

**EDITION**

**53<sup>RD</sup>** YEAR 2025



**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

# **SMEs EXPORT**

## **Argentine technology and innovation**





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## Editorial



The food sector represents one of the fundamental pillars of the country's economy; with an export profile that generates millions of jobs, Argentina is the third largest food exporter in the world, but it is also a strategic sector for the development of regional economies.

The National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) plays a crucial role in this sector, providing specific services aimed at incorporating improvements to meet quality standards and requirements for the internationalization of products. Our goal is to promote increased competitiveness and contribute to the positioning of products in an increasingly demanding global market, providing key tools to professionalize and optimize processes, ensure traceability and produce quality, thus contributing to the growth and consolidation of the country's productive network. To achieve this, INTI provides a wide range of mature tools that include testing, analysis, calibration, specialized technical assistance, technology transfer, certification, development and innovation.

In this edition, we are pleased to present four outstanding cases of federal articulation between the Institute and companies in the sector, in which technological advice, training, audits, tests and certifications were provided. These experiences exemplify the tangible results of the synergy between INTI and SMEs, highlighting our mission of transferring technology and generating value in assisted organizations.

Our approach seeks to generate contributions that are incorporated by the companies and that the changes applied last in time beyond the end of the service, promoting improvements that they can continue to address alone.

**Patricia Ohaco**

**Patagonia Regional Assistant Manager- INTI**



## VALLEVERDE PATAGONIA



## Where clean air becomes food and legacy



From Bariloche, in the heart of Patagonia, and from a national park that breathes one of the purest airs of the planet, Francisco Ponzinibbio and his team produce canned vegetables, gourmet pastas and handmade sweets without preservatives or additives. All natural and authentic.


They started in a cold shed, surrounded by disused cold storage rooms and with more will than certainty. That is how an agronomist engineer recently arrived in the province of Río Negro decided to start machines, literally and metaphorically.

There were no magic recipes or recognized brands. They were guided only by a simple intuition: to respect what the land offers, because what it provides can feed a true life project. And that is how it all began. Among frozen vegetables, economic downturns and bets that few understood, one day the pine mushrooms dried in the heat of the firewood ignited the spark. That was the beginning of something different: Valleverde Alimentos SRL: non-traditional preserves, dehydrated tomatoes, mushrooms, eggplants in oil. Proposals with original and surprising flavors.

“We were pioneers in carrying out vegetable smoking in Argentina. We designed our kiln and selected woods from the region with low resin

content. We do not use preservatives or additives, not even in this process. Because smoking is not just setting fire, it is a process that requires patience,” explains Francisco Ponzinibbio, founder and managing partner.

Time proved him right. A sweet proposal was added to the offer of savory products: Don Melitón, a line inspired by his great-great-grandfather, precursor of the national industry of liquors and sweets. These jams stand out for not containing pectin, having more fruit than sugar and, in some cases, with a final touch of alcoholic beverage that, although it evaporates in the process, leaves its distinctive mark on the flavor.



For almost twenty years, the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) has been accompanying this evolution. **“We have been working with Valleverde since 2006, assisting them in updating the documentation that specifies the characteristics that their products must have to comply with current food regulations. We also guide formulation modifications to reduce the sodium or sugar content in order to comply with the law on front labeling without altering the sensory profile. All the assistance was based on safeguarding the quality of their products, differentiation and innovation and their natural imprint,”** says Marina Pérez, technical advisor of the Food and Beverage Department of INTI Patagonia region. And she adds: **“Beyond regulatory compliance, our mission is to accompany them. We interpret the requirements of the health authorities and help products such as Valleverde’s to access new markets. With them, each recommendation is transformed into a concrete improvement. They do not improvise: they consult, implement and move forward.”**

“For us, INTI is support and at the same time a tool for assistance and guidance that gives us security and the peace of mind of having a more secure and consolidated presence in the markets”, summarizes Francisco.



The global fruit and vegetable market was estimated at USD 733.9 billion in 2023, projected to reach USD 761.6 billion in 2024; a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of ~5% is expected between 2024-2030, reaching USD 1,018 billion.

