Over a third of the earth’s surface is destined to food crops; however, this territorial design has been defined solely on the basis of functional, logistical and economic criteria. By proposing to incorporate an architectural perspective onto the territory, this project seeks to transform the ‘sea of soy’ of Argentinean pampa into an architectural territory that is integrated to the global markets while also serving local communities.

**KEYWORDS** - soil, crop, hinterland, Argentina, soy

Food shapes territory. While only 3% of the world’s surface is occupied by cities, 38% is used for agriculture. Most of this land is used to harvest the 7,605 tons of food that are produced per minute worldwide. Of this, almost one third will be wasted, while only two thirds will be consumed, most probably, miles away from its origin.

Although humans have historically eaten food coming from lands far away, the size of the world’s current population makes the scale of the logistical endeavor astronomical. As a consequence of this, some countries are transformed into global hinterlands, dedicating huge percentages of their land to produce what other countries are demanding for their consumption.

These productive territories generate a unique urbanity, almost exclusively based on the necessary pragmatism to fulfill the task of feeding the world. This is the case of the Argentinean pampa, an area that was once considered the world’s granary and is still capable of feeding a population ten times the country’s current size. Extremely flat, with mild
A network of over 30 towns is ‘floating in a sea of soy’, which covers an area of 9,800 km² between the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba, Argentina. This region is the world’s third largest soy producer with most of its production coming from this area and leaving the country through one of Rosario’s ports.

The routes traversing the landscape from East to West conform a necklace of towns, where the paths are the string tying together a set of communes and municipalities, each 20 km apart. However, paths are weaker in a North-South direction, disconnecting neighboring towns.
weather and fertile soil, the pampa region was the perfect place to fulfill the role of an agricultural hinterland at a global scale. The resources were always so vast for its own small population that the territory was shaped focusing on the external market without considering the country’s internal needs. Crops in productive regions were chosen to please stronger economies in different corners of the world, making whatever is more demanded in the global market the one and only crop for that moment, forgetting that this monoculture strategy cannot feed Argentineans. 

In the chosen site, an area of 9,800 km² between the provinces of Córdoba and Santa Fe, 36 towns are situated on the old railway paths. Ironically, located in one of the most fertile territories of the world, these rural towns are ‘floating in a sea of soy’ that they do not consume while they are forced to import their food from other regions of the country. This productive loop is hard to escape.

Questioning this condition and suggesting another approach, the project aims to create a food network where each town is dedicated to produce a single type of product based on local pre-existences, and then exchange it with other municipalities and communes nearby. By doing so, food sovereignty of the area is achieved and food miles are reduced, creating a new business that will strengthen the local economy.

This network is materialized by reinforcing currently weak North-South connections, replicating the existing grid based on the railway paths (East-West). By calculating the routes, it is then possible to set prospective buyers and suppliers in each location and design a new territorial logic where the hinterland feeds locals again.
1. Conectores existentes / Existing Connectors

The territorial logic is defined by railway lines that connect the western part of the pampas, in the Province of Córdoba, with the ports on the east, mainly in Rosario.

2. Nodos existentes / Existing Nodes

Existing towns were created between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th in order to populate the area and to host immigrant workers –mostly from Italy and Spain. Created in relation to railway lines, the constant distance between towns is the result of the need for stops approximately every twenty kilometers.

3. Nuevos Conectores / New Connectors

The project proposes a set of six productive strips that are perpendicular to the main connectors creating a regular grid of towns. This new connectivity results in a richer region, bringing food closer to consumers and transforming the urban structure into a new territorial logic.

4. Nuevos Nodos / New Nodes

The project does not propose to create new towns but reinforcing the existing ones. However, because of their conflicting nature, certain activities cannot be close to towns. That’s why new nodes are created away from residential areas, hosting Nimby (Not In My Back Yard) activities but still connected to the main nodes to be processed and consumed.

Bandas / Strips

1. Frutas y vegetales / Fruits and vegetables

This strip combines residential neighborhoods with greenhouses and vegetable growth. Since these activities are easily put together, this strip becomes a neighborhood with recreational areas, public squares, pedestrian paths, greenhouses and houses, reinforcing the relationship between food production and consumption.

2. Animales Nimby / Nimby animals

This strip is designed to allocate Nimby animals far away enough from towns so that their smell does not affect them but close enough from the slaughterhouse to avoid long trips.

3. Granos / Grain

This strip combines extensive grain production with its storage in silos and the industrial buildings that enable to process them. Since new harvesting technologies involve little labor, value production could offer job opportunities while increasing town revenues.

4. Vacas / Cows

Nowadays meat and milk production are separated throughout the territory, acting as two independent activities without this being necessary. This strip proposes the combination of every phase along the productive chain, from birth (where milk is produced) to slaughterhouse (where meat is produced) simplifying food motion and transportation logistics.
Aerial view of Armstrong, Santa Fe Province, Argentina. Creation of a new centrality.

Aerial view of Chañar Ladeado, Córdoba Province, Argentina. Creation of public productive spaces in the urban area center.

Mercado (más) Fresco / Fresh(er) Market
The Fresh(er) Market combines a greenhouse with an on-site market. The idea is to eliminate the transport of products by allowing consumers to buy their food directly from where it is produced.
The project is developed at three scales, creating new ways of inhabiting rurality: the regional scale (at which the food network is established), the local scale (at which towns are intervened) and the architectural scale (at which the intervention materializes in the contact with the users, creating new building typologies that combine production with consumption). ARQ

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