

eSignal - Continuous Contract Symbols (Using #F)

A continuous contract is designed to piece the trading activity of the most active contracts together, and then chart that activity to see how the prices have fluctuated over time. For continuous futures contracts, you simply need to use the symbol, a space then #F in place of the month code and year to create a continuous contract. For example, **ES #F, CL #F, LC #F**. The current, most active contract will generally mirror the data you see on the #F symbol in a quote sheet. **#F symbols are available for US-based futures contracts only.**

Update: To create a continuous contract for European or Asia/Pacific Futures, or to customize a US Future Continuous Contract, you'll need to be running at least version 7.9. For instructions on creating User-Defined Continuous Contracts, please review [KB Article 2258](#).

Intention of #F Symbols

We created the #F for futures so users can track a long term trend of the futures contracts they are following. These symbols will work in any window in eSignal, however, we recommend that you use them in daily charts for long term trend analysis. By their own nature, continuation charts usually have gaps at the rollover dates which will often affect any analytics that are applied to daily charts. Keep in mind that these #F symbols are designed to be a continuation of PRICES, not activity.

Rollover Details

Rollovers for #F are done in the afternoon (after the markets close at 13:15 PT,) so they are in place for the next morning. Even though the actual stock index rollovers occur on a Thursday morning, we roll the corresponding #F symbols on Wednesday afternoon so they will be in place for the Thursday Open. That creates a bit of an overlap for Wednesday night's trading, since the Globex and A/C/E sessions are still using the old contract as the front month.

The rollover date we generally use is the 2nd day before the last trading day for the expiring contract. We avoid using the last 2 trading days since they typically can be extremely volatile and can have huge hi/lo ranges that don't reflect the activity of the whole market. However, we want to roll them as close to expiration date as possible, so the "First Notice Day" date of any contract is not a consideration. For some markets, we do the rollover earlier; below is a list of some of these:

Stock Indexes -- Forced rollover at the exchange. 8 days before the 3rd Friday of the expiration month (Thursday). Same day as when \$PREM is rolled.

CME Currencies -- CME Currencies now roll on the afternoon before expiration day.

Special Case Currencies (BR & 6L) -- Rollover on last day of the previous month due to all activity being in the front month.

CBOT Interest Rates (US, FV, TN, TY, TU, YH, ZB, ZF, ZN & ZT) -- Forced rollover at the exchange. This is generally the last business day of the previous month (First Notice Day).

Metals (GC, SI, ZG, ZI, YG & YI) -- 25 days before expiration, due to an extreme lack of activity in the expiring contract. Otherwise, the daily hi/lo ranges would be too small, or nonexistent.

Grains (CT, KE, KW, MW and MWE) -- 2 weeks before expiration, due to an extreme lack of activity in the expiring contract. Otherwise, the daily hi/lo ranges would be too small, or nonexistent.

Mini Grains (YC, YK and YW) -- Rollover at the end of the previous month due to a 15 day offset.

NK (Nikkei 225) -- Rollover on day prior to Last Trade Date.

Others (CC, KC, PA, PL, RR & ZR) -- 3 weeks before expiration, due to an extreme lack of activity in the expiring contract. Otherwise, the daily hi/lo ranges would be too small, or nonexistent.

Charting Expired Contracts

In order to chart expired futures contracts you will need to enter the symbol, a space, the expiration month code and then the **4 digit** year.

For example:

US Z2007 is the US 30yr Bonds for December 2007

AX U2007-DT is the September 2007 DAX on the Eurex exchange

Update: Rollover Lookup

eSignal 7.9 gives us a powerful new tool to handle continuous contracts. Under **Tools, Configure Continuous Contracts**, is a window that let's a user define exactly what roll strategy they wish to use.

We also had to have some default way of rolling these new types of symbols for those users that didn't want to specify their own rules. For this, we mirrored the same roll strategy we were already using for #F symbols. We did this by the use of a local file stored in the eSignal folder, **rollprefs.tab**. eSignal uses this file whenever a user has not defined there own custom configuration. When a user does specify their roll preferences, it is stored in **user-rollprefs.tab**. For example, if you were to pull up a chart on ES 1!, eSignal will go to **user-rollprefs.tab** to see if there is an entry for ES. If there is not, eSignal will use the defaults in **rollprefs.tab**.

When the Configure Continuous Contracts window is opened, the contracts that are displayed there are the ones listed in the **user-rollprefs.tab**. Because of this, we can actually look up what the #F roll strategies are by replacing the **user-rollprefs.tab** with **rollprefs.tab**. (Please note that this process will overwrite any custom Continuous Contracts settings you have performed previously on domestic future symbols.)

1. Close eSignal.
2. Open Windows Explorer by right-clicking the Windows Start button, and select **Explore**.
3. Navigate to the eSignal folder (default is c:\Program Files\eSignal).
4. Find and right-click the file **user-rollprefs.tab**, and select **Rename**.
5. Rename the file to **user-rollprefs.old**.
6. Find and right-click the **rollprefs.tab**, and select **Rename**.
7. Rename the file to **user-rollprefs.tab**.
8. Launch eSignal.

At this point, you will be able to view the default rollover strategies, by clicking on **Tools, Configure Continuous Contracts**, and then select the desired root symbol in the Contracts area.