SM135 | 8.19.2023
Summer Playlist 2023 | Episode 5
Helima Croft, Managing Director & Global Head of Commodity Strategy, RBC Capital Markets

On this week's installment of our Summer Playlist, we welcome Helima Croft back into the SmarterMarkets™ studio. Helima is Managing Director and Global Head of Commodity Strategy at RBC Capital Markets. SmarterMarkets™ host David Greely sits down with Helima to discuss the geopolitics and current state of play in the global commodities markets.

Helima Croft (00s):
I think a lot of market participants have sort of parked the Russia war on the sidelines and they think of it as background noise, but it could really come back to a front and center issue. I still think energy and weaponization of energy remains part of the Russian strategy. So I think we're going to be dealing with these issues for at least several more years.

Announcer (21s):
Welcome to SmarterMarkets. A weekly podcast featuring the icons and entrepreneurs of technology, commodities and finance ranting on the inadequacies of our systems and riffing on ideas for how to solve them. Together, we examine the questions: are we facing a crisis of information or a crisis of trust, and will building Smarter Markets be the antidote?
This episode is brought to you in part by Abaxx Exchange, bringing you better benchmarks, better technology and better tools for risk management.

David Greely (01m 03s):
Welcome back to our Smarter Market Summer playlist 2023, where we're sitting down with our special guests midway through the year to talk about where we are and where we might be and need to be heading next. It's our beach reading in a podcast. I'm Dave Greely, Chief Economist at Abaxx Technologies. Our guest today is Helima Croft, Managing Director and Global Head of Commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets. We'll be discussing the geopolitics and current state of play in the global commodities markets. Hello, Helima. Welcome back to Smarter Markets.

Helima Croft (01m 36s):
Thank you so much for having me back.

David Greely (01m 39s):
Absolutely. You know, the last time we talked was earlier this year at the Financial Times Global Commodity Summit in Lausanne, and we only got to chat for a few minutes, but I so enjoy talking with you that I've been looking forward ever since then to having you here for a full episode. So I'm really glad you could join us.

Helima Croft (01m 55s):
I am so excited to be back and how much has changed since we were together in March when it looked like the world was coming to the end with the potential financial crisis

David Greely (02m 04s):
Right, right. It was right after Credit Suisse was getting absorbed right at that time and you know, before we dive into the current events, I wanted to ask you, you know, my background is more PhD in economics and your background I think is a little unique. So I wanted to ask you about that in that you have the background that you have a PhD in Economic History and you worked at the CIA and I think I would imagine that background influences how you think about and form views on the commodity markets. So I just wanted to ask you, how do you think your background influences your thinking about these markets?

Helima Croft (02m 40s):
No, a 100% I have a non-traditional background for covering commodities. I did a PhD in Economic History at Princeton and what's interesting though is I did have a bit of a commodity take because I was looking at the longest sustained economic reformer in Africa,

Ghana, which at one point had been the world's largest cocoa producer and I was looking at sort of government interventions in the market and how that impacted Ghana's economic fortunes and then I had done a lot of work though at Princeton on other big commodity producers. I'd done work on the Middle East on Nigeria and I ended up being recruited to join the C I A I was recruited before nine 11, but I actually walked in the door on December 1 2001 and it was an incredible time where energy security was seen as a really vital core national security priority of the Bush Cheney administration.

Helima Croft (03m 32s):
And so I joined a team that was looking at worldwide threats to oil supply. And we did this in the run up to the Iraq war and we had very exciting things happen like Venezuelan oil strikes, attacks on critical Nigerian oil infrastructure, right as we were going into the Iraq war where we're anticipating significant disruptions of Iraqi croute. That whole experience of thinking about what does a global supply picture look like, what are the risks to oil supply, how are sovereign governments thinking about managing their resources, like that was all core to the work I did at the CIA and it remains core to how at least I look at commodity markets. I mean, there are people on this fabulous team that I work with that look at the supply and demand numbers that look at all the traditional aspects of how you think about commodity markets, but I think I bring that geopolitical twist to the markets as well.