Source: [worldmetrics.org](https://worldmetrics.org)

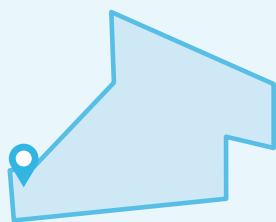


Among the most outstanding products are smoked mushroom pastes, ideal for enhancing rice dishes or accompanying pasta with a deep flavor that recalls traditional homemade recipes. Also distinguished are smoked vegetables, such as peppers with plums, which when combined with a creamy base -like a mayonnaise or a smooth dip- are transformed into a unique sensory experience. In turn, Patagonian fruit jams combine quality, origin and character, becoming an attractive proposal for the most demanding international markets.

**Today, Valleverde seeks to expand its presence in neighboring countries due to the logistic advantage they offer, in addition to recovering markets such as Spain and the United States, to which they have already exported in the past.**

“We are distinguished by the sum. We use natural ingredients, several of which are certified organic. We also make our products in a national park, which obliges us to establish a real commitment to the environment and energy efficiency. Finally, the packaging - designed by Carolina, my wife - is another important element that reflects who we are, what we care for and what we choose to do right from the source,” Francisco concludes. And he returns to that idea that sums it all up: “Smoking does not just mean setting fire. It means respecting the process. It is science, time and conviction.”





#### VALLEVERDE ALIMENTOS SRL

**Bariloche, province of Río Negro**

*Handmade production of gourmet products*

- Annual production capacity: 600,000 units.
- Production plant: 400 m<sup>2</sup>



#### • HS CODE:

- 2106.90.90.900Z / Spreadable cherry.
- 0910.99.00.900N / Smoked tomato and beer dip
- 2002.90.90.190E / Spice mix for the preparation of spicy seasoning
- 0910.99.99.00.900N / Smoked olives in oil
- 0910.99.00.900N / Andean antipasto, eggplants with sweet red bell pepper
- 2103.90.21.000J / Smoked mushrooms, southern mushrooms
- 2003.90.00.190K / Tomatoes with olive oil
- 2103.90.91.200N / Smoked olives in oil
- 2002.90.90.190E / Mix for preparing polenta with mushrooms
- 2106.90.90.900Z / Raspberry jam, fruits of the forest, rosehip, Calafate marmalade
- 2209.00.00.000X / Mushrooms, natural w/mushroom cap
- 2007.99.10.900Q / Wild berries jam with cider, apple jam with beer, strawberry jam with merlot, raspberry jam with sparkling wine
- 0910.99.99.00.900N / Blueberry and elderberry candy with whiskey
- 2005.99.00.980V / Black olive paste
- 2103.30.21.200K / Smoked mushrooms, smoked peppers and smoked plums pasta
- 2005.70.00.129Q / Smoked tomato paste



## DON PEREZ



## Northern argentine flavor: the history of a sauce that was born with its own trademark



Before the birth of the factory, there was the effort. Before any product, there was the dream of a family. Don Pérez SRL started with a decision. That of a grower from the north of Argentina named Luis Pérez, who one day stopped selling his tomatoes to other factories and started to create his own. Thus, in Yuto, in the province of Jujuy, this small and medium-sized company was born, which today aspires to export flavor, identity and quality.

Luis knew it: if he had planted and sold tomatoes for years, he could also industrialize them. And he was not alone. His children, Fabián (general manager) and Gessel (production manager), supported his vision. Together they bought machinery, recovered an old plant and learned by doing. “My dad is almost 70 years old and has been working in the tomato industry for four decades. He is the basis of everything we have built”, says Gessel, while walking through the plant where today they produce a natural crushed tomato, without preservatives, with raw material from the region, with a northern flavor that speaks for itself.

Its star product is crushed tomato, offered in 970-gram PET bottles and in 8 kg industrial cans. This line is designed for both households and large productions, with a differential that is not explained in technical terms, but in sensory terms. “Our tomato feels different, it is natural. When you open one of our packages, you don’t perceive that acidity or that strong sauce flavor. What you taste is real tomato,” says Gessel proudly.



However, reaching that “for real” was a path that included technical, regulatory and productive challenges. In this context, Don Pérez SRL decided to approach the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) with the aim of transforming their way of producing. And they succeeded.

**Antonio Toledo, INTI’s technical advisor in the NOA region, explains that the assistance consisted of implementing a food safety management system based on Good Manufacturing Practices. Work was carried out on the preparation of manuals, records and instructions. At the same time, personnel were trained, production lines were analyzed and optimized and building adjustments were made to enable them to improve and advance in the standards required by the external market.**

This improvement not only had an impact on quality. It was the fundamental key that enabled the company to obtain the authorization of the Superior Provincial Bromatological Unit (SUNIBROM), an essential requirement to market throughout the country and in border areas.



