Conflict between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea helped stoke uncertainty in the global markets, particularly in Europe where the majority of the region’s oil and natural gas are supplied by Russia.

- During the fourth quarter of 2013, oil prices rose 3% to end the quarter at $101/barrel. Relative to one year prior, oil prices were up 8%.

- On average, U.S. gasoline prices increased by 7% to $3.66/gallon for regular blend. Relative to one year prior, gasoline prices were down by approximately 5%.

- Natural gas prices increased by 16% to $4.90/MM BTU during the quarter and represented an increase of 29% from one year prior. The increase was largely the result of seasonal demand from the extremely cold winter weather particularly in the Northeast. Pricing for natural gas reached over $120/MM BTU in certain Northeast markets.

- Gold prices averaged $1,336/oz., representing a 9% increase for the quarter. Relative to one year prior, prices were down 16% from approximately $1,593/oz.

- Copper prices ended the quarter at $3.00 per pound representing an 8% quarterly decrease and a 13% decrease from one year prior.

- The USDA’s initial estimates for the 2014 season included projections of increased acreage plantings, inventories, and crop yields. Relative to one year prior, prices for corn and soybeans were down 28% and 3%, respectively. The estimates are frequently revised during the season, as factors such as adverse weather and actual crop yields and acreage plantings can significantly alter the figures and expectations.

- Prices for lumber and paneling products were flat during the quarter, but were down 12% and 29%, respectively, from one year prior.