David Greely (04m 25s):
Well, I'd love to dive into that geopolitical twist and take on the markets because there's a lot going on still and maybe we can start with the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and Right. How that may be continuing to affect commodity markets.

Helima Croft (04m 40s):
I mean, what's amazing is that we are basically in the second year of a war that many market participants never thought would happen because they thought it was so economically irrational for Russia to invade Ukraine and then right after the war began, remember how quickly prices ran up because there was anticipation of significant supply disruption and the whole US policy was really designed to punish Russia and not the United States and other western governments. So we really avoided initially sanctioning Russian energy and things like price caps were really designed to keep Russian oil on the market and so the moment I saw you in March at the FT conference, a lot of the big traders had made this big bet on this massive disruption Russian supply that didn't come and we're sort of fading then geopolitics as a story in the oil market. But what we're really seeing is, as we are seeing now Russian supply come down, you know, we have it down about 800,000 barrels since the start of the year.

Helima Croft (05m 40s):
And so the question I think about when I think about Russia is, is Russia's best days as an energy producer behind it now because of the impact of this war, because of the impact of some of the sanctions that was going after future Russia production when those sanctions are put in place but it's gonna be very hard for Russia to get financing and equipment for its energy sector and so the question for the oil market is if this war is a multi-year war going forward, you know, are we gonna see this continual decline in Russian output.

David Greely (06m 10s):
Right, that's a great point. Do those sanctions finally begin to, to bind on the investment needed to maintain the Russian oil sector?

Helima Croft (06m 17s):
Right, really complex, difficult to operate fields and when these sanctions were put in place, I think there was an expectation that this would be a rather short war and now we're seeing the impact, I think now starting on the technology side.

David Greely (06m 34s):
And I also wanted to ask you, there's a lot going on in the Black Sea right now as well. Yes. So we've had, you know, Russia pull out of the grain deal. So outside energy markets proper, but still affecting the, the wheat market and there's been a step up in Ukrainian attacks on Russian tankers in the Black Sea as well, I believe. What do you think is happening there?

Helima Croft (06m 54s):
Such an important story because as you mentioned, July 17th Russia pulls out of the Black Sea grain deal, this UN broker deal that was enabling Ukrainian grain to reach global markets. Not only did they pull out of the deal, they started attacking Ukrainian agricultural infrastructure and export infrastructure. So then you had the Ukrainians respond August 4 and five by attacking Russian tankers, including a tanker that had been supplying at one point jet fuel to Syria, which then apparently was being used by Russian jets and that tanker had been sanctioned by the US Treasury and you had senior officials saying in Ukraine that it was immoral and indefensible to

ship Russian oil. So there was this expectation the first week of August that the Ukrainians were going to go after Russia's most important source of revenue, the oil exports, but something happened, there were conversations, I think with the US government that basically were saying like, this is not, you know, a policy that we think will be helpful.

Helima Croft (07m 56s):
We want to keep oil markets well supplied. So then we had the announcement last week of this essentially commodity safe corridor where Ukraine officials said that they will not go after non-military ships. So essentially hands off in terms of cargoes carrying Russian commodities. At the same time though, Russia has shown no signs of going back into this grain deal and they continue to attack Ukrainian infrastructure again, export infrastructure when it comes to commodities and also you mentioned, you know, the wheat trade. I mean the fact that Russia has had this bumper wheat harvest, they're essentially also going after Ukraine's market by supplying African nations with additional supplies of grain and so to me, this is a really important story. It speaks to the fact that we are waging the war in a way that enables Russia to retain some pretty significant revenue while at the same time providing Ukraine with weapons. The question is like, is this a short war scenario or a long duration war because of the fact that we are so concerned about rising energy prices.

David Greely (09m 09s):
It's really fascinating how the causality runs both ways, right. That geopolitics drives the oil market and the oil market constrains the limits of geopolitics. Now there's also, with Russian oil supplies coming down as you said now, there is a look for how can we get every barrel and we have been writing and working on what's happening with the US or on relationship in light of this?