**The Argentine fruit and vegetable sector is an important contributor to the country’s exports, with main destinations such as Brazil and the United States.**

**Source: Rosario Stock Exchange, Argentina.**

Marcos Bravo, head of INTI’s Agri-Food Engineering Department in the NOA, says, “Don Pérez SRL not only improved its traceability and quality controls. It also managed to incorporate a work culture that positions it as a company prepared to export, with solid standards and strategic vision”.

Gessel Pérez says: “INTI’s technical assistance was a turning point for us. It helped us to organize our processes, professionalize the way we work, improve quality controls and guarantee traceability. This not only gave us greater internal security, but also confidence that we projected to the outside world. Today distributors see us as a reliable company and that translates into new business opportunities that seemed far away before.”

That vision is already being put into action. The company has begun selling in border areas and aims to expand. “We want to export to Bolivia, Paraguay

and Chile, but also explore opportunities in Europe and North America, where consumers value natural, regional and authentic products," says Gessel.

Don Pérez SRL is a story that speaks of inclusion, of roots, of territorial development with quality. Of tomatoes grown by local hands and processed by a family that has not forgotten its roots. A story where the industrial and the human do not oppose each other, but enhance each other.

**DON PÉREZ SRL****Yuto, province of Jujuy***Production of packaged tomatoes*

- Annual production capacity: 28,000 tons
- Plant: 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>

**• HS CODE:**

- 2002.90.90 / Crushed Tomato in 970 g bottles
- 2002.90.90 / Crushed tomato in 8 kg can.



## COLONIA SAN FRANCISCO LTDA



### The cooperative company that challenged the Argentine citrus map



In the province of Corrientes, on farms of 30 to 50 hectares, between the footprints of families, crops and an increasingly demanding market, a group of small citrus growers decided in 2002 to create the Cooperativa de Transformación y Comercialización Agropecuaria Colonia San Francisco Ltda.

With a firm commitment to excellence, this cooperative offers high quality fresh citrus, frozen juice concentrates at 65° Brix and essential oils. When a company stands out not only for what it produces, but also for how it produces it, what it exports goes beyond the product: it exports credibility. Currently, under the Coosanfra brand, **has a presence in destinations as diverse as the Philippines, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.**

"We would like to reach new non-traditional markets, especially **Asia, the Middle East and Central America.** Exporting is not just selling abroad. It is to defend what one does, to show traceability, quality, commitment. It is also about opening doors for other producers like us," says Silvia Quiroga, treasurer of the cooperative.



According to the Rosario Stock Exchange (Argentina), fruit complexes (citrus, blueberries, pears and apples, grapes and others) exported more than USD 1.15 billion, representing a 22% year-on-year increase over 2023.

With the firm conviction that the shared effort overcomes any promise of intermediaries, they decided to develop their own packaging and designed a distinctive seal for their fruits. As time went by, they became benchmarks, price formers in the whole region and consolidated their place as the largest citrus complex in the south of Corrientes.

But it was not just a question of will. It did something else that was necessary: technical assistance, planning and certifications. Factors that are not perceived at first glance on the shelf, but are decisive for the fate of an entire shipment. It was then that INTI became part of the process, contributing its technical knowledge and institutional support.

**“Its relationship with INTI began with the audit of the Argentine Food Seal. That was the first step. After that, training in packaging and food safety followed, and we currently maintain a partnership that provides support and projection,” explains Eugenio Micucci, technical director of INTI-NEA.**

**The Institute’s interventions made it possible to professionalize processes, ensure quality and maintain standards that are now common in markets such as Israel, Brazil and the Netherlands.**

“INTI’s contribution marked a before and after for us. It is not only because of the technical assistance, but also because of the commitment with which



they accompany us. Each training leaves concrete improvements and what we value most is that this support allowed us to grow with solid foundations, without losing our identity”, reinforces Miguel Rosbaco, president of the cooperative.

“We were pioneers in breaking with the belief that exporting was an exclusive privilege of large companies. Today, we are the largest citrus complex in Corrientes and the only ones in the south of this province with certification”, concludes Rosbaco with a statement that speaks for itself.



