

# WEEKLY ASADO

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars  
Latin American Program  
Friday, September 22, 2017



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## ***Unrest: Lab coat sit in***

Argentina is no stranger to strikes that bring businesses and public works to a halt, and it can now add scientists to the ranks of labor protestors. Five hundred researchers and post-doctoral fellows have occupied the headquarters of CONICET, the Argentine National Science Foundation, to protest budget cuts. The researchers had been promised grants that were suddenly cut in December, and the protest signaled frustration with the slow pace of subsequent negotiations. Luis Baraño, the science and technology minister – and the only Kirchner holdover in the cabinet – denounced the protest and suspended negotiations. CONICET has had strong ties with U.S. agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the NSF. Now, U.S. and Argentine scientists have something else in common: the White House has proposed an 11 percent cut to the NSF budget and an 18 percent reduction in NIH resources. On April 22, thousands gathered on the National Mall in Washington to defend science and evidence-based policymaking.

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## ***Biodiesel: Fueling EuroTrip***

Argentine biodiesel exports to the European Union are set to jump after the EU announced it was re-opening its markets to the Argentine fuel, and lowering duties. Argentina had successfully challenged EU duties at the World Trade Organization – a major win for an industry that was once the largest biodiesel supplier to Europe. In 2013, the EU imposed anti-dumping tariffs of 22-26 percent on Argentine biodiesel. Now, in response to the WTO ruling, the EU is lowering those duties to between 4.5-8.1 percent. The news comes at a good time for Argentine producers; the United States, the top market for Argentine biodiesel, announced in August countervailing duties of up to 64 percent on the fuel. At its height, the United States imported 1 billion gallons of Argentine biodiesel annually, while the Europeans consumed half that amount.

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## ***Locked up: More criticism for Argentine prisons***

The Argentine [NGO](#) Comisión Provincial por la Memoria estimates that on average, one person dies every day in state custody or in a confrontation with Argentine law enforcement personnel. The new report, highlighted by [LA NACION](#), calculated 385 deaths last year, including 156 in Argentine prisons. Argentina has repeatedly come under criticism for its prison system. In May,

for example, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention visited Argentina for ten days, and later condemned the incarceration of Tupac Amará leader Milagro Sala as well as the broader

system of pre-trial detention.

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### ***Muddy Pampas: Climate change dampens agricultural prospects***

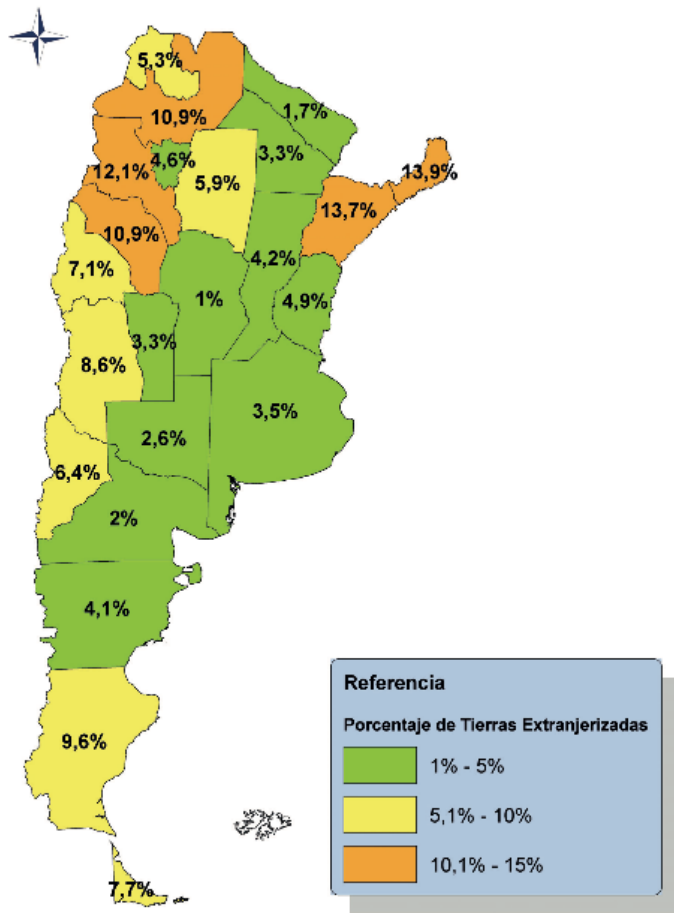
As climate change appears to intensify hurricanes in the battered Caribbean, it also seems to be disrupting life in Argentina's breadbasket. Bloomberg [reports](#) that farmers in the Pampas are suffering extreme weather – including flooding and drought (and associated wildfires) – that is hurting soy operations. That is a setback for President Mauricio Macri, who had hoped sharp reductions in taxes on farm exports would produce a revenue bonanza. But it is not all bad news; the September [World Agricultural Report](#), from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, projected an 18 percent increase in Argentine sunflower production this season – as farmers increase planting in the absence of export taxes – and a 2 percent increase in corn production, despite expected delays in planting in Córdoba due to soggy soil. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet used her UN General Assembly [speech](#) Wednesday to urge greater action on climate change, saying, "We are in a key turning point in humanity's history." Meanwhile, Nicaragua announced plans to join the Paris agreement, leaving the United States alone in the hemisphere in its

opposition to the pact.