Helima Croft (09m 35s):
No, this is, these are such great questions. I so enjoy being on this podcast because if you think about the, the Biden administration, when they came into office, there was an expectation that us would reenter JCPOA, the 2015 Iran and nuclear agreement, that essentially Iran basically only enriched at lower levels of uranium and in return we lifted sanctions on Iranian oil exports. The US pulled out of that agreement in 2018, we slapped back sanctions and so there was this expectation that we would get some type of deal that would enable the US to go back in and that we would remove all sanctions on Iran oil experts. Some things got in the way of that, most notably the fact that Iran continued to make significant strides in its nuclear program cracking down also on, you know, peaceful demonstrators and so it became really challenging for the Biden administration to think about selling a formal nuclear agreement with Iran to Congress, especially since the Iranians were saying we saw this movie before we went into an agreement in 2015, we thought that the relief would be enduring, we abided by the terms of the deal and yet another administration pulled out.

Helima Croft (10m 47s):
And so Iranians kept saying, we want guarantees that whatever deal we sign will be permanent. But the problem is, is congressional sanctions, no president can do that. So it's gonna be very challenging to get a formal deal. What it looks like we are getting, and we saw the signs of this last week when the Iranians released a number of Americans that were being held in prison into house arrest in Iran, is that we're getting the signs of an informal agreement whereby Rich Iran does not enrich beyond 60% uranium levels, which is very close to weapons grade level, that they were trying to get them to not provide Russia with as much drone technology and in return for the sort of freeze that we go soft on sanctions enforcement and Iranian oil exports have recently climbed to, to five year highs. And so the question is, in a goof sanctions enforcement, you know, approach on Iran, how many more barrels can they move into Asia? But this is certainly part of the energy diplomacy strategy of the Biden administration. We're not gonna be doing any more blockbuster SPR releases. We initially had been in buyback mode this summer, but that has been paused. But we're not going to be able to have that tool in the toolkit to bring down energy prices. So I think a greater reliance on this type of diplomatic effort to see where the potential sources of supply can come onto the market.

David Greely (12m 20s):
And I'm glad you brought up the USSPR because I wanted to ask you about that and how that's changing the relationship potentially between the US and OPEC and by OPEC, I guess I really mean Saudi Arabia. In the old days, the SPR was supposedly only used for non-economic reasons, time of war, national security.

Helima Croft (12m 40s):
Disruptions to refineries or member disrupt weather related of events,

David Greely (12m 43s):
Acts of God you know, but the US has increasingly been using the SPR as a policy tool to influence the oil market influence prices and that's kind of a change in the way the US and Saudi had approached the oil market and I'm curious if you have thoughts on how the change in US behavior is being received by and affecting the behavior of Saudi and the rest of OPEC?

Helima Croft (13m 08s):
Well it's interesting you bring up the, the changing use of the SPR, because again, we're gonna show our age on this, on this podcast.

David Greely (13:14):
Here we go.

Helima Croft (13m 16s):
Because if we go back to 2011 with the Arab Spring, remember we had the big Libyan disruption and that was really one of the first times that we used the SPR when there was not a disruption to a US refinery. Essentially we released from the SPR to put additional supply on the market because we had this outage in Libya and so I think that to me was a turning point in the market is when we basically said, okay, we're gonna use these barrels to bring down price. We said we were backfilling Libya, but we're bringing down price and in the case of now with the Russia Ukraine War, we did it explicitly to target price when there wasn't a significant Russian supply disruption. So that was another sort of change in the way the SPR is used, but I certainly think when we go into all the drama that led up to that October OPEC meeting with the 2 million barrel at eight cut and the strong reaction from Washington, I do think that the lack of clarity around future SPR releases criteria for buying back, contributed to the decision led by Saudi Arabia to cut production.

