

# Report

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## **Country-Case Studies on Reflecting National Circumstances and Development Priorities in National Codes on Good Agricultural Practice that can be benchmarked to EurepGAP**

### **Argentina**

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Authors:

Martin Babboni & Valeria Glusman, Argencert, Buenos Aires/Argentina

Dr. Jochen Neuendorff, GfRS, Göttingen/Germany

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## **List of abbreviations**

AFINOA: Asociación Fitosanitaria del Noroeste Argentino  
CAFI: Cámara Argentina de Fruticultores Integrados  
CALIBA: Cámara Argentina de Laboratorios independientes, Bromatológicos, Ambientales y Afines  
CAPAB: Camara Argentina de Productores de Arandanos y otros Berris  
FUNBAPA: Fundación Barrera Patagónica  
GAP: Good Agricultural Practices  
GMP: Good Manufacturing Practices  
IDR: Instituto de desarrollo Rural  
IFA: Integrated Farm Assurance  
INFOCOPO: Información Comercial por Posición Arancelaria  
INTA: Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria  
ISCAMEN: Instituto de Sanidad y Calidad Agropecuaria Mendoza  
MIP: Manejo integrado de Plagas  
NOA: Noroeste Argentino  
PROCAL: Programa Argentino de Calidad de Alimentos  
SAGPyA: Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganadería, Pesca y Alimentación  
SENASA: Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria  
TWG Argentine EUREGAP Working Technical Group

## **1 Introduction**

Argentina is a country that mainly exports produce, with significant increases in the exports towards the European Union from 12,000 to 18,000 thousands tons from 1993 up to the present.

According to official data of FoodPlus, there are 14,000 ha under EUREPGAP certification belonging to approximately 150 producers.

The different profiles of Argentine producers of the various regions of the country have generated many differences in their capacity to adapt to the requirements of Good Agricultural Practices.

The producers that are EUREPGAP certified face in general greater costs of implementation, training and certification, and their final production, although able to accede to more demanding international markets, does not receive an additional valuation for being a certified product.

The UNCTAD secretariat has commissioned this country-case study that aims at putting the benchmarking option into a specific national trade and development context with a view to (i) identifying the potential impact of national GAP codes on the major stakeholders (producers, local communities, exporters, and the government); and (ii) reviewing options for shaping national GAPs and related policies and measures in a way that duly reflects national conditions and development priorities. This report was jointly elaborated by experts of the Argentinian certification body ARGENCERT and Dr. Jochen Neuendorff as the UNCTAD-consultant.

## **2 Results**

### **2.1 Short overview of production and trade patterns of horticultural products and the role of EUREPGAP**

In Argentina there is official statistical information for different productions, regarding produced and exported amounts (in weight) as well as the production's destination and lists of exporting companies. The information is available in different institutions (SAGPyA, Ministry of Outer Relations)

In 2004, the total amount of Argentina's agro-alimentary exports was 15,64 million tons. On average, 27% of Argentina's agro-alimentary exports has the EU as desti-

nation, while the rest is mainly exported to Brazil, then Russia and -to a lesser extent- the USA, Canada and other countries.

The total amount of Argentine agro-alimentary exports to the European Union was valued at 4,459 million dollars. This represents 8.17% (in value) and 16.48% (in volume) of the whole exports from Argentina to the European Union.

6.90% (in value) of the total amount of Argentine agro-alimentary exports to the European Union correspond to fresh fruits and 1.61% to vegetables.

Argentina contributes 21% of the EU's imports from third countries in amount and 19% in weight (tons) of vegetables like onions, garlic and other vegetables.

The vegetables of greater volume are onion and garlic. Other products of minor volume contribute more added value per unit (e.g.: asparagus and avocados).

In the fruit sector, the main products exported to the EU are fresh fruits, mainly citrus, composed of 45% lemons, oranges and tangerines, and then pears and apples (38%). With respect to citrus, Argentina contributes 17% of EU imports (second place after South Africa), and holds the fourth place for apples, pears and quinces, with 16% of value and 18% of weight (tons) after South Africa, New Zealand and Chile.

The values of the main exported fruit and vegetable products, as well as their main importing countries, are indicated in the following tables.

Table 1: Exports of fresh fruits to the European Union :

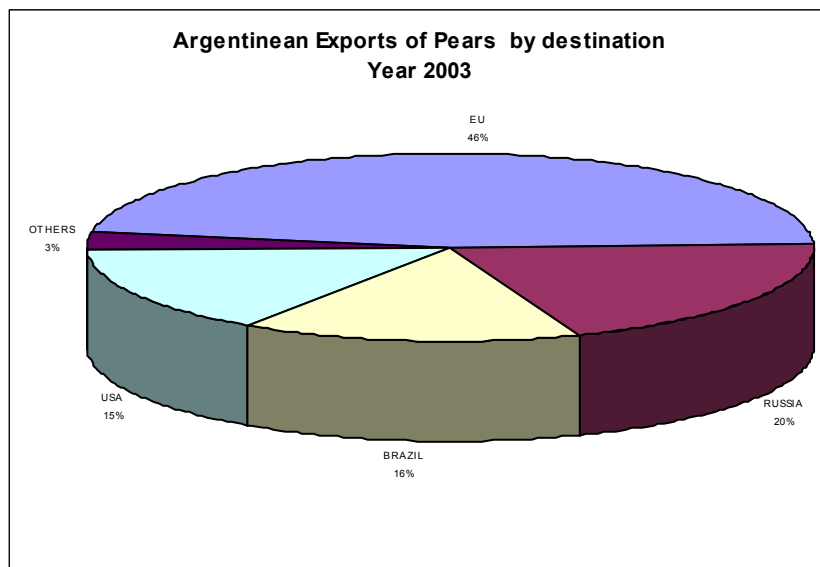
Product	Tariff position	Nacional Production (Tn)	Amount Ex-ported (Tn)	Total amount (in thousands US\$ FOB)	Importing countries (% of volume)
Avocado	080440		555	592 (545 to the EU)	EU: 83% Chile: 17%
Apples	080810		200.345	82.023 (46.315)	EU: 55% (Belgium, Russia: 26% Brazil: 14% USA: 2%
Grapefruit	080540	177.210	26.067	9.133 (8110 to the EU)	EU: 89% Russia: 5% Romania: 5%
Grapes	080610		37.840 (28.864 a EU)	32.756 (26.832 to the EU)	EU: 76% Russia: 10% Brazil: 9% USA: 2% Canada: 1%
Lemon	080530	1.340.152	320.000	133.290 (1.984 to the EU)	Russia: 43% EU: 35% Canada: 13% USA: 0% Canada: 4%
Oranges	080510	736.607	76.100	21.618  (18.190 to the EU)	EU: 86% (Spain: 28% Netherlands: 24% Belgium: 14) Russia: 9%
Pears and quinces	080810	500.000	328.100	148.552 (70.980 to the EU)	EU 47% Russia: 20% Brazil: 15% USA: 15%
Tangerines	080520	483.136	42.750	18.852 (12.187 to the EU)	EU: 64% Russia 13% Philippines: 10%

Official data extracted from the Ministry of Exterior Relations, International Trading and Cultivation, corresponding to 2003, INFOCOPO.

