

Inflation

Policy makers and investors have debated the effects of fiscal and monetary policy on inflation, but a big reason for rising prices this year have been factors that neither lawmakers nor central banks can do much about.

Prices for natural gas, lumber, corn, soybeans, wheat and other building blocks of modern commerce surged to multiyear highs — in some cases records — because of fire, freezes, flood, drought, hurricanes and some of the hottest weather ever.

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