Helima Croft (14m 29s):
I think that has certainly been part of the negotiation with the Biden administration was, okay, what will the terms of a buyback look like and I think there had been, at that moment there had not been a lot of clarity on what the buyback conditions would look like. So I think that was one of the reasons why OPEC proceeded with a cut in October. It was a contributing factor.

David Greely (14m 53s):
Right it's a really interesting, really interesting scenario to play out. If you were sitting in Saudi Arabia's sea, would you want to supply oil onto the market at a low price so the US can refill its SPR or is it a more comfortable and give you a little bit more control to have a low SPR that can't be brought onto the market the moment it starts to tighten up?

Helima Croft (15m 14s):
Well also, you know, there are all sorts of things that were happening if we go back to October. Do you remember how fast oil was falling then and I think from the Saudi perspective they very much sort of wanted to put a circuit breaker into the market in October. That's why we actually thought they were going to do a significant cut because we were looking at the speed of the decline and the fact that the Saudis were so clear that they were not gonna repeat 2015, they were not going to take a hands-off approach. They were not resurrecting the Ali Naimi strategy and so very much if you think about what motivates Saudi Arabia and the Saudi leadership, they are very focused on delivering for their own population. Just as we wanted to use the SPR to insulate US consumers from the impact of the Russia, Ukraine war, the Saudis are very focused on having the revenue to deliver on this wildly ambitious transformational vision 2030 agenda.

Helima Croft (16m 15s):
And so from their perspective I think they were deeply concerned that they didn't come into the market. You could be staring down a similar price outlook as we saw in 2015 and so they wanted to be super serious about sending this message to the market that they were going to be activist and I think that, again, when we think about the SPR if there had been sort of more clarity about what moment the US would come in, I think there was probably also a price gap between what the Biden administration wanted obviously, and what the Saudis wanted. But I do think that US Saudi relationship is in a significantly better place since that October meeting.

David Greely (16m 56s):
And you know, thinking about oil inventories and SPRs, I wanted to ask you a question about China because you know, on the one hand you read the headlines and it sounds like the economy's in rough shape demand should be coming down, but the oil import numbers at least so far, have continued to look pretty good and I'm curious it's a bit of a head scratcher, right.

Helima Croft (17m 19s):
Multi-year highs in June. I mean, July was softer, but the data so far in August looks solid and, you know, refinery utilization rates look solid as well in China. I think this reminds me, again, I'm really showing my age on this podcast. It reminds me of 2015. Do you remember when we had the China credit scare. Do you remember we had this recovery in Brent prices in June. We briefly touched 70 and then all of a sudden we had this China credit scare and it was kind of a sell everything scenario. And people were like, you know, imports are gonna be terrible. And if you looked at the end of 2015, you know, Chinese oil imports held up. And so you had this macro story creating a sort of sum of all fears dynamic, but it wasn't mirroring what was actually going on in the physical market in China and I do think that has been a bit of a similar story this year is that every time you get worrisome economic data in China, people sell oil, but it doesn't necessarily reflect what's actually happening in terms of the import data.

David Greely (18m 23s):
It'll certainly be a, an interesting thing to keep tabs on and I'm curious, you know, we, we've talked about a number of geopolitical issues are there any other geopolitical issues that we should be discussing or should have on our radar?

Helima Croft (18m 35s):
I think there's a lot that we should have on our radar. Certainly. I think that when we think about Iran, you know, we just, I talked about the US perspective on was the White House perspective on this, but there is some interesting spoilers. Certainly you should be paying attention to Congress. There have been a number of Republicans, but also some Democrats raising concerns about what they see as this effort to end run the congressional review process on a informal deal. These are actually congressional sanctions and so loose enforcement of their own sanctions does not sit well with every member of Congress. So watch potentially congressional action to try to force the White House to at least, you know, come before Congress and, and defend this informal arrangement. But also I would be watching for what happens in Israel. I mean, Bibi Netanyahu has consistently said that on his watch, Iran is not going to be a nuclear power, not even a threshold power and so the question is, does a deal that allows Iran to remain on the brink of being a threshold power, is that going to satisfy him or will we potentially see a return to the Israeli dark arts. Will mysterious explosions happen at critical infrastructure sites in Iran, will we have, you know, once again, key officials in the nuclear program have mysterious accidents, are we going to see some type of return to the shadow war, , will Israel tolerate this informal deal?

