Rangeland management in Argentina

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Argentina has 186 M ha of grazing lands that span over a wide range of rainfalls from 150-1600 mm and temperatures between 24° and 7°. Over 53 M cattle, 14 M sheep and 5 M goats are tended.

The rain shadow of the Andes in the west gives way to deserts that remain almost entirely natural.

Puna
A high altitude steppe with traditional mixed grazing of Lamas and sheep by Colla and Aymara people.

Monte
A dry, hot Larrea shrubland that is grazed with mixed sheep, goat and cattle grazing.

Patagonia
A cold steppe mostly grazed with sheep. They are subjected to erosion and desertification.

Chaco
The savannas of Humid Chaco span 19 M ha with up to 1600 mm rainfalls shows highly productive cattle and sheep systems. Rangelands have rich soils and are being lost to agriculture.

Dry Chaco, with 50 M ha of subtropical xerophytic woodlands receives 300-800 mm rainfall and is grazed by goats, sheep and cattle.

Pampas
These are iconic rangelands that Argentina shares with Brazil and Uruguay. This bioregion occupied originally 44 M ha of prairies with rich loess soils. About 71% of it has been converted to agriculture, except for the “Flooding pampas”, where a great part of the Argentine cattle graze year round.

Rangeland management has a long history in Argentina and producers in these varied habitats range from large commercial enterprises to small subsistence-type farmers or mobile pastoralists. The main problems are overgrazing, degradation and conversion to agriculture.