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Living in a Material World: The Commodity Connection

Kevin Morrison

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At a time when the world is grappling with rising food and energy prices and climate change, Living in a Material World provides an insight into some of the contributing factors behind these challenges. The emergence of new consumers in China, India, Russia and the Middle East has added formidable competition to the natural resources that have been taken for granted in the developed world.

Everything we consume involves the use of metals, fossil fuels or agriculture. Our high tech 'lifestyles' depend on the secure supply of these raw materials which we take from planet earth and use to make our lives more comfortable, more productive or more manageable. The effect of this increasing global demand for commodities has pushed up prices of materials from oil and copper to corn and wheat; forcing consumers to pay more for the many 'necessities' of life, from a loaf of bread to electricity bills.

Since the commodity boom has unfolded, commodities have gone from the back page of the newspaper to the front; with more and more headlines about record food and oil prices, dire climate change warnings, energy security and China's demand for more raw materials.

This era of high oil and food prices is no passing phase: The supply of many key natural resources is stretched to the limit. But what is the real cost?

Living in a Material World makes the link between raw materials and the consumer, and shows how they are relevant to everybody, everyday - now more so than at any time since the last oil shock nearly three decades ago. A unique insight into this 'once in a generation' boom, the book shows how the increasing value of commodities is impacting on consumers and investors, in ways we are only just beginning to understand.

"It was a great pleasure to read this book which provides an essential background to understanding commodities for anybody interested in understanding them more closely. It is so rare to see all the essential elements brought together in one book." -Chris Brodie, Krom River Partners LLP

"Kevin Morrison set out to write a book about the daily relevance that raw materials have for the ordinary consumer. He has achieved his objective par excellence. The subject matter has been comprehensively researched and well documented - yet the writer has avoided using complicated technical language. The style of the book is more in tune with a novel and the main topics are treated with a special sense of humour. I would readily recommend this work to anyone interested in how global energy issues have a direct affect on us all." -Mehdi Varzi, President, Varzi Energy, London

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