David Greely (20m 09s):
It's a lot going on, as you said from just when we talked earlier this year. I was curious, you know, outside of the geopolitics, what other big influences are you seeing on the commodity markets this year that people should be aware of?

Helima Croft (20m 22s):
No, I, again, I focus a lot on obviously the geopolitics, but when I think about OPEC I don't always think of that as, as geopolitics. I really think about it as really core economics and I think about the, you know, Minister of Energy in Saudi Arabia, his Abdulaziz bin Salman, he really thinks about himself as a sort of central banker of oil. And so I think it's really enormously important to think about how they see the market, what they see as the, sort of their core priorities in terms of what price meets their domestic needs. So I think that sort of a, a broader thinking about if you were sitting in the seat of Prince Abdulaziz, what type of action would you be taking in the market. Or really importantly, if you are sitting in the seat of Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, how are you seeing your revenue imperative. How are you thinking about delivering on vision 2030. I think a lot of market participants are really in the weeds on the fundamentals and obviously thinking about inventories, thinking about what we are seeing like in the Atlantic Basin. But I often think that we should be thinking about putting ourselves in the place of these oil producing nations and thinking about how they're seeing the world.

David Greely (21m 43s):
And I think that's great, especially thinking over the long term where you're away from some of these smaller inventory cycles and I wanted to get your thoughts, and I'm not gonna ask you for a price forecast or anything like that, but I think there has for some time been a sense in the market that there's a, a long term bullish story for many commodities and then concern about the macroeconomic picture in the short run and over the course of the year, prices have stayed broadly volatile, but stable from end to end and I'm curious, like how are you thinking about, you know, say the long term outlook versus the near term?

Helima Croft (22m 21s):
Well, I think that the really interesting question that a lot of us are trying to grapple with is does this underinvestment thesis really hold and who is gonna be the last one standing when it comes to investment in oil and gas and I spend so much time in the golf, and to me

what's interesting is like that's where you really do see the, the all of the above strategy where they're basically like look you are going to have, you know, key parts of the world that are gonna drive demand for oil, the developing nations. A lot of focus on energy poverty still, like in places like Sub-Saharan Africa and what does the future look like for demand for places like India. Is India, the new China and they're basically saying like, we're gonna invest in the energy of the future hydrocarb, you know, hydrogen, we're gonna invest obviously in natural gas, but we're gonna invest in in oil as well and what I think is going to be interesting is if this is not mirrored elsewhere, even if demand declines overall for fossil fuels, who's gonna be dominating the supply. Are we gonna get, even if it's a smaller pie are we gonna have fewer participants and are we gonna see then greater influence accruing to these nations who are pursuing this type of investment strategy?

David Greely (23m 44s):
Yeah, it's a fascinating question of where will the last barrel, assuming we ever get to a last barrel, where will that come from and where would you want it come from.

Helima Croft (23m 52s):
It's gonna come from the Gulf,

David Greely (23m 54s:
Right and, you know, bringing up, you know, investing in the energy of the future and doing the full range, it made me think of you know, there also seems to be a switch to the energy of the past and I'm thinking of coal in particular. Arjun Murti was on a few weeks ago, and he's fantastic. He's great and he made the really important point that, you know, in places like China and places like India, you can see a move to electric vehicles, which here we associate with going green sustainable there, it could very well be associated more with energy security. You know, obviously those countries have way more coal reserves, they can generate electricity from coal, put that into electric vehicles, right. It's a coal car and reduce their dependence on oil and it's a coal car and I'm curious, you know, do you see that calculus when you think about the, the folks in China, the folks in India?

