



## **ARC Commodity Factor Risk Model Monthly Report October 2023**

The Asset Risk Company (ARC) Commodity Model is a cross-sectional commodity factor model. The model contains 50 of the most widely traded commodity products with approximately 1,200 futures in total over all maturities. All futures in the model have exposures to sectors, sub-sectors, and style factors such as basis, momentum, and open interest. The model is estimated daily with 23 years of history. It provides a framework for managing risk and investment decision making.

In this report, you will find:

- Performance of Sectors, Sub-Sectors and Style Factors
- Examples of Style Tilted Portfolios (Low Vol, Value, Momentum, Backwardation)
- Risk Factor Decompositions of Popular Commodity Indexes (BCOM, GSCI)
- Inflation prediction

The ARC Commodity Model is a powerful tool to help many constituencies in the financial industry, trading, and real economy. Some of the applications of the model are very straightforward, but some uses of the model are more nuanced. We recommend this short piece that provides details on both common and novel use cases for a commodity factor model: <https://www.assetriskcompany.com/whyfactor.html>. You can access our latest research at <https://www.assetriskcompany.com/library.html>.



## Sectors and Factors Performance Report:

Table 1. Sectors and Subsectors Performance

Sectors	Oct. 23	YTD	5-year Return	5-year Volatility
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>
Grain And Oilseed	-1.0%	-13.9%	15.5%	15.1%
Lumber And Pulp	0.2%	-25.1%	9.8%	51.7%
Proteins	-4.0%	-3.4%	11.6%	10.8%
Softs	6.8%	25.3%	9.3%	14.0%
<b>Energy</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>
Biofuels	-0.3%	1.3%	15.1%	22.3%
Coal	-0.3%	-5.1%	21.6%	25.7%
Crude Oil	-1.4%	-1.2%	-3.4%	19.2%
Natural Gas	1.4%	-3.4%	1.8%	16.5%
Petrochemicals	-0.3%	-4.6%	-3.6%	19.0%
Refined Products	-1.8%	-8.0%	0.8%	21.4%
<b>Metals</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>	<b>-11.3%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>
Base	-2.5%	-12.4%	8.2%	19.5%
Precious	0.7%	-8.8%	13.4%	18.6%

Overall commodities are having a tough year so far. Year to date, all 3 major sectors are still negative. In October, Crude Oil was down 1.4% and Natural Gas up 1.4%. But we observe a good deal of daily volatility in the last few weeks due to the events in the Middle East. Base Metals were down 2.5% this month and 12.4% year to date. Precious Metals were up 0.7% this month but still down 8.8% year to date. In the Agriculture sector, Grains & Oilseeds were down again this month but softs were up 6.8% this month and 25% year to date. As a reminder, ARC sectors and sub-sectors returns are

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not estimated using a static configuration of commodity weightings. The returns come naturally from a cross-sectional regression of the 1,200 assets in the model and therefore cover the entire term structure. For instance, Natural Gas has more than 120 maturities in the model. The model uses all of that information to derive sector and subsector returns and one can think of our sectors as risk weighted on the entire curve.

**Table 2. Styles Performance**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Oct 2023</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>5 Year Return</b>	<b>5 Year Volatility</b>
<b>Basis</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>Open Interest</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>Momentum</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>ST Momentum</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>-6.6%</b>	<b>-7.2%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>Trading Activity</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Volatility</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
<b>ST Volatility</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>

Volatility had a significant move down again this month. Both Momentum factors were slightly negative in October. Noticeably, Short Term Momentum is down 6.6% year to date. Remember the factor returns here come from large portfolios of what are known as “factor replicating” portfolios. The factor replicating portfolios are not a practical way to trade and consist of positions (both long and short) in most of the instruments in the model’s universe. We provide a much more parsimonious factor-tilted (long only) portfolio later in this analysis.

### **Style Tilted Portfolios Performance Report:**

BCOM commodity index was up 0.3% in October and the GSCI Index was down 4.2%. Year to date, GSCI is up 2.8%, while BCOM is down 3.2%. Value (Low Momentum) is the best performing tilted portfolio this year with a return of +8.2%. Momentum is the worst performing so far with -7%. Both Value and Low Volatility portfolios are worth

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considering as a tilt to a strategy. Based on a variety of studies coupled with 23 years of data we clearly see some real premia for Low Vol and Low Momentum futures. Our thesis is that the market has lacked a good lens with which to view these effects. Our model and approach illuminates this market feature.

**Table 3. Factor Tilted Portfolios and BCOM Performance**

	Value	Momentum	Low Vol	Backwardation	BCOM
<b>Oct. 2023</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>-7.0%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>-5.9%</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>
<b>Annualized*</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>Volatility*</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>

\*Annualized 5 years

## Factor Correlations:

Long term correlations between sectors and style factors are very low. The model is able to separate sector allocation risk from style risk providing key insights in the real key drivers of risk and performance of a portfolio.