#### **COOP. DE TRANSF.Y COMERCIALIZ.AGROP.**

##### **“COLONIA SAN FRANCISCO “ LTDA**

##### **Monte Caseros, province of Corrientes**

*Production of fresh citrus fruits, frozen concentrated juices and essential oils.*

- Annual production capacity in fresh fruit packing:  
200,000 boxes of 10 kg / 15 kg
- Capacity in juice concentrate factory: 2,500 drums of 265 kg
- Production plant:
  - Fresh fruit packing with chambers: 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>
  - Juice factory with chambers: 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>



#### **• HS CODE:**

- 0805.21.00.910 / Tangerine
- 0805.10.00.910 / Orange
- 0805.50.00.910 / Lemon
- 2009.11.00.900 / Orange juice
- 2009.29.00.900 / Grapefruit juice
- 2009.39.00.900 / Mandarin juice
- 3301.12.90.900P / Orange essential oil
- 3301.12.90.900Y / Mandarin orange essential oil
- 3301.12.90.900N / Lemon oil



## TRES ASES



## From Patagonia, the fruit that has already conquered more than 50 countries



Tres Ases SA has been growing fruits of excellence in the Argentine Patagonia for more than six decades and has been exporting uninterruptedly to almost all continents. This outstanding trajectory is due to the vision of a family of Italian immigrants who made of the winning move “the three aces” a brand with international projection. Today, presided by Gabriel Grisanti, the company continues to bet not only on innovation, but also on diversification.

This company is dedicated to the production of pears, apples, plums and peaches; but it is the pears, in their varieties Williams-Bartlett, Packham's Triumph, Beurre D'Anjou, Red Bartlett, Golden Russet Bosc and Abate Fetel, which stand out in the global market. Argentine pears are recognized for their high quality, and the Tres Ases brand is especially valued in various international markets. It is a dynamic company, with state-of-the-art practices that allow it to adapt its exportable supply to the tastes and traditions of each market.



**In 2024, world fruit exports reached 82 million tons, with a 4.6% growth in volume, and generated an estimated value of US\$94 billion.**

Source: [www.indexbox.io](http://www.indexbox.io)



Geraldine Bournaud, head of the technical packing quality department, states that this quality is no accident: “The fruits are produced under certified quality, safety and good practice standards and protocols. Each of these aspects is controlled from the origin (primary production), through conservation, packaging and logistics. All of this is aimed at preserving their nutritional and sensory attributes, respecting the environment and customer requirements”.

Daniela Aburto, commercial director, summarizes her international aspirations in this way: **“The objective is to consolidate our presence in the Western markets with which we already operate, but also to “disembark” in Southeast Asia and Central Asia, regions with a strong demand for fruit.** His testimony reflects an export plan primarily associated with emerging markets.

Tres Ases’ trajectory was strengthened thanks to the technical support of the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI). María del Carmen Díaz, head of the Institute’s Food and Beverage Department, describes their contribution: “We have trained staff in the introduction to the HACCP system and in internal auditor training in 2019. We then renewed that training in 2022 and added food defense training in 2024. All this was key for Tres Ases to meet international regulatory requirements and respond solidly in its external audits.”

“The presence of INTI gave us institutional support and confidence. We went from having one internal auditor to consolidating a team of 12 people, all trained by the Institute. They currently audit the chain of custody and food defense with accredited technical support. For an SME in the interior of the country, this has marked a before and after,” adds Mónica Bermejo, implementer of the management system and head of audits at Tres Ases.

This support allowed the company to certify GMP, HACCP, Global G.A.P., its two Add-On FSMA and GRASP, SMETA, and national seals such as Alimentos Argentinos. Audits by organizations such as SGS and Bureau Veritas are no longer an obstacle, but a competitive advantage.

Today, Tres Ases combines history, technological innovation, quality standards and institutional support in each box it exports. Gabriel Grisanti sums it up in a strong phrase: “We produce high quality fruits, packed with state-of-the-art technology and backed by international certifications, with the strategic support of INTI”.

**TRES ASES SRL****Cipolletti, province of Río Negro***Producers, packers and marketers of fresh pears, apples and plums*

- Plant: 14,825 m<sup>2</sup> and more than 1,000 ha productive land
- Production capacity: 50 million kilos

**• HS CODE:**

- 08.08.30.00 / Fresh pears
- 08.08.10.00 / Fresh apples
- 08.09.40.00 / Fresh plums







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