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**Does nobody want to work in the countryside?
Know-how, working conditions, and consent
in 21st-century Argentine livestock farming**

Dr. Bruno Capdevielle
CIEA (University of Buenos Aires, ARG)
ISFOOD (Public University of Navarra, ESP)
IDICHS (National University of La Plata, ARG)

Recent beef cattle production in Argentina

Expansion of soybean and crop cultivation

Intensive cattle farming



Traditional and personal labour relations

Labour formalisation and management professionalisation

Decline in permanent employment

"No one wants to work in the countryside"

"Labour shortage"

Methodology

Fieldwork conducted as part of a PhD in Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires in 2019, 2022 and 2023.

70 in-depth interviews with salaried workers, cattle farmers, and professional technicians in the Province of Buenos Aires

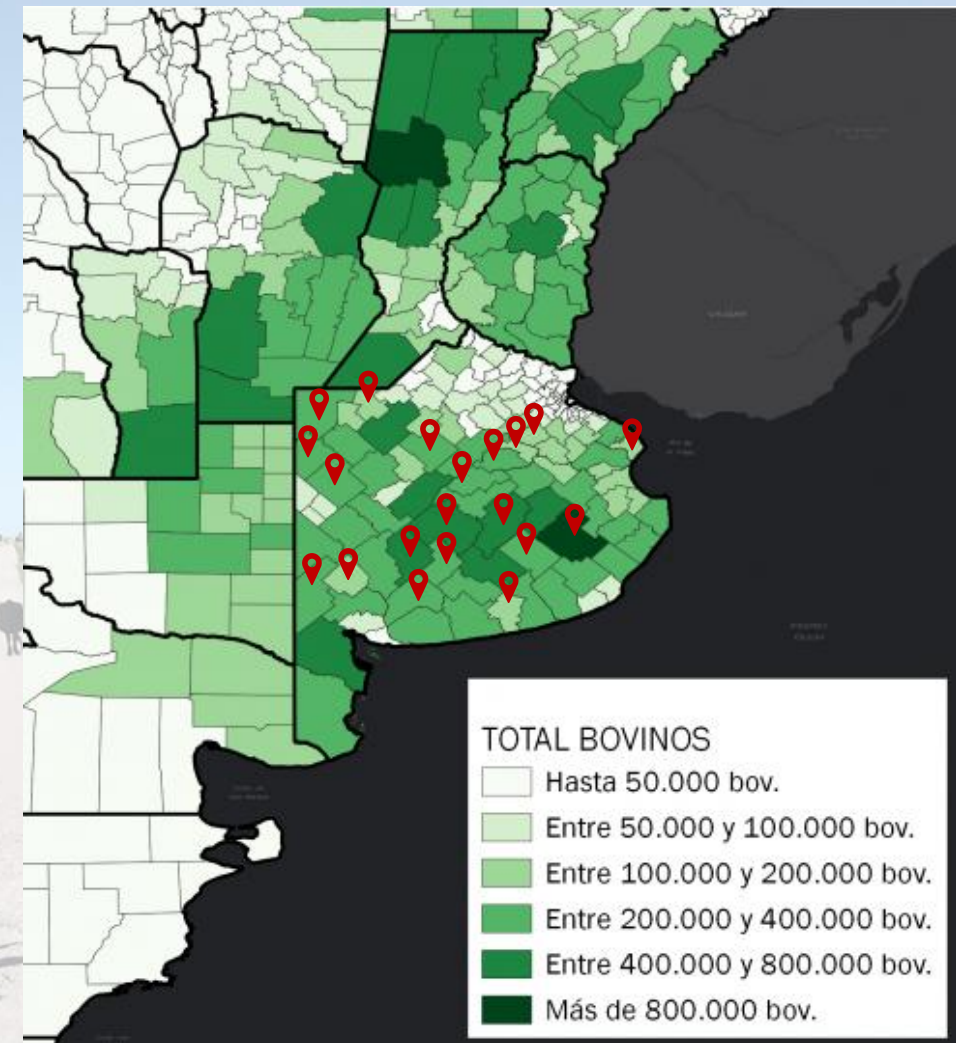
One question was:
Is it true that there aren't enough people to work in the fields? Why?

Main answers indicated that actors emphasised:

- A lack of the required practical know-how
- Absence of commitment and responsibility of workers
- Unwillingness to live at the worksite.

Three key underlying factors and incentives

Figura N°1. Map of cattle stocks in the Pampas region, by department, 2021.



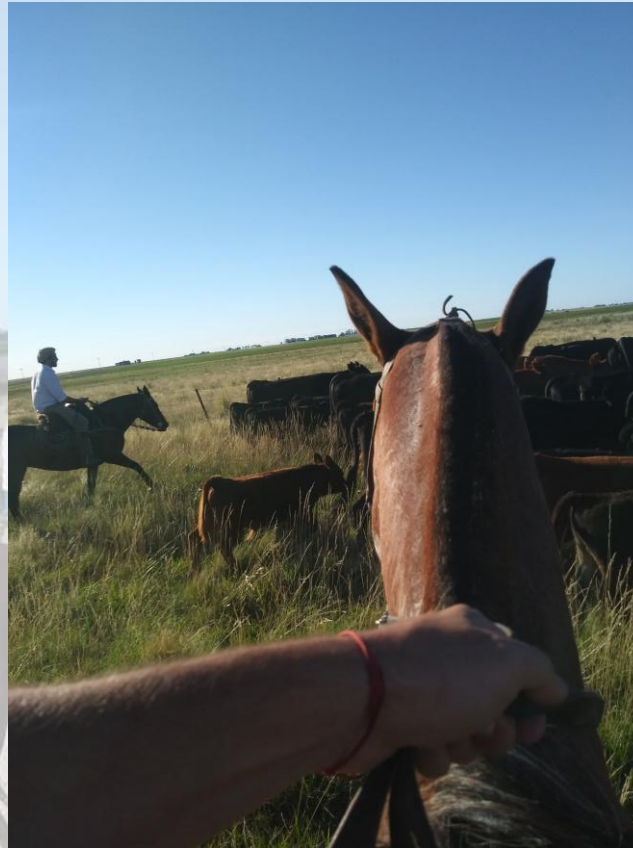
Source: SENASA.

**Lack of mechanisms for the reproduction
and recognition of required skills**

Acquired through practice

Urbanisation of the family

**Not formally recognised nor
institutionalised (not paid)**



Low wages, poor working and living conditions

Wages below the poverty line

Incomes of workers

Food and housing

Informal arrangements:
Keeping cattle and sheep
Odd jobs
Home farming
Hunting

Declining

Poor public services (education
and rural roads)

Contrast with other sectors
and urban life



Consent and independence

Non-material and subjective
compensatory factors

Independence and task planning

Identity and cultural component

Enjoyment and satisfaction

Reduces through vigilance,
professionalisation and
standardisation



Current trends

Lack of practical skills and training

Low wages and reducing incomes

Less consent, identity and independence

Group of **skilled workers** and their descendants, who **love rural life and their work**, yet are increasingly **pushed out of the sector**

They stay in the beef sector because they enjoy their work, but they don't want their children to remain in the countryside as employees.

If there is a shortage of supply, shouldn't the price go up?

Employers tend to adopt work-replace technologies and recruit workers from poor rural regions of the country

The main problem is not labour shortage, but the fact that objective and subjective labour conditions don't improve

Thank you!

