

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 04 - COMMODITY SYSTEMS IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES IN ARGENTINA'S EXPORT-ORIENTED BEEF CHAIN

Emilia Ormaechea (emiliaormaechea@gmail.com)

Maricel Massera (maricel.massera@uner.edu.ar)

In the context of recent transformations affecting the global agrifood system, debates surrounding the sustainability of production and consumption patterns have gained central relevance. Livestock production and the beef industry, in particular, have become among the most contested activities due to their environmental impacts. While these dynamics pose challenges for a wide range of actors, they are especially significant in countries where cattle ranching holds major economic, political, and cultural importance, as is the case of Argentina. Against this backdrop, this paper analyzes the strategies deployed by export-oriented fractions of capital linked to the Argentine beef chain in response to emerging sustainability claims and regulatory pressures. It examines both cooperative dynamics with local institutions and the state, as well as conflictual relations with other actors within the beef commodity system at local and international levels. The paper argues that prevailing sustainability strategies are grounded in a productivist and profit-oriented approach aimed at adapting to the

requirements of international markets. Rather than fundamentally questioning livestock production or the beef industry, these strategies reframe sustainability as a source of new market opportunities, enabling capital accumulation and the expansion of corporate business strategies. Methodologically, the study relies on qualitative research, combining documentary analysis of corporate reports and institutional documents with semi-structured interviews conducted with key actors across the beef commodity system.

Palavras-chave: meat industry; agrifood; beef export; argentina.