



**WISCO**  
Investment Management

*First Quarter 2021*

**DEAR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS;**

**The Wisco-managed ETF portfolios were flat to slightly higher this quarter.** Our lower risk portfolios (Conservative & Balanced) were flattish while our higher risk portfolios (Growth & Aggressive) were up in the mid-single digit range. Our higher risk portfolios benefited from continued strong growth in the global equities markets offset to an extent by softer results from our metal holdings. Our lower risk portfolios also benefited from strong equity market returns but were disproportionately impacted by declines in the fixed income markets this period.

**The U.S. and International stock markets were up this quarter, rising 7% and 5%, respectively.** Equity markets continue to be the primary beneficiary of accommodative Central Bank policies around the world. Global Central banks (G7) all slashed borrowing rates to zero in the last year to provide liquidity to financial institutions. In the U.S., we are also benefiting from nearly \$5.3 trillion in stimulus thrown at the Coronavirus in the last twelve months with another \$2 trillion infrastructure bill on the table (for perspective 2020 U.S. GDP was \$21 trillion). In addition to these stimulative policy actions, investor sentiment appears to be improving as the economy slowly re-opens, election fatigue wanes, and we return to our normal routines, which is expected to be a key driver to the U.S. Real GDP growth forecasts of 6% and 4% for 2021 and 2022.

**Our Fixed Income allocations were down 3% this quarter.** The 10-year treasury yield began the quarter at 0.9% and edged up to 1.8% at quarter-end. Fixed income returns generally move in opposite directions with treasury yields. A low interest rate environment along with the possibility that rates continue to move higher poses a challenge for low-risk, income-oriented investors to earn yields commensurate with inflation and is likely driving demand towards riskier assets. The Fed has maintained its borrowing rate at 0%-0.25% since last March and has stated that it does not expect to raise rates until late-2023 (although some believe this will happen sooner). Real interest rates (adjusted for inflation) have been negative in the U.S. since January 2020.

**Our commodity exposures consisted of gold (down 10%) and silver (down 8%) this period.** Both positions are in the portfolios to potentially take advantage of their safe-haven status (low correlation with stocks and bonds) and hedging ability against an increasing money supply. Wisco uses alternative exposures (like metals & agricultural products) in our ETF portfolios as they tend to improve portfolio diversification when combined with traditional investments.

**We know this has been an unusual year in the financial markets.** Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your recent performance, current market positioning or your target risk level. Also, the 2020 IRA contribution deadline is fast approaching so let us know if we can help.

At Wisco, we believe our approach of designing well-diversified, low-cost investment portfolios is the best way to produce favorable results over time. We would like to thank you for providing us with the opportunity to work with you as your investment adviser. We appreciate your business!

Sincerely,

*The Wisco Team*



## First Quarter 2021

# Wisco Investment Management

Wisco-managed portfolios are constructed using five asset classes; Domestic Equity, International Equity, Domestic Fixed Income, Alternative Investments and Money Market. Our current managed portfolio asset class allocations are as follows:

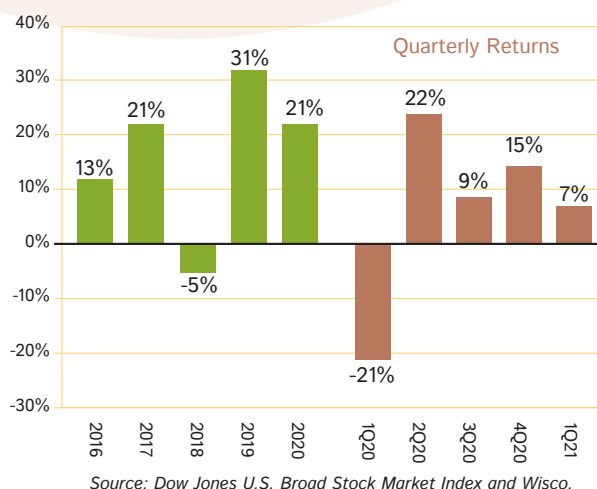
### WISCO MANAGED PORTFOLIOS

	Conservative	Balanced	Balanced Growth	Growth	Aggressive
Domestic Equity	24%	33%	41%	49%	59%
International Equity	5%	9%	12%	18%	23%
Domestic Fixed Income	60%	47%	36%	22%	7%
Alternative Investments	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Money Market	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target Volatility*	6%	8%	10%	12%	15%

