): Review of Irwin and Sanders 2010 OECD report](#): "1) The statistical methods applied are completely inappropriate for the data used. 2) The study is contradicted by the findings of other studies that apply more appropriate statistical methods to the same data. 3) The overall analysis is superficial and easily refuted by looking at some basic facts."
- 8) [Frenk, David / Turbeville, Wallace C. \(Better Markets Inc.\) \(2011\): Commodity Index Traders and the Boom/Bust Cycle in](#)

hoarding food in the midst of a famine, only to make profits on rising prices. That should not be possible."

- 19) [Tudor Jones, Paul \(Tudor Investment Corporation\)\(2010\): Price Limits: A Return to Patience and Rationality in U.S. Markets. Speech to the CME Global Financial Leadership](#): "Every exchange traded instrument including all securities, futures, options and any other form of derivatives should have some form of a price limit. And this is all the more urgently needed now that electronic execution dominates trading."
- 20) [Urbanchuk, John M. \(Cardno ENTRIX\) \(2011\): Speculation and the Commodity Markets](#): "A careful examination of activity by non-commercial and index traders (i.e. speculators) in the corn futures market in the context of supply and demand fundamentals strongly suggests that speculation is a major factor behind the sharp increase in both the level and volatility of corn prices this year."
- 21) [Woolley, Paul \(former fund manager, York University / London School of Economics\) \(2010\): Why are financial markets so inefficient and exploitative – and a suggested remedy](#): "With the flood of passive and active investment funds going into commodities from 2005 onwards, prices have been increasingly driven by fund inflows rather than fundamental factors. Prices no longer provide a reliable signal to producers or consumers."

D) Reports by public institutions

- 1) [Chevalier, Jean-Marie \(ed.\) \(Ministère de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et de l'Emploi\) \(2010\): Rapport du groupe de travail sur la volatilité des prix du pétrole](#): "On peut raisonnablement avancer en conclusion que le jeu de certains acteurs financiers a pu amplifier les mouvements à la hausse ou à la baisse des cours, augmentant la volatilité naturelle des prix du pétrole..."
- 2) [House of Commons Select Committee on Science & Technology of the United Kingdom \(2011\)](#): "While the debate on the relative importance of the multiple factors influencing commodities prices is still open, it is clear that price movements across different commodity markets have become more closely related and that commodities markets have become more closely linked to financial markets."
- 3) [Jouyet, Jean-Pierre \(Président de l'Autorité des marchés financiers\) / de Boissieu, Christian \(Président du Conseil d'analyse économique\) / Guillon, Serge \(Contrôleur général économique et financier\) \(2010\): Rapport d'étape – Prévenir et gérer l'instabilité des marchés agricoles](#): "Les marchés agricoles sont confrontés à une mondialisation et à une financiarisation qui influencent leur fonctionnement. La volatilité naturelle des prix qui caractérise ces marchés est amplifiée par de nouveaux facteurs et notamment par une spéculation excessive."
- 4) [Schutter, Olivier de \(UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food\) \(2010\): Food commodities speculation and food price crises: Regulation to reduce the risks of financial volatility](#): "The global food price crisis that occurred between 2007 and 2008 ... had a number of causes. The initial causes related to market fundamentals, including the supply and demand for food commodities, transportation and storage costs, and an increase in the price of agricultural inputs. However, a significant portion of the increases in price and volatility of essential food commodities can only be explained by the emergence of a speculative bubble."
- 5) [Tanaka, Nobuo \(head International Energy Agency\) \(2009\): IEA says speculation amplifying oil prices moves \(Reuters article\)](#): "Our analysis shows that the fundamentals are deciding the direction of the price while these funds or speculations ... are amplifying the movement."
- 6) [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development \(UNCTAD\) \(2009\): Trade and Development Report, Chapter II – The Financialization of Commodity Markets](#): "The financialization of commodity futures trading has made commodity markets even more prone to behavioural overshooting. There are an increasing number of market participants, sometimes with very large positions, that do not trade based on fundamental supply and demand relationships in commodity markets, but, who nonetheless, influence commodity price developments."
- 7) [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development \(UNCTAD\) \(2009\): The global economic crisis: Systemic failures and multilateral remedies](#): "The evidence to support the view that the recent wide fluctuations of commodity prices have been driven by the financialization of commodity markets far beyond the equilibrium prices is credible. Various studies find that financial investors have accelerated and amplified price movements at least for some commodities and some periods of time. (...) The strongest evidence is found in the high correlation between commodity prices and the prices on other markets that are clearly dominated by speculative activity."
- 8) [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development \(UNCTAD\) \(2011\): Price Formation in Financialized Commodity Markets: the Role of Information](#): "Due to the increased participation of financial players in those markets, the nature of information that drives commodity price formation has changed. Contrary to the assumptions of the efficient market hypothesis (EMH), the majority of market participants do not base their trading decisions purely on the fundamentals of supply and demand; they also consider aspects which are related to other markets or to portfolio diversification. This introduces spurious price signals to the market."
- 9) [United Nations Commission of Experts on Reforms of the International and Monetary System \(2009\): Report](#): "In the period before the outbreak of the crisis, inflation spread from financial asset prices to petroleum, food, and other commodities, partly as a result of their becoming financial asset classes subject to financial investment and speculation."
- 10) [United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation \(FAO\) \(2010\): Final report of the committee on commodity problems: Extraordinary joint intersessional meeting of the intergovernmental group \(IGG\) on grains and the intergovernmental group on rice](#): "Unexpected crop failure in some major exporting countries followed by national responses and speculative behaviour rather than global market fundamentals, have been amongst the main factors behind the recent escalation of world prices and the prevailing high price volatility."
- 11) [United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation \(FAO\) \(2010\): Price Volatility in Agricultural Markets. Economic and Social Perspectives Policy Brief 12](#): "Financial firms are progressively investing in commodity derivatives as a portfolio hedge since returns in the commodity sector seem uncorrelated with returns to other assets. While this 'financialisation of commodities' is generally not viewed as the source of price turbulence, evidence suggests that trading in futures markets may have amplified volatility in the short term."
- 12) [United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation \(FAO\), IFAD, IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, WFP, The World Bank, The WTO, IFPRI, UN HLT \(2011\): Price Volatility in Food and Agricultural Markets: Policy Responses](#): "While analysts argue about whether financial speculation has been a major factor, most agree that increased participation by non-commercial actors such as index funds, swap dealers and money managers in financial markets probably acted to amplify short term price swings and could have contributed to the formation of price bubbles in some situations."
- 13) [United States Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations \(2007\): Excessive Speculation in the Natural Gas Market](#): "Amaranth's 2006 positions in the natural gas market constituted excessive speculation. (...) Purchasers of natural gas during the summer of 2006 for delivery in the following winter months paid inflated prices due to Amaranth's speculative trading."
- 14) [United States Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations \(2009\): Excessive Speculation in the Wheat Market](#): "This Report concludes there is significant and persuasive evidence that one of the major reasons for the recent market problems is the unusually high level of speculation in the Chicago wheat futures market due to purchases of futures contracts by index traders offsetting sales of commodity index instruments."
- 15) [United States Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations \(2006\): The Role of Market Speculation in Rising Oil and Gas Prices](#): "The large purchases of crude oil futures contracts by speculators have, in effect, created an additional demand for oil, driving up the price of oil to be delivered in the future in the same manner that additional demand for the immediate delivery of a physical barrel of oil drives up the price on the spot market."