**Table 6. Factor Correlations**

Correlations	Agriculture	Energy	Metals	Basis	Open Interest	Momentum	ST Momentum	Trading Activity	Volatility	ST Volatility
Agriculture	1.00	0.23	0.20	0.04	(0.01)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.02)	0.21	0.09
Energy	(0.01)	1.00	0.27	(0.07)	0.31	(0.22)	(0.12)	(0.21)	(0.02)	0.25
Metals	0.04	0.02	1.00	(0.21)	0.10	(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.07)	0.01	0.11
Basis	(0.03)	0.16	(0.26)	1.00	(0.27)	(0.01)	(0.05)	0.23	0.07	(0.09)
Open Interest	0.11	(0.02)	0.13	(0.55)	1.00	(0.38)	(0.01)	(0.65)	(0.26)	0.01
Momentum	(0.09)	0.05	(0.22)	0.08	(0.18)	1.00	0.15	0.27	0.40	(0.19)
ST Momentum	0.06	(0.33)	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.00)	0.34	1.00	0.11	0.03	0.03
Trading Activity	(0.00)	(0.16)	0.07	0.30	(0.51)	0.18	0.03	1.00	0.15	0.01
Volatility	0.02	(0.17)	0.06	(0.32)	0.27	0.47	0.06	(0.07)	1.00	(0.64)
ST Volatility	0.15	0.23	(0.01)	0.46	(0.59)	(0.19)	0.21	0.22	(0.73)	1.00

1 yr correlations on the right (above the diagonal), 30 days on left (below the diagonal).



## Commodity Indices Risk Decomposition

Energy is the largest sector in GSCI but the smallest in BCOM. Both indices have high z-scores with respect to Open Interest reflecting the fact that the indices' constituents are weighted more heavily on the front month contract.

Table7. Factor Exposures

Factors Exposures	BCOM	GSCI
<b>Agriculture</b>	0.32	0.25
<b>Energy</b>	0.33	0.60
<b>Metals</b>	0.35	0.15
<b>Basis</b>	0.11	0.15
<b>Open Interest</b>	2.28	2.29
<b>Momentum</b>	-0.08	0.08
<b>ST Momentum</b>	-0.03	-0.42
<b>Trading Activity</b>	0.44	0.09
<b>Volatility</b>	0.49	0.68
<b>ST Volatility</b>	0.45	0.66

Exposures, z-scores for BCOM and GSCI as of 10/31/2023

We use a 6 month half life for this risk decomposition so the model is fairly reactive to market conditions. Despite different sector allocations, both indices have similar risk and exposures to styles. A portfolio which is long/short would be evaluated on the breakout between systematic exposures and whether idiosyncratic risk. Long only managers will want to find their exposures relative to their benchmark. As shown above in the correlation tables, sector correlations with style factors are relatively small. The model is able to separate risk due to sector allocation and styles risk. All risk is not equal. Systematic risk can display non normal behavior when compared to specific or idiosyncratic risk. Both types of risks are driven by fluctuation, but systematic risk is



driven by the “crowd” expressing some thematic bet. The systematic risk is related to market risk.

**Table 8. Risk Attribution of BCOM and GSCI**

<b>Index</b>	<b>BCOM</b>	<b>GSCI</b>
<b>Total Risk</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	1.4%	0.9%
<b>Energy</b>	2.6%	6.3%
<b>Metals</b>	3.2%	0.9%
<b>Basis</b>	-0.2%	-0.1%
<b>Open Interest</b>	6.4%	6.1%
<b>Momentum</b>	0.1%	0.0%
<b>ST Momentum</b>	0.0%	0.8%
<b>Trading Activity</b>	-0.2%	0.2%
<b>Volatility</b>	0.8%	1.3%
<b>ST Volatility</b>	-0.2%	-0.4%
<b>Specific Risk</b>	4.0%	5.1%

Ex-Ante Annual Volatility Decomposition for BCOM and GSCI as of 10/31/2023

## **Inflation:**

Empirical testing finds that the ARC Commodity Model is an excellent predictor of breakout moves in the headline number, both in bouts of inflation and deflation. For October, we predict a higher CPI level, but the year on year change (Inflation) will decrease versus September. Reach out to [info@assetriskcompany.com](mailto:info@assetriskcompany.com) for our estimate.

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## **Conclusion:**

In this report, we have shown the factor performance driving the commodity markets. Using the ARC Commodity model, style tilted portfolios have shown great performance and seem to be suitable benchmarks for active managers to track. We then conducted an analysis into the risk dynamics of two major commodity indices. The view of commodities as diversifiers is quite accurate. All of this was possible with the ARC model. The model enables the user to look at their book or portfolio and how it fits into their thesis as well as how it fits in the broader economic landscape.