\*Target Volatility is our estimate for the annual standard deviation of portfolio returns.  
Source: Wisco Investment Management LLC

## First Quarter 2021 Market Review

### DOMESTIC EQUITY

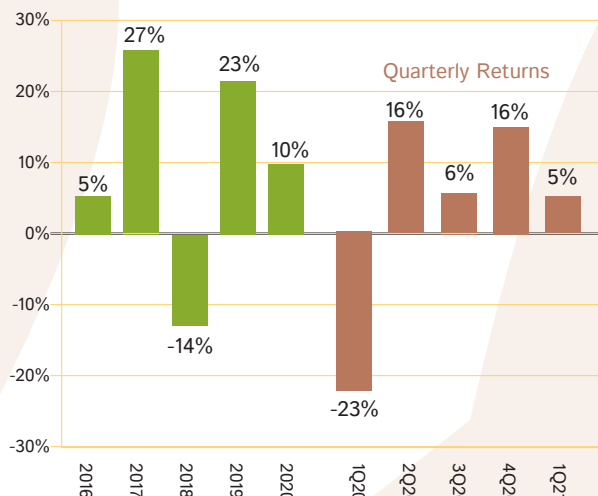


The stock market continued to rally returning 7% in 1Q21. The S&P 500 closed the quarter at an all-time high of 3973 and is now 78% above the March 23, 2020 bottom. In a reversal, small-cap stocks (up 12%) outperformed large-cap stocks (up 6%) this quarter. The last year small stocks outperformed large stocks was 2016. The United States' 4Q20 GDP increased 4.3% but still declined in 2020. S&P 500's 4Q20 earnings increased 4%, with strength in Materials (+22% earnings growth), Technology

(+17%) and Financials (+17%) offsetting declines in Industrials (-52%) and Energy (-101%). S&P 500 earnings declined 14% in 2020. Going forward, 2021 consensus earnings estimates are expected to be 25% higher than 2020's and 7% higher than 2019's peak levels. We feel a number of drivers should help 2021's growth prospects. First, most citizens could be vaccinated against COVID-19 by July. Second, the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package passed in March could accelerate consumer spending. Finally, an infrastructure bill could boost capital expenditures in the second half of 2021.

Strong growth prospects and little inflation have led to above normal returns for the past twelve months. Going forward, the questions are 1) how much good news is priced in and 2) will inflation force an end to the Fed's easy money policy? With the S&P 500 trading at a forward PE of 23x, it appears a lot of good news is already priced into the market. That said, we do not see inflation as a threat near-term and feel the Fed is willing to tolerate some inflation to ensure a strong economy. We are maintaining our domestic equity positions in all our managed portfolios for now but may look to decrease exposure later in the year should inflation become more of a threat.

## INTERNATIONAL EQUITY

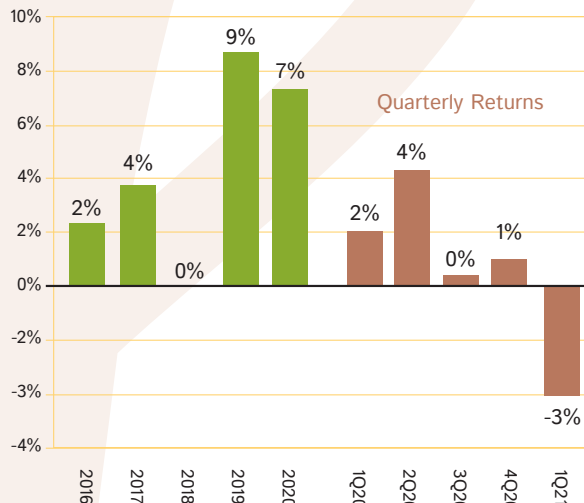


Source: MSCI ACWI ex USA and Wisco

The MSCI All World Index increased 5% in 1Q21, with FTSE Developed Large Cap Index up 4%, FTSE Small Cap Index up 5% and FTSE Emerging Market Index up 4%. In Europe, markets were mainly positive with Norway (+10%) and Austria (+9%) among the top performers, while Poland (-3%) lagged. In Asia, Hong Kong was up 4%, South Korea increased 2%, while Japan was flat. In emerging markets, South Africa (+11%) and Taiwan (+10%) were strong but Shanghai (-1%), and Brazil (-10%) declined.

