Juan Jose Marconi – Executive Director, COOPERALA



We’re the ear that listens and the arm that supports our members.

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Juan Jose Marconi, Executive Director of Cooperala, offers a unique perspective shaped by decades of leadership across Argentina’s pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors. With a strong academic background in applied mathematics, industrial engineering, and economics, Marconi has led both major pharmaceutical companies and national healthcare institutions. Since 2021, he has been at the helm of Cooperala, advocating for the competitiveness and growth of Argentina’s domestic laboratories. In this interview, he discusses the industry's digital transformation, its commitment to affordable medicines, and why Argentina remains a strategic hub for regional innovation and production.

How has your diverse professional background shaped your current perspective on the pharmaceutical industry and the healthcare system in Argentina?

I have an academic background, with degrees in Applied Mathematics and Industrial Engineering, along with postgraduate studies in Economics, Industrial Hygiene and Safety, and an MBA. My career has always been tied to the pharmaceutical industry, starting in operational areas like procurement and production, and later moving into commercial and leadership roles.

I have served as Commercial Director and General Manager at three well-known Argentine pharmaceutical companies, and later went on to lead two major social security healthcare providers. This gave me valuable insight into the healthcare system from a comprehensive social

security perspective. Since 2021, I have had the privilege of serving as Executive Director of Cooperala, where we focus on supporting the national pharmaceutical industry.

What sets Cooperala apart from other pharmaceutical chambers in Argentina, and how is this reflected in your governance model?

Argentina has three main pharmaceutical chambers: CAEMe, representing foreign laboratories, and two domestic chambers—CILFA and Cooperala. Cooperala was founded in 1959 as a cooperative with the mission of representing and strengthening national laboratories.

Today, with over 85 members of varying sizes—from large industrial groups to SMEs—we maintain an inclusive and democratic approach. We offer technical services, guidance, and representation before public and private institutions. Our governance model guarantees equal footing among members, regardless of size, and supports them through reports, training, and technical meetings.

How are digitalisation and artificial intelligence reshaping the Argentine pharmaceutical industry, and what is the impact on employment?

The Argentine pharmaceutical industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by technological advances. The adoption of AI, digitalisation, and automation is having a major impact on production, management, and research.

The pharmaceutical industry plays a key role in the economy, providing over 45,000 direct jobs and 120,000 indirect ones—many linked to scientific expertise and the development of innovative products. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Argentina managed to maintain its medicine supply, underscoring its strategic importance. Although there has been a slight decline in units sold (-2.6%), national laboratories continue to play a vital role, supplying more than 75% of the market in units through local production. These companies are continuously training staff in AI and integrating “AI assistants” and digital automation tools in the workplace.

Despite a difficult macroeconomic context, how has the national pharmaceutical industry managed to keep prices below inflation, and what does this mean for society?

Argentina’s economic environment has been challenging, with high inflation, currency devaluation, and reduced purchasing power. Despite this, national laboratories have shown strong social commitment by keeping medicine prices below inflation. In the first half of 2025, for example, medicine prices rose by 10%, while inflation stood at 15%. This demonstrates the industry’s dedication to supporting society during difficult times, ensuring medicines remain affordable without compromising quality or availability.

What measures are being taken to