Citric: data of year 2004 were obtained from "Production of Citruses in Argentina - Year 2004".

### Argentinean exports of Pears by destination – Year 2003

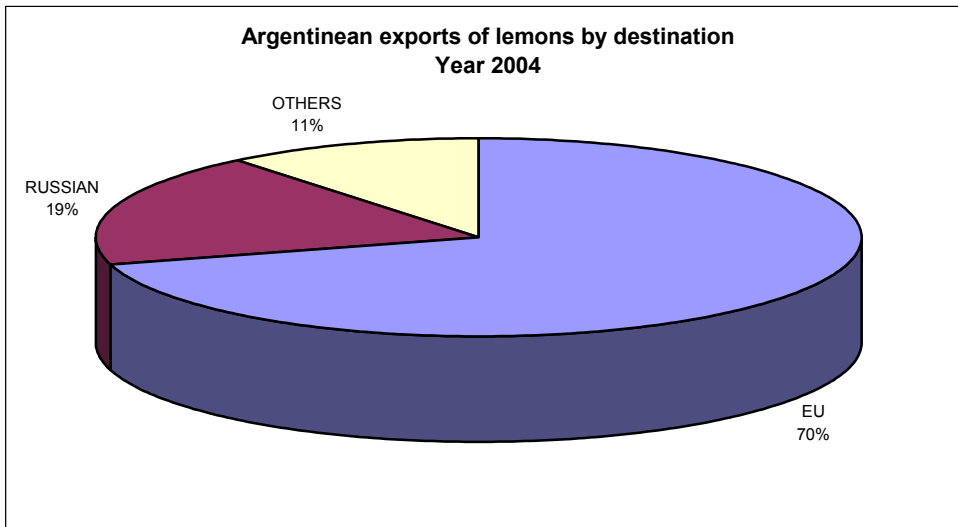
Destination	Ton	Percentage
UE	153.112	86
Italy	59.419	18
Belgium	33.084	10
The Netherlands	31.503	10
France	7.596	2
RUSSIA	64.325	20
BRAZIL	50.914	16
USA	48.765	15
OTHERS	10.981	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>328.097</b>	<b>100</b>



Argentina has 20% of the international trade of pears.

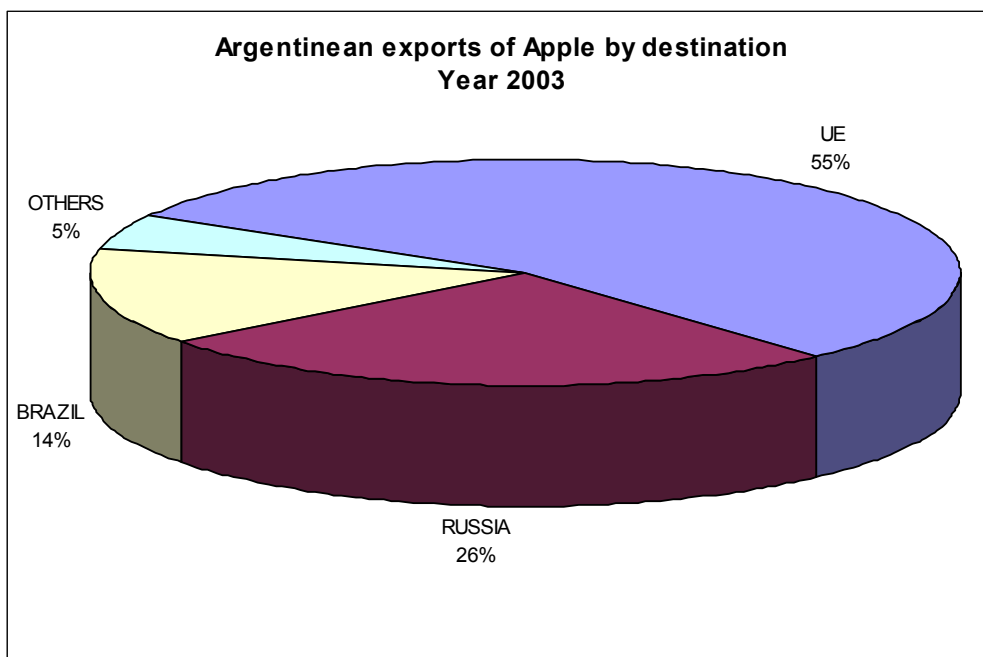
### Argentinean exports of Lemon by destination – Year 2004

Destination	Ton of Lemon	Percentage
EU	224.961	70
Italy	45.130	14
The Netherlands	42.325	13
Belgium	33.227	10
Greece	28.743	9
RUSSIAN	59.455	19
OTHERS	34.783	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>319.199</b>	<b>100</b>



