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Although Argentina is in the midst of a serious economic crisis and climate change is low on the political agenda, the country has taken many steps to end climate change. On October 27, 2019, President Alberto Fernandez replaced Mauricio Macri in office, and officials are unsure how this leadership change will affect the climate policy. In July 2019, while in office, Macri declared a climate crisis in Argentina. In addition, the senate drafted a climate change law. Under current climate policies, annual emissions are projected to grow by about “44%-54% above 2010 levels by 2030, reaching about 449-480 MtCO₂ in 2030.”¹ This is almost double 1990 emission levels.

Mauricio Macri, along with previous Argentine presidents, has had a major impact on the climate crisis through his attempts to slow the progression of climate change. Argentina has adopted many policies in the last 20 years, including the 2006 ‘Biofuels Law’, “...mandating a blend of 5% of biodiesel for diesel fuels and 5% of bioethanol for gasoline as of 2010.”² In addition, the ‘Renewable Energy Law’ was established in December 2006, which required “...that within 10 years (2017), 8% of all electricity consumed nationally must be generated from renewable energy sources.” Among other laws, a carbon tax on fossil fuels was also established in an effort to modernize technology and reform behavior to protect the climate.

“Agriculture is a major component of Argentina’s economy. In 2011, it accounted for 9% of the GDP, and agricultural exports accounted for 48% of total exports.”³ Agriculture in Argentina is crucial to the economy and economic growth. The main sub sectors consist of grain, livestock and dairy. In Argentina, meat is central to their culture and diets, and meat production relies on agriculture to support animals’ growth and sustenance. As reported by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Argentina places third in the world in meat consumption in kilograms per capita annually, with people consuming just over 86.1kg per person each year. Argentina is also “...the second biggest consumer of beef and veal..., with first place being awarded to neighbouring Uruguay...”⁴ Meat consumption is a large contributor to

¹ "Argentina | Climate Action Tracker." <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/argentina/>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

² "Biofuels in Argentina - Assolombarda." http://www.assolombarda.it/fs/201029114737_122.pdf/at_download/file. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

³ "Agriculture is a major component of Argentina's economy. In" <http://um.dk/~media/UM/Markedsinformation%20Publications/Files/Publikationer/Markeder%20og%20sektor/A/Argentina/Factsheet%20AGRO%20Argentina.pdf>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

⁴ "These are the countries that eat the most meat | World" 29 Aug. 2018, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/08/these-countries-eat-the-most-meat-03bdf469-f40a-41e3-ade7-fe4ddb2a709a/>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

climate change. Livestock and meat consumptions contribute to “7.1 Gigatonnes of Co2-equiv per year, representing 14.5 percent of all anthropogenic GHG emissions.”⁵ Therefore, Argentina’s meat consumption and related agricultural production is substantially responsible for Argentina’s contributions to climate change.

Argentina is in a severe economic crisis. According to the Federation of American Scientists, “the peso has lost two-thirds of its value since 2018; inflation is hovering around 30%; and since 2015 the economy has contracted by about 4% and its external debt has increased by 60%.”⁶ Because Argentina has suffered economically for years, it has been very challenging to reduce CO2 emissions. In the U.S, “...subsidies to wind generation, such as the wind production tax credit in the United States, have estimated carbon abatement costs ranging from \$2 to more than \$260 per ton of reduced CO2.”⁷ Unlike other countries, Argentina does not have the money or the materials to reduce CO2 levels, making it very challenging to combat and prevent climate change. Nevertheless, despite economic shortages and inflation limiting the country’s ability to combat climate change, “The Argentine Republic places environmental protection at the highest level, securing it explicitly within an article in its national constitution,” as the Foundation of Investigations Economic Latin American (FIEL) states.

Argentina was accepted into the Paris Agreement on February 15, 2017 and entered into the force on March 17, 2017, along with 191 other countries. The Paris Agreement aligns with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that emphasizes adaptation, mitigation, greenhouse-gas-emissions, and finance to help combat and fight the climate crisis. More specifically, the agreement requires that, before the end of the century, all countries keep a global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius” by 2030. Despite this agreement, Argentina is not on track to meet this requirement, resulting in the labeling of the country’s intended nationally determined contributions (NDC) as “highly insufficient,” according to the Climate Action Tracker (CAT). Despite Argentina’s efforts, the “...climate commitment is not consistent with holding warming to below 2°C, let alone limiting it to 1.5°C as required under the Paris Agreement.”⁸ This could present many potential issues in the future for Argentina’s economy and the nation’s climate.

Although Argentina is taking many actions to combat climate change, annual emissions are still expected to increase significantly in the coming decades. Annual emissions are still expected to grow “... by about 44%-54% above 2010 levels by 2030, reaching about 449-480 MtCO2 in 2030.”⁹ It is estimated that the projected warming may reach up to 3.5°C in the

⁵ "greenhouse gas emissions - Food and Agriculture" 13 Dec. 2019, <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/197623/icode/>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

⁶ "Argentina's Economic Crisis - FAS.org." 28 Jan. 2020, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10991.pdf>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

⁷ "The Cost of Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions - Harvard" 2 Aug. 2018, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/stock/files/gillingham_stock_cost_080218_posted.pdf. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

⁸ "Argentina | Climate Action Tracker." <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/argentina/>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

⁹ "Argentina | Climate Action Tracker." <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/argentina/>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

northern parts of the country.¹⁰ In addition to rising temperatures, researchers believe that the changing climate may cause precipitation extremes, a phenomenon that has already been observed in Argentina, such as with the Argentine drought of 2009, which turned the country into a dust bowl and caused many crops to perish. The Agricultural Secretariat reported "...a 44% drop in the 2008-2009 wheat harvest, and a 27% drop in corn,"¹¹ and this drop had a major negative impact on the Argentine economy. In addition to extreme droughts, climate change is also projected to cause flooding. The country has already witnessed many deadly floods, such as the April 2013 flood in Buenos Aires, Argentina's Federal Capital, and in the nearby city of La Plata, which experienced 91 deaths, the most reported in this flood.

In the coming years, Argentina plans to continue working to lower CO2 emissions nationwide, despite economic and national obstacles. The Argentine government remains determined and hopeful that their actions will be sufficient to combat climate change and to do their part to calm the global climate crisis.

¹⁰ "Climate change in Argentina - ResearchGate." 13 Mar. 2019, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267762362_Climate_change_in_Argentina_Trends_projections_impacts_and_adaptation. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.

¹¹ "Argentina farmers hit hard by worst drought in decades - Los" 1 Feb. 2009, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-feb-01-adfg-argentinadrought1-story.html>. Accessed 28 Apr. 2020.