Helima Croft (24m 42s):
I would even say when we see that calculus, when we look to Europe, I mean to me what was so striking about the war and the way we've chosen, again, when you think about our sanctions policy, but also when you think about how quickly European nations pivoted and think about Germany in particular, I mean the fact that when they were staring down an energy crisis and potentially having to deal with angry consumers in their home countries, like they went back to the traditional fossil fuels and I think that's an interesting question that it poses is if this was not the moment, yes, the, the Europeans did make a lot of measures in terms of consumption as well back on consumption but if this was not the moment to really say to consumers like, this is not going to be necessarily a low cost transition.

Helima Croft (25m 40s):
Like that's the kind of moment to say like what we've learned in the Russia, Ukraine war also potentially applies to the energy transition. That this can be a bumpy price environment. We can see volatility and preparing consumers for the economic cost of a transition that the necessary transition. And I, I think about that in the US as well. When we think about SPR releases, a lot of emphasis was placed on shielding consumers from the impact of the war in terms of higher prices, particularly in the US it wasn't as much a conversation about ratcheting down consumption. Nobody wants to have the Jimmy Carter put on a sweater conversation here, but that may be a necessary conversation as we get further along into policies designed to accelerate the transition.

David Greely (26m 31s):
Alright, I remember seeing Jimmy Carter on television, so I'm definitely feeling my age right now.

Helima Croft (26m 37s):
You and me both.

David Greely (26m 39s):
But I'm really glad you brought that up because you know, we've talked about policymakers in China, India a little bit in the us you know, middle East, Saudi Arabia, Russia, but this energy transition piece really brings in policymakers in Europe as well as policymakers in the US where as you said, you know, maybe a year ago little more, there was a real focus on we're gonna transition, we're gonna transition quickly, we're not gonna talk about the pain involved kind of security reliability, taking a back seat. Do you think

that shift, 'cause it definitely seems like there's been a shift to when we look at the natural gas market in Europe, right, building a lot of LNG intake facilities, right. So even if they're not doing as many long-term contracts, they're, they've got the capability. How do you see the thinking about the fossil fuel industry broadly, I guess, and investment needed to keep our current energy supply going while we transition? How do you see that calculus changing among policy makers?

Helima Croft (27m 38s):
I think natural gas has seen the biggest sort of shift, because remember it wasn't even in the green taxonomy of the EU and then you have this war, I think the war changed so much in terms of the thinking about energy security. It brought energy security back up to the top of action items for Western governments. And again, look how the EU pivoted. I mean, they're building out the infrastructure. Think about the role US LNG played in preventing staving off an energy crisis in Europe. And the question is going forward, now that we've decided that gas is a transition fuel, is it a transition fuel or a destination fuel that still needs to be settled. But I think it is squarely established now that natural gas is seen as a essential transition fuel and again, I don't think any European governments really wanted to face the full wrath of their consumers.

Helima Croft (28m 40s):
You know, I think about what happened in France, remember with the yellow vest when you had those protests, nobody wanted to return to that and natural gas imports from the US and also places like Qatar really helped stave off that scenario. But I think it's gonna be interesting when we think, you know, going forward, you've had the Biden administration really shift from, remember the early days of the Biden administration, the discussion was really about keep the resource in the ground, and now you have still the conversation about, okay, we need you to put the money in the ground because we need these supplies in the near term. The question is, if you are an energy company, and we've seen a really strong rebound in US production, but does that message sort of work with your, your boardroom, is that enough you know, we keep talking now about just put the money in the ground for the near term. At what point though, do we have to say like, what, when do we get to the end state of this. That's, I think gonna be the challenge. Like you need these short term supplies, and so you're saying we need the investment for the near term, but can you manage this so you don't have this volatile, disruptive, messy transition?

David Greely (29m 53s):
And we've talked a lot about policymakers and I appreciate that, such a unique insight that you have. Of course, you're also the head of commodities research at RBC Capital markets, and so you're, I'm sure you're talking with investors and CEOs and all those folks every day who are putting the dollars to work and I'm curious, you know, has there been a shift in their attitude or, or what is the, the attitude among investors towards commodities these days?