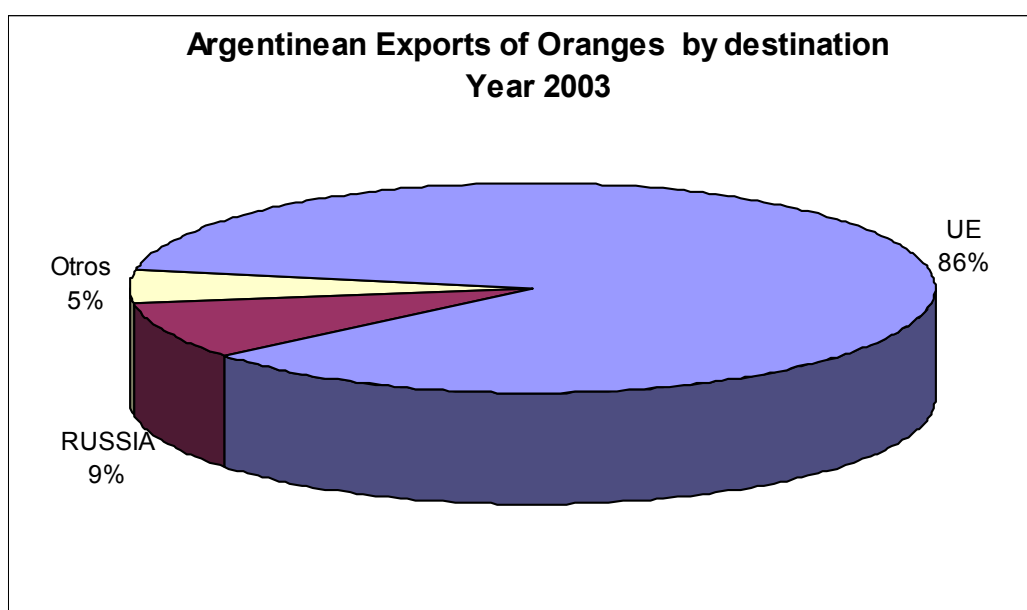
**Argentinean exports of Apples by destination – Year 2003**

Destination	Ton of Apples	Percentage
UE	109.920	55
Belgium	31.131	16
The Netherlands	30.155	15
Spain	10.622	5
Sweden	9.880	5
RUSSIA	52.763	26
BRAZIL	27.543	14
OTHERS	10.118	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200.345</b>	<b>100</b>



## Argentinean exports of Oranges by destination – Year 2003

Destination	Ton of Oranges	Percentage
UE	65.461	86
Spain	21.882	29
The Netherlands	18.724	25
Belgium	10.502	14
United Kingdom	3.862	5
RUSSIA	6.909	9
OTHERS	3.729	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76.099</b>	<b>100</b>



In 2005, the exports of some fruits increased (see table 2).

Table 2: Exports of selected fruits to the European Union in 2004 and 2005:

Product	U\$S (thousands)		Increase (%)
	2004	2005	
Apples	84.000	115.000	43%
Lemons	129.000	149.000	20%
Pears	147.000	202.000	55%

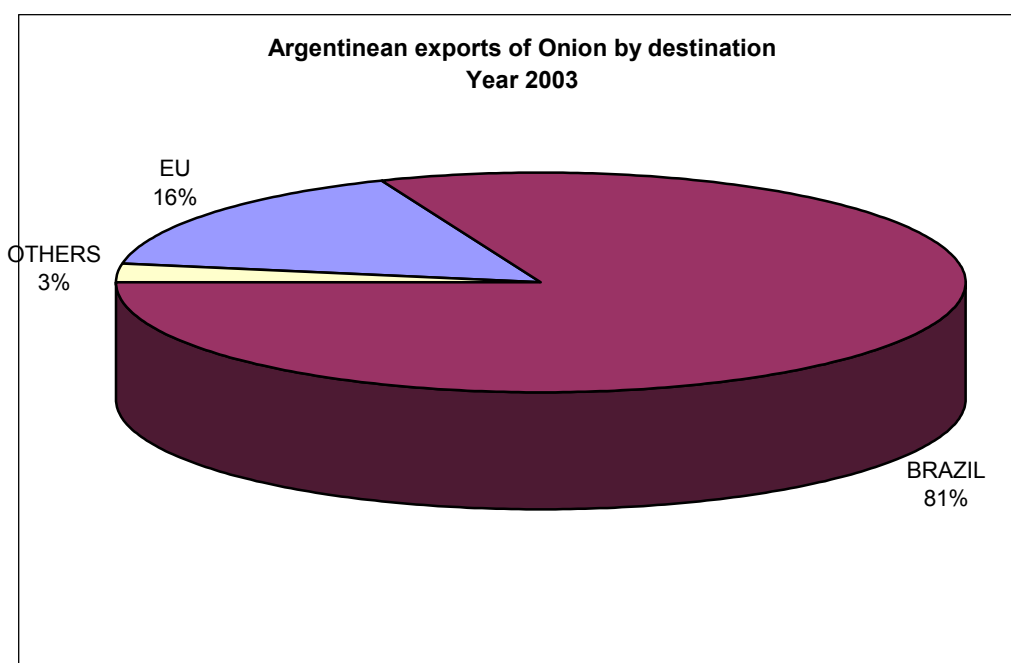
Table 3: Exports of vegetables to the European Union :

Product	Tariff position	Nacional Production (Tn)	Amount Ex-ported (Tn)	Total amount (in thousands U\$ FOB)	Importing countries (% of volume)
Garlic	070320	800.000	270.000	56.842	Brazil: 61% USA: 8% EU: 19%
Onion	70310	800.000	210.000	28.629 (EU 7.500)	Brazil: 81% EU: 16%
Asparagus	070920		732	616	USA: 46% EU: 43%

Official data extracted from the Ministry of Exterior Relations, International Trading and Cultivation, corresponding to 2003, INFOCOPO.

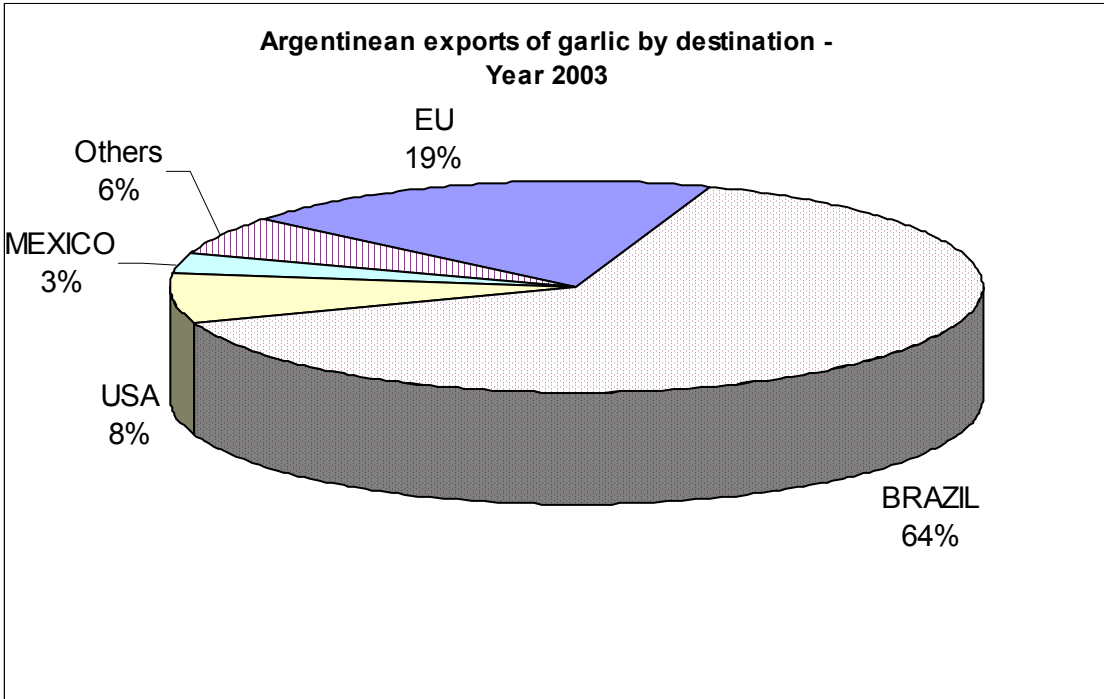
### Argentinean exports of Onion by destination – Year 2003

Destination	Ton	Percentage
BRAZIL	168.246	81
EU	33.214	16
Belgium	18.775	9
Germany	3.730	2
Italy	3.227	2
Spain	2.210	1
OTHERS	5.494	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>206.956</b>	<b>100</b>



**Argentinean exports of Garlic by destination – Year 2003**

Destination	Ton	Percentage
BRAZIL	54.961	64
UE	16.519	19
France	7.909	9
Spain	3.885	5
Italy	2.042	2
Greece	780	1
USA	6.542	8
MEXICO	2.687	3
OTHERS	5.209	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85.919</b>	<b>100</b>



**2.2 Producer profile for the main export products**

**2.2.1 Pears and apples**

In recent years, the agricultural production in Argentina has been concentrated in smaller number of producers with greater amounts of capital (data from the INDEC). Many companies, although all legally incorporated in Argentina, are part of international companies, or have shared capital.

In the following paragraphs, the specific situation and profile of pear producers (which is similar to that of apple producers) will be described.

There are about 6,000 pear producers in Argentina, who produce apples as well. In the Valley (Río Negro, state of Neuquén), half of the farms have less than 10 hectares, whereas in Mendoza, establishments of that dimension represent 90%.

The provisory data of the National Farming Census (year 2002) reflect a greater concentration of capital, fewer number of producers and greater size of the properties in comparison with the Census of 1993.

Many cases of vertical integration of cooperatives and packing plants can be found among primary producers, moving up in the chain and industrializing the production.

The activity of pear and apple production generates about 41,000 jobs in the whole production chain; qualified manual labor is required.

About fifty percent of the producers are independent. Their distinctive characteristics are: lack of capital, high impact on the familiar manual labour, old plantations with traditional system, high production costs, low quality of the fruit, and individual and isolated marketing. This group is in the most precarious conditions to obtain some type of quality in its productions. Therefore, it is difficult for them to gain access to an implementation or certification of GAP with their own resources. They will only have a chance of conversion if training is offered and if they are stimulated through a better price for their products.

The producers which are moderately integrated -those who pack or commercialize their production- represent about 30% and have greater power of negotiation with clients

The remaining 20 % correspond to the producers which are totally integrated, who control the marketing to the external markets and use high technology in all phases of the production chain. Many of these companies (originally of familiar character) have incorporated shareholder capital from Germany, Italy and France. These producer know the demands of international markets and consider them in their production systems.

Most of the small producers choose -in an individual fashion- the packing plant that will buy their production. There are only few cases of vertical integration in which, associated in cooperatives, the producers can take part in the second sale of the product.

Most of their commercial transactions are made on a weight-basis in the packing plant. That is the moment in which the price is established.

A very common practice is to operate without a written contract: when the production is delivered, the producer receives a part of the agreed amount as to cover the harvest expenses; the remaining balance is then paid until the next production season.

In the 2003 campaign, the Provincial Law N° 3,611 of Fruit Transparency was put into practice in the state of Río Negro. It establishes a regime of legal entailment between the different stages of the production chain.

This law determines that the transaction contracts should be formalized (written) and that the specific data about the fruit, the delivery conditions, payment, classification and discards must be stipulated in an explicit way. The producers and companies that adhere to this regime can ask for a 10% reduction in Real Estate Taxes. In a first stage, nearly 1500 contracts were signed.

Generally, most of the suppliers play an important role as technical assistance. Fruit producers establish an agreement of payment -both in time and form- with the goods supplier. Most of the seedlings come from the 19 breeding greenhouses installed in Mendoza. The suppliers of the Valley of Río Negro and Neuquén are organized in a camera (CAVIA).

There are about 300 packing sheds. 40% of them have refrigerator chambers and 90% are qualified for exportation, mostly located in the High Valley of the Río Negro. In Mendoza, however, their production caters to the internal market.

A gradual concentration has been observed in this stage. Many of the companies are associated to CAFI (Argentine Camera of the Integrated Fruit Producers).

About 60% of the establishments have a capacity of less than 50,000 boxes per year (nearly 900,000 kg, the equivalent to the harvest of 30 ha).

In the last 15 years, the average volume processed in the High Valley was of 477 thousand tons, equivalent to 23 million boxes.

25% of the establishments are totally integrated in the chain (production-packing-refrigerating-exportation).

The main causes of fruit deterioration in the packing process are the metabolic changes, mechanical damages and the attack by plagues and diseases. The assembling, filling, closing and sealing of the packages are carried out in a manual form, using conveyor belts, grapping and hooping machines.

### **2.2.2 Citrus fruits**

In Argentina, there are 5,300 citrus producers, 529 packing plants (of which only 79 are qualified for export, 15%), and the manual labor reaches 100,000 workers.

It is important to indicate the sector's productive concentration in some regions of Argentina, preferably in the North (Jujuy, Tucumán and Salta). The increasing external insertion of this product imposes improvements of quality and introduction of technologies that increase the minimum establishments' area for an efficient production.

The sector has been showing a continuous growth of its production and an important development of its exports, both in fresh and processed products (juices and essential oils). A decrease in the shipments of grapefruit and an increase in oranges and lemons can also be detected. The new sanitary exigencies of the European Union (principal destination of the Argentine fresh exports) means that the productive zones in which Cancrosis (*Xantomonas campestris*) and other diseases are present can undergo severe restrictions to access to this market during the following campaigns.

### **2.2.3 Garlic**

The production is located in small farms. Approximately 75% of them have less than 5 ha, while only very few farms have areas of more than 20 ha (those represent 4% of the total).

## **2.3 Awareness concerning and application of each of the key food safety and quality requirements in the main export markets and the role of the main private sector quality-assurance systems**

Currently, large fruit and fresh vegetables export companies are already certified or in a very advanced implementation stage. The mostly requested quality systems are EUREPGAP (for fresh fruit and vegetables), then HACCP and GMP (for the processing operations), and - to a lesser extent - BRC and ISO 9001.

In turn, a higher level of heterogeneity can be observed in the small scale producers sector. Some of them know the names of the certification systems, but neither the requirements nor the details.

Several training courses and diffusion campaigns have been offered by institutions like SAGPyA, INTA, the universities and the chambers of producers, including workshops, seminars and courses of awareness of good practices for quality in foods. Courses for productions of specific regions have also been carried out (e.g. citrus fruits, berries, etc.). Some producers have been reached, but others are still completely far from the possibilities of knowing and implementing the requirements.

All these small and medium producers require assistance for the implementation of GAP programs.

#### **2.4 Main points of overlap and differences between EUREPGAP requirements and requirements for food safety/quality in other export markets**

From a general perspective, those farms which have already implemented EUREPGAP do not require another quality system for the primary production, but they do need different systems for the grading and packing, where - in addition to EUREPGAP- some buyers (from the EU to the USA) demand HACCP or Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) as well as environmental norms (ISO 14000) or social responsibility norms (SA 8000).

For Brazil, there are specific requirements implemented through phytosanitary programs for the control of plagues like the Risk Mitigation System (SMR), which is a series of cultural practices and controls, officially supervised, that allow to reduce to the minimum the risk of appearance of quarantine plagues in any batch of a certain product. The objective of the program is to obtain fruit (apples, pears and quinces), with a minimum risk of quarantine regarding *Carpocapsa (Cydia pomonella L.)*.

Different markets require specific systems of traceability and identification that force the producers to have multiple registry systems to satisfy the exigencies of each destination, with all the associated difficulties and costs they imply (e.g. for Mexico, Israel, EU and the USA).

The main superposition that the exporters perceive is located in the control system, since - in addition to the audits of the certification bodies - they continue to receive

audits from their buyers (e.g. by chains of supermarkets of the UK and Italy). These audits take up numerous days dedicated to them as to demonstrate this production system.

Today, some buyers also start to require EUREPGAP for organically produced fruits and vegetables. About 50% of the EUREPGAP control points cannot be applied to organic farmers (e.g. GMO), and the use of the prescriptive checklist is a rather bureaucratic inspection exercise.

## **2.5 Specific points that could be regarded as unfair competition**

Although some specific problems exist, these points are usually not considered as unfair competition.

Sometimes, agrochemical products in Argentina are not officially registered, although they are in other countries of the region and the country of destination. As the procedures are expensive, the dealer only registers products for the fruits and vegetables of highest demand but not for others.

These restrictions impede that in the cultivation of certain fruits and vegetables control point 8.2.2 cannot be fulfilled (e.g. production of bilberries, avocados, figs).

## **2.6 Importance of the EUREPGAP standard in the main export markets**

Buyers from the EU start to require the EUREPGAP certification for their imports, although not all the Argentine production sent to the EU has this certification.

It is not easy to know the certified amounts vs. those without certification. There are no official data available. Although the number of producers has been increasing since 2002, it is probable that only 20% of the exports to the EU have the EUREPGAP certification. The percentage is variable according to cultures and regions.

Pears and apples in the zone of the High Valley of Río Negro are most advanced in the implementation and the certification according to the EUREPGAP Protocol. In other zones (e.g. Buenos Aires for the citrus fruit production) the certification quota is estimated to be lower than 10%.

Many exporters only have part of their farm suppliers EUREPGAP certified, usually starting the EUREPGAP implementation in their own farms or in those where the GAP are already well implemented. This implies that although the exporter is certified, only a part of the exported fruit and vegetables exports fulfills the EUREPGAP standards.

This is also observed in Cooperatives or Groupings where the EUREPGAP certification process began by the most technologically developed farms or by those whose producers were more active in quality practices, in traceability and in bookkeeping.

In Argentina, there was much concern about the possibilities of restricted market access to Europe for those without EUREPGAP certification. When exporters and pro-

ducers learned that no restrictions occurred, many postponed the EUREPGAP certification.

This can be also observed in the IFA-protocol of EUREPGAP; as the access to the European market for grains or for animal productions is not restricted. As a consequence, very few operators have been interested in this certification until now.

## **2.7 Implications of EurepGAP for exports of fruit and vegetables of the studied country**

The large export companies are experienced with quality systems. If they export to the EU, it means they have incorporated the EUREPGAP requirements for the producers and for the establishments where the production is processed or manipulated. Usually, at least part of the producers that are suppliers of these large companies have incorporated the EUREPGAP standards according to the certification option 1 or 2 and with technical assistance of the exporter.

Only a small part of medium-sized exporters is certified, or they buy from some EUREPGAP certified farms.

Small-scale producers that work individually are still far from the fulfillment of the requirements and from the knowledge of the requirements. Thus, they can only market their products to less quality demanding markets like the national Argentine marketplace, to Russia, Brazil, and other ones.

Although there is no financial assistance for certification costs offered, some programs (e.g. the PROCAL Program of the SAGPyA) offer support for the implementation costs. Unfortunately, there is no tradition of associative activities of small-scale producers in Argentina, so that this offer is not widely used by producers.

## **2.8 Certification costs (indicative)**

For each project to certify, offers by certification bodies are prepared considering the type of production, area, number of workers, and the intensity of the production.

The costs are higher for the more intensive productions (e.g. greenhouses have greater costs).

There is a wide variation range among certifying agencies. Usually, the costs of the international certifying agencies are higher than those of the national agencies.

## 2.9 Certification bodies

The list of approved certification bodies can be found in the internet under [www.eurep.org](http://www.eurep.org).

Table 4: Accredited certification bodies with headquarters in Argentina and accredited certification bodies with branches in Argentina

Organization	National Certification Bodies	International Certification Bodies	Address	Contact
1. <a href="#">Argencert SRL</a>	✓		Bernardo de Irigoyen 972, piso 4 - Of. B C1072AAT Buenos Aires Argentina Tel: +54 11 4363 0033 Fax: +54 11 4363 0202 <a href="http://www.argencert.com.ar">www.argencert.com.ar</a>	Ing Valeria Glusman
2. <a href="#">Bsi Inspectorate de Argentina S.A.</a>		✓	Sarmiento 1113, 4 piso C 1041 AAW Buenos Aires Argentina Tel: +54 11 4124-1200 Fax: +54 11 4124-1259 /1260 <a href="http://www.inspectorate.com.ar">www.inspectorate.com.ar</a>	Mrs. Rita Cinca
3. <a href="#">IRAM-Instituto Argentino de Normalización y Certificación</a>	✓		Peru 552/556 C1068AAB Buenos Aires Argentina Tel: +54 11 4346 0600 Fax: +54 11 4346 0601 <a href="http://www.iram.com.ar">www.iram.com.ar</a>	Mr. Enrique Kurincic
4. <a href="#">Organizacion Internacional Agropecuaria</a>	✓		Av. Santa Fe 830 B1641ABN Acassuso - Buenos Aires Province Argentina Tel: +54 (54-11) 4798-9084 Fax: +54 (54-11) 4793-4340 <a href="http://www.oia.com.ar">www.oia.com.ar</a>	Mr. Pedro Landa
5. <a href="#">BVQI Argentina S.A.</a> *		✓	BVQI Argentina S.A. AV.L.N.Alem 1134, 8° Floor, Buenos Aires, Argentina (C1000AAT) Buenos Aires Tel: +54 11 4000 8100	Eduardo Musitani
6. <a href="#">LATU Sistemas S. A. (Argentina)</a> *		✓	LATU Sistemas S. A. (Argentina) Edificio Laminar Plaza Ing. Butty 240. 4to. Piso C1001AFP Buenos Aires Tel: +54 (+ 5411) 4590 2348 Fax: +54 (+5411) 4590 2201 <a href="http://www.latusistemas.com">www.latusistemas.com</a>	Ing. Agr. Romeo Volonté
7. <a href="#">SGS Argentina</a> *		✓	SGS Argentina Adolfo Alsina 1382, Ciudad de Buenos Aires. 1088 1088 Buenos Aires Tel: +54 5411 4124 2048 Fax: +54 5411 4124 2046 <a href="http://www.sgs.com">www.sgs.com</a>	Diana Gaglietti
8. <a href="#">Surveyseed - Control Union Argentina*</a>		✓	Surveyseed - Control Union Argentina Reconquista 723 1003 Buenos Aires Tel: +54 11 - 45106600 Fax: +54 11 - 45106738 <a href="http://www.survey.com.ar">www.survey.com.ar</a>	Juan Palmeiro; Carlos Chiavarini

\* Certification Bodies with branches in Argentina, subcontracted by foreign companies.

## **2.10 National producers that are third-country certified under a foreign quality-assurance system**

Since 1993, Argentina is recognized by the European Union as a third country for organic products in the framework of Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91.

Such agreements do not exist for conventional quality assurance systems.

## **2.11 Objective need for the development of a national GAP scheme and potential benefits**

The development of own GAP certification schemes for Argentina is at a starting point.

The benefits of the development of any GAP are strongly tied to:

- The consumer's health (greater innocuous food security)
- Improvement in the quality of life of the workers, both health and security; improvement in the work conditions, greater training level for risky activities; provision of safety elements.
- More efficient use of resources: water, amounts to apply on the basis of necessities of the cultures; agrochemicals, improvement in the control of diseases and plagues to initiate plantations free from them; calibration of machineries.
- Environmental care: prevention of contaminations by minimum and adequate use of agrochemicals. Management of packages. Environmental conservation for a long term (erosion, evaluation of the impacts of new productive zones).
- Awareness and actions for eventualities: precautionary measures for spills or fires in the places where agrochemicals are stored; for accidents of workers.
- Improvement of the facilities.
- Economic and health benefits from the identification of batches to be retired from the market before any eventuality take place. The traceability of the product allows only specific batches to retire from the market and not the whole production.
- Improvement of available information by the required bookkeeping.

The introduction of GAP-standards forces the knowledge and the compliance with official regulations, which are numerous in Argentina, but rarely observed.

A potential benchmarking of a national scheme with EUREPGAP also could help Argentine producers to maintain their national identity.

On the other hand, the current benchmarking process requires full compliance with all requirements of the EUREPGAP General Regulations as well as of the Control points and Compliance Criteria. Potentially, a national GAP could be more prescriptive than EUREPGAP and thus restrict market access of Argentine producers.

## **2.12 National GAP schemes and stakeholders involved**

Although there are no other GAP schemes at the national level, SENASA, the National Service of Health and Agro-alimentary Quality, developed two guidelines:

- "Guides of Good practices of Hygiene and Agricultural for the Primary Production (culture-harvest), Packaging, Storage and Transport of Fresh Vegetables", 1999: Resolution 71/99 of SAGPyA.
- "Guides of Good practices of Hygiene and Agriculture for the Primary Production (culture-harvest), Packing, Storage and Transport of Fresh Fruits", 2002: Resolution 510/02 of the SENASA

The objectives of the guidelines are:

- To identify the essential principles of hygiene for fresh fruit and vegetables products in the primary production (in field, under cover or in hydroponics), packing, storage and transport, in order to obtain innocuous and apt foods for human consumption.
- To provide specific recommendations for the general practices of hygiene in the primary production (culture-harvests), packing, storage and transport of vegetables and fruits.
- To offer recommendations about good agricultural practices, necessary for the maintenance of the characteristics and quality of the product.
- To establish work guidelines tending to preserve the security and health of the people involved in the production chain.

- To preserve the natural resources of the productive areas and human health, by means of the implementation of a productive system.

The Guide of Good Practices and Fruit Hygienics developed in 2002, has more descriptions and details than the Guide of Good Practices and Hygienics of Vegetables that was previously developed, in 1999. The Guidelines cover similar aspects as the EUREPGAP protocol, even with more details on some specific points as equipments, control of the process of application of post-harvest products and frost control. Being guidelines, their compliance is recommended, but there is no official inspection mechanism yet.

There are private initiatives as well, like the protocol of quality PAI, developed by Integrated Argentine Producers for their group of producers. They export to different markets like Brazil, EU and the USA. The group has developed their protocol with controls and registries on Plague Integrated Handling (MIP) five years ago, for the production of pears, apples, plums, and peaches.

A few great retailer chains also have their own quality protocols, being the destination of that production the national consumption through their own stores.

### **2.13 Impact of the national GAP schemes on market access and national agricultural development**

The GAP developed in Argentina are easy to understand and refer to the local conditions. But, being still in stage of recommendations (and as a consequence of being voluntary) their level of implementation is still low, and their diffusion is still not so relevant as to evaluate their impact. They still do not have the sufficient force as to be required by the international buyers. The enforcement of GAP through the EUREPGAP protocol is stronger.

## **2.14 Specific impediments to implementation of national GAP schemes**

The main limitations for the implementation are:

- Insufficient access to credits for the required investments for the improvements of machineries and installations.
- Insufficient availability of sufficiently trained personnel.
- In some regions with traditional family productions, the attitude of the producers is a limit because of their age and their cultural habits.
- There is no price premium for the product. The producer must absorb the costs of the system (implementation and certification)

## **2.15 Factors to be reflected in a national protocol on Good Agricultural Practice**

The Argentine working group Eurepgap ([www.eurepargentina.info](http://www.eurepargentina.info)) has been working for more than two years, and began its activities in June, 2004 (Constitution Act dated 29-06-2004). The aim of the Argentine EUREPGAP Technical Working Group is to link its global implementation activities as close as possible to the Argentine producer. At the same time, it intends to get a well qualified support from national consultants who share the same language, to improve the interpretation of the legal and structural issues in the different areas considered by EUREPGAP. This objective is addressed through the formation of Technical Working Groups (TWG) in EUREPGAP. These groups work in close co-operation along with the EUREPGAP Secretariat and with the CTN. They also support and facilitate the implementation of the EUREPGAP normative documents and foster a continuous improvement of the system.

The objectives of the Argentine EUREGAP Working Technical Group were set up as follows:

- to elaborate -in a coordinated way together with official institutions- an adequate legislation as to facilitate the fulfillment of the certification requirements.
- to establish implementation guidelines for each sector.
- to make the fruits and vegetables producers aware about the EUREGAP norms
- To adjust the EUREPGAP protocols to the specific conditions of our country.

The TWG meets monthly. The participants are exporters, certification bodies, official institutions, agrochemical suppliers, the Argentine chamber of berries producers (CAPAB), of citrus producers (FEDERCITRUS & AFINOA) and of pears, apples, peach and plums (CAFI), and the chamber of independent laboratories (CALIBA).

Regional Working Groups were formed in the Argentine Northwest (NOA) and in the Cuyo region.

The TWG got its official state in 2005, being enlisted in the working groups in the EUREGAP pages.

The hosting organizations are the Argentina Chamber of Integrated Fruit producers (CAFI) for the protocol of Fruits & Vegetables and Orgainvent Latinoamerica (OILA) for Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA).

The developed guides are public, and the objectives are the improvement of the quality of products, improvements in hygiene, the establishing of security guidelines for the workers, the tracing of products and the preserving of natural resources.

## **2.16 Specific concerns and requirements of smallholders**

For small-scale producers, introduction of EUREPGAP carries the risk that access to international markets will be further restricted. These producers will become dependent of large exporters with sufficient capacities to introduce EUREPGAP-standards and which are able to cope with the costs for inspection and certification.

The introduction of a national GAP for Argentina would not change this situation, because full compliance with all applicable requirements of the EUREPGAP General regulations (GR) and the Control Points/Compliance Criteria (CP/CC) is required to become bechmarked.

Small-scale producers have particular difficulties with record keeping and self inspection (CP/CC 2), documentary needs (p.e. CP/CC 4.2, 6.2, 8.3), storage facilities (p.e. CP/CC 6.4 and 8.8) and the hygiene conditions (CP/CC 9.1 and 10.1). All types of risk assessments foreseen in the EUREPGAP CP/CC are complicated to implement. This can usually be done on a group level to facilitate the process.

Argentine laboratories are usually not widely accredited to ISO 17025 yet. The analysis requirements for water and products are also difficult to fullfill for small-scale pro-

ducers. Export companies do not communicate analysis results back to the producers.

## **2.17 Extension services for meeting the requirements of high-precision agriculture**

In Argentina, there are different programs on advising and financing:

### PROCAL Program<sup>1</sup> (SAGPyA)

Its objective is to improve food hygiene and to improve its marketing, through the diffusion and intensive promotion of the use of the quality management systems and measures for quality assurance.

### PROSAP Program (SAGPyA)

The PROSAP is a federal program, implemented in 1996, with funds of the World Bank (BIRF), the Inter-American Development Bank (I.A.D.B.) and with budgets from the Argentine state. It shall support investment projects for farms in the provinces. The PROSAP is implemented under the responsibility of SAGPyA.

### Consejo Federal de Inversiones (CFI)

The “Fondo Federal de Inversiones” (FFI) is the financial instrument of the Federal Council of Investments. Its purpose is to cooperate by means of funding with the public and private sectors in the investment for specific projects or programs.

Within its credit lines the FFI has financed productive microprojects, and Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), having granted since 1990 around 5000 loans exceeding a total of 150 million dollars.

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1 Information about PROCAL on the web: [www.prosap.gov.ar/](http://www.prosap.gov.ar/) o en [http://www.alimentosargentinos.gov.ar/programa\\_calidad/procal.asp](http://www.alimentosargentinos.gov.ar/programa_calidad/procal.asp)

## SEPYME

The Undersecretary's office of the Small and Medium Company and Regional Development operates the following programs:

### PRE: Program Of Support To The Enterprise Reconstruction<sup>2</sup>

The PRE is a program of the Undersecretary's office of the Small and Medium Company and Regional Development of the Ministry of Economy and Production of the Argentine Republic, financed with funds contributed by the Argentine Government, the participant companies and the Inter-American Development Bank - I.A.D.B.

The objective of the PRE is to support the competitiveness of the small and medium Argentine companies, facilitating the access to professional services of technical advice and the improvement of the supply of these services.

### FUNBAPA<sup>3</sup>

The Zoo-phytosanitary Barrier of the Patagonia Foundation (FunBaPa) is a private institution without aims of profit with eminently public functions. It works on national, provincial and regional programs for health and quality, with the intention of achieving a free zone of pests and diseases in the Patagonian Region. The program offers calibration services for spraying equipment.

### ISCAMEN (Institute of Health and Quality of Mendoza)

It deals with training activities (quality in GAP) in the different productive sectors, and in implementing international schemes.

The institute also offers services:

- Forms for bookkeeping
- Disposal of empty agrochemical packages.

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<sup>2</sup> PRE: <http://www.sepyme.gov.ar/index.php?btn=1&a=pre&b=institucional>

Capacitacion: <http://www.sepyme.gov.ar/index.php?btn=1&a=cap&b=institucional>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.funbapa.org.ar/funbapa.htm>

## IDR

The Instituto of Desarrollo Rural (IDR) is a foundation, founded by public and private institutions. It supports the rural development in the province of Mendoza.

## “Fortalecer” Program

This program is implemented by the I.A.D.B. and the Agrarian Argentine Federation. It offers services for small and medium producers like advice on new products, innovation in processes, accesses to new markets, etc.

## “Forex” Program

Forex is a program whose objective is to constitute an institutional network to facilitate the access to international markets to the small and medium Argentine farmers. Forex offers market information and information on international requirements for market access. It offers qualification and technical advice for companies that start exporting as for those already experimented which are trying to explore new product and market alternatives.

The availability of professional extension services is fairly different in Argentina. In some zones, there is a high degree of knowledge in IPM. Well prepared professionals are available, and other new services start to become accessible, as portable toilets, calibrations, qualified laboratories for analyses, systems for the disposal of empty agrochemical packages .

In other zones, it is more difficult to find qualified extension services to support the implementation of EUREPGAP..

The SAGPyA plans to qualify extension services by regions and production types and supports pilot projects. These trainings are free for producers and for technicians.

Of course, the export companies offer own extension services to their suppliers, with their own technicians or external advisors. There are private consultant companies too.

Despite the fact that several institutions engage in rural extension, it must be stated that the efforts lack co-ordination and the offer is still too small to cover the training needs of the farms for EUREPGAP.

## **2.18 Institutional capacities for accreditation and certification**

A number of accredited certification bodies is currently operating in Argentina. All of them are ISO 65 accredited. The number of qualified EUREPGAP auditors and inspectors is still small, so that higher travel expenses can occur because they must be sent from a distance. Training for qualified auditors, especially in quality management and HACCP, is strongly required.

The Argentine accreditation body OAA is an IAF member and signed recently the multilateral agreement for products. Qualified local auditors for accreditation of certification bodies with the scope EUREPGAP are still not available in Argentina and should be trained.

## **2.19 Group certification (EurepGAP option 2) as an option for small-scale producers**

Certification according to option 2 has several restrictions for small-scale producers. First of all, a legal entity must be established. This implies legal advising for the registration process. Option 2 is viable for already legally registered producer groups (co-operative, suppliers of an exporter). It is nearly not viable for small-scale producers that group themselves to achieve the Eurepgap certification. The groups lack

- the legal entity
- the organizational structure
- the quality management system
- sufficiently trained staff and
- sufficient financial resources.

Support is urgently required to develop accessible quality management systems so that these small-scale producers gain market access.

At present, most groups certified to option 2 are linked with an export company that provides the quality management system to its suppliers.

Regarding organic productions in Argentina, there are examples of small producers grouped together for certification, to obtain greater volumes to trade. These producers do not require a quality system, but all of them are individually visited.

## **2.20 Governmental role in national GAP development and implementation**

Although some work is being done, more activities are required to cover all production regions and especially to address small-scale farmers. The programs that allow access to financial support are restricted to extension or, in some cases, co-financing for improvements. Medium and large producers can use these benefits, but the small producers cannot afford even a part of the costs of implementation and certification. In Argentina, SENASA, the National Service of Health and Agro-alimentary Quality, implements different programs which are relevant for certain aspects of GAP implementation, as detailed below:

### Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Products Control System (SICOFHOR)

SENASA is implementing the System to strengthen the promotion of Good Agricultural Practices and Manufacturing in the different stages of production, elaboration, storage and commercialization of these products.

### National Program of Quality Certification in Foods - Resolution 280/2001

This is a Program of certification of quality attributes of products or processes, with voluntary participation. It could be applied for all types of food.

In both cases the producer/elaborate assumes the primary responsibility for the product presented for certification regarding the fulfillment of certain procedures, effective registries, protocols and national norms.

### Federal Control System of Agrochemical and Biological Products - SIFFAB

The legislation of phytosanitary products, fertilizers and soil conditioners grants the SENASA the responsibility of registering such products. It coordinates a system to allow the control, monitoring and supervising its basic aspects, ensuring the traceability of the products, the correct operation of the equipment used for its application, an adequate level of knowledge by users and applicators, and a final controlled disposal of the wastes and packages resulting from the use of agrochemicals.

This system is of particular relevance to compliance with EUREPGAP-requirements.

### Argentine National System of Surveillance and Monitoring of Agricultural Plagues (SINAVIMO)

This is a system that works through a cooperative network. Its general mission is to provide updated information on the phytosanitary state of the main cultures in the territory.

Besides this, the role of the government in implementing good agricultural practices on a national level could focus on:

- Creating awareness of producers
- Elaboration of criteria and parameters to be considered when assessing new sites for agricultural production
- Elaboration of zonal plans for erosion control
- Effective control of some EUREPGAP-elements: quality of seeds, GMO's, agrochemicals, labor laws
- Offer elements for compliance (p.e. disposal of empty packages of agrochemicals)
- Effective control of supply companies related to GAP: calibration, laboratories, fertilizer and agrochemicals etc.

In Argentina, no governmental run quality-assurance schemes exist. There is also no lobby to sell a country brand as it happens in Chile.

## **2.21 Supportive role of international organizations, in particular UNCTAD and FAO**

The main role of UNCTAD and FAO should be that of official normative harmonization and continue with their efforts to support GAP implementation in different countries.

Both organizations should strengthen the participation of developing countries in the international standard setting process.

With regard to small-scale producers, FAO and UNCTAD should support their integration in the supply chain through

- Analysis of the requirements of EUREPGAP standard being difficult to comply with for small-scale producers and discussions with the standard setting organization on alternative ways to ensure compliance
- Support to the establishment of quality management systems according to EUREPGAP option 2 for small-scale producers

- Support of local institutions for rural extension services and certification

In Argentina, international donor agencies currently do not support EUREPGAP-related activities.

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