The Eurozone continues to struggle with GDP down 2.6%, however, Britain was stronger with GDP up 4%. Asia appears farther along in its recovery with Japan's GDP up 12% and China up 11%. We are hopeful Europe will start to soon see growth as vaccinations become more prevalent. In terms of valuation (PE), international stocks trade at a 29% discount vs. the United States which suggests valuations might be more attractive abroad. We maintain international equity exposures in all our managed portfolios and may increase our exposure if the international discount widens or growth accelerates. We also feel small and emerging market companies could grow faster than large companies in developed markets.

## DOMESTIC FIXED INCOME



Source: Barclays Capital U.S. Aggregate Bond Index and Wisco.

The Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index declined 3% in 1Q21 with Intermediate Treasuries down 3%, Short-term Investment Grade Bonds down 1%, Long-term Investment Grade Bonds down 8% and High Yield Bonds up 1%. The 10-year treasury yield trended higher in the quarter starting at 0.92%, peaking March 18th at 1.76%, before finishing the quarter at 1.75%. Annual inflation (PCE) in February remained tame at 1.6%. The Federal Reserve continues to hold rates around 0% and increased the assets on its balance sheet 47% over the last year to \$7.7T in fixed income securities. The money supply (M2) now stands at \$19.7T up from \$15.5T twelve months ago.

After posting consistently good returns the last four years, Fixed Income had its worst quarter since 4Q16, as consistently increasing rates negatively impacted price especially on longer dated bonds. Going forward, we feel shorter dated bonds may perform better than longer dated bonds as the Fed appears committed to easy monetary policies for an extended period, and inflation remains in check. We continue to hold Fixed Income in all our client portfolios and prefer Investment Grade to Treasuries and short duration to long duration.



## ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS

The Dow Jones-UBS Commodity Index increased 8% in the quarter. In agriculture, grain prices were mixed. Corn prices were up 17% and soybean prices increased 9%<sup>1</sup>, but wheat prices declined 3%<sup>1</sup>. Grain prices were helped by dwindling stockpiles.

After a strong performance in 2020, precious metals traded down in 1Q21. Silver declined 8%<sup>3</sup> in 1Q21 after increasing 48% in 2020. Gold prices decreased 10%<sup>2</sup> in the quarter but were up 25%<sup>2</sup> last year. Precious metals suffered in the quarter as investors' appetite for more risk negatively impacted traditional safe-haven assets like precious metals.

The Cushing, Oklahoma spot price for WTI crude oil increased 27% in the quarter to \$61.49/barrel. In 2020, spot oil declined 22%.

Wisco holds positions in alternative investments because these assets tend to not be correlated with stocks and bonds and improve a portfolio's risk adjusted return. Specifically, we hold a silver ETF and a gold ETF. Gold and silver could benefit from central banks around the world aggressively increasing the money supply. In addition, precious metals are a good hedge against hyperinflation and/or geopolitical uncertainty. Finally, silver has the added benefit of several industrial applications and we feel a stronger economy could increase demand for silver.

## FOOTNOTES:

1. Return calculation based on the near future contract as quoted in the Wall Street Journal.
2. Return calculation uses Aberdeen Physical Gold Shares (SGOL) as a proxy for gold.
3. Return calculation uses Aberdeen Physical Silver Trust ETF (SIVR) as a proxy for silver.
4. Return calculation uses Cushing, OK WTI spot price FOB as a proxy for oil.

## DISCLAIMER:

Wisco Investment Management LLC is a registered investment adviser. Information presented is for educational purposes only and does not intend to make an offer or solicitation for the sale or purchase of any specific securities product, service, or investment strategy. Investments involve risk and unless otherwise stated, are not guaranteed. Be sure to first consult with a qualified financial adviser, tax professional, or attorney before implementing any strategy or recommendation discussed herein.

## MONEY MARKET

The current money market yield is 0.03%. Given this low yield, Wisco is going to hold a minimal amount of Cash/Money Market assets in our client portfolios.

*Wall Street to Wisconsin*