Helima Croft (30m 20s):
Well, you know, it is really interesting to me because I feel like, I feel I see my age, but these things are happening. These shifts are happening so fast now. I mean, just think about 2020 when oil briefing went negative and there was this whole discussion about peak demand and is it the age of fossil, truly over and then the war shifts everything back to basically energy security being of importance and now conversation of do we have enough investment and so these things are, these things are moving, they're moving quickly. And so to me, we don't know when this war is going to end and so I think we're gonna be dealing with this energy security dynamic for at least several more years because I think a lot of market participants have sort of parked the Russia war on the sidelines and they think of it as background noise, but it could really come back to a front and center issue.

Helima Croft (31m 20s):
I mean, you mentioned earlier in this conversation what was happening in the Black Sea. If we had had a Russian tank or a sunk, that would've been, I think a material event. And again, I think the Russians have every incentive to try to get the west to rethink the supply of weaponry to Ukraine. And so I do think they wanna cause as much economic pain as possible and what, what, what's left for them in terms of weaponry and I still think energy and weaponization of energy remains part of the Russian strategy. So I think we're gonna be dealing with these issues for, you know, at least several more years.

David Greely (31m 56s):
Well, I hope you'll come back and talk with us more about it. Speaking of things that go quickly, I feel like conversations always fly by with you. It's so, so much in them, so entertaining to talk with you, and I really appreciate that. Before I let you go though, as you know, we think of our summer playlist series as our beach reading and a podcast, and I'm asking everyone who's on, including yourself,

what's on their own personal beach reading list this summer, whether you're reading it at the beach or in the office. So what are you reading this summer, Helima?

Helima Croft (32m 25s):
So I was at the beach and I decided to go back and read some novels. So 100 Years of Solitude was at the top of my beach reading list. I also have Teenagers so sometimes what I do is I see what they're reading for school and I basically read it alongside them as well. So I picked up a little Marquez this summer, but to stay in my, you know, my main world, I also always bring foreign affairs with me. So that is always my essential plain reading and beach reading as well.

David Greely (32m 59s):
It sounds like a great range of topics. Thanks for sharing that with us.

Helima Croft (33m 03s):
Thank you for having me on again.

David Greely (33m 05s):
Absolutely. Really appreciated you being here. Thanks again to Helima Croft, Managing Director and Global Head of Commodity Strategy at RBC Capital Markets. We hope you enjoyed the episode. Join us next week as we continue our summer playlist 2023 with our next special guest. We hope you'll join us.

Announcer (33m 26s):
This episode was brought to you in part by Abaxx Exchange. Market participants need the confidence and ability to secure funding for resource development, production, processing, refining, and transportation of commodities across the globe. With markets for LNG, battery metals, and emissions offsets at the core of the transition to sustainability, Abaxx Exchange is building solutions to manage risk in these rapidly changing global markets. Facilitating futures and options contracts designed to offer market participants clear price signals and hedging capabilities in those markets is essential to our sustainable energy transition. Abaxx Exchange: bringing you better benchmarks, better technology, and better tools for risk management.

Announcer (34m 15s):
That concludes this week's episode of SmarterMarkets by Abaxx. For episode transcripts and additional episode information, including research, editorial, and video content, please visit smartermarkets.media. Please help more people discover the podcast by leaving a review on Apple Podcast, Spotify, YouTube, or your favorite podcast platform. SmarterMarkets is presented for informational and entertainment purposes only. The information presented on SmarterMarkets should not be construed as investment advice. Always consult a licensed investment professional before making investment decisions. The views and opinions expressed on SmarterMarkets are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect those of the show's hosts or producer. SmarterMarkets, its hosts, guests, employees, and producer, Abaxx Technologies, shall not be held liable for losses resulting from investment decisions based on informational viewpoints presented on SmarterMarkets. Thank you for listening, and please join us again next week.