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### ***Landowners: 'I don't want nobody nobody sent'***

Among the controversial policy issues on hold until after the midterms is foreign ownership of land in Argentina, the Economist Intelligence Unit reported Monday in an analysis that also focused on rising tensions between the government and the Mapuche community. Earlier, it had appeared that Mr. Macri was prepared to take further steps to ease restrictions on purchases of land by foreigners, in another effort to increase foreign direct investment. He had already weakened a 2011 law that classified foreign ownership as control over more than 25 percent of a business, and restricted those firms to 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) in agricultural regions. Under the new regulations, companies are only limited if foreigners control at least 51 percent of the business. The Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos [publishes](#) fascinating data on foreign land ownership. It estimates that only *six percent of Argentine land is in foreign hands*, with major regional disparities. Argentina, of course, is hardly the only country that has grappled with this issue. In mid-19th century Uruguay – devastated by civil unrest that lasted from 1839 to 1851 and became known as the Guerra Grande – Brazilian capital poured into struggling *estancias* in the north. Those investments helped rebuild the livestock industry, but Uruguayans were displeased to see Brazilians take over 30 percent of Uruguayan territory. Consequently, Uruguayan authorities purposefully recolonized the north with Uruguayans, while undermining Brazilian businesses by restricting slave labor and taxing cattle crossing the border to Brazilian *saladeros*. Today, pressure is growing on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to give greater scrutiny to Chinese acquisitions, such as the 2013 purchase of Smithfield, the world's biggest pork producer.

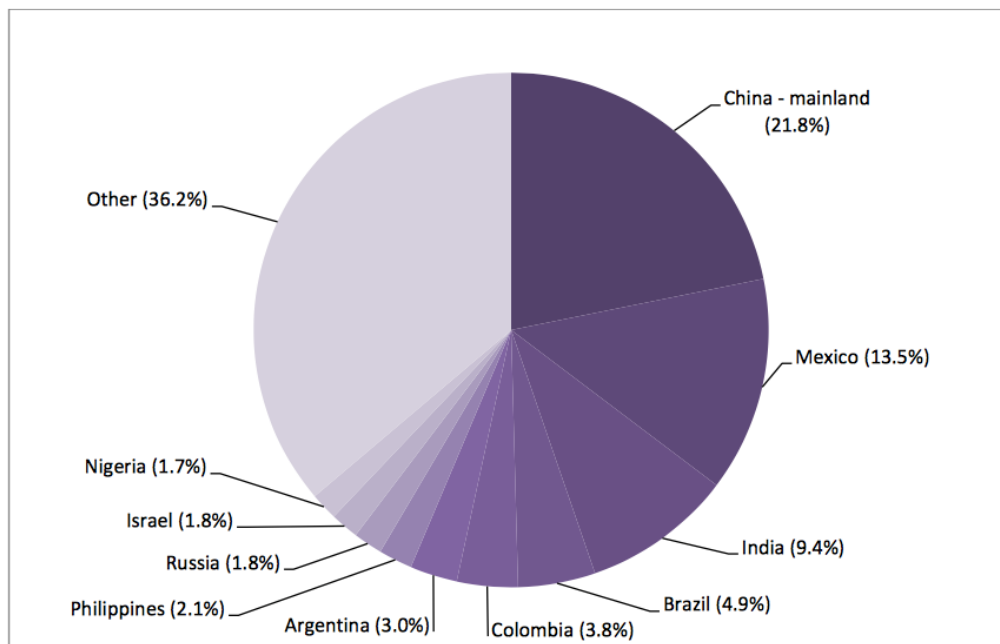


**Travel trends: Argentines still at Disney?**

It will be interesting to see whether Argentine tourism follows the same Trump-era trend as seen in Mexico, which saw tourist travel to the United States fall by five percent so far this year, according to U.S. Department of Commerce [data](#). The diplomatic and economic implications for the United States are important. Argentina is in the top ten countries for non-immigrant visas, totaling 303,897 in the 2016 fiscal year. That number has been [steadily rising](#), up from approximately 147,000 in 2010. But Argentines are not impressed with the new U.S. administration, which could affect travel. In Pew’s latest [Global Attitudes Survey](#), only 13 percent of Argentines expressed confidence in the U.S. president’s handling of global affairs, down from 40 percent during the last administration. More broadly, only 35 percent of Argentines held a

favorable view of the United States, down from 43 percent.

**Nonimmigrant Visas Issued by Nationality  
Fiscal Year 2016**



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***Tweet, tweet: @WWCArentina***

The *Argentina Project* is on Twitter, @WWCArentina, so keep sharing your favorite Federico Sturzenegger memes, and *Weekly Asado* tips. The project formally launches on Wednesday, so stay tuned for announcements of its first activities, including a discussion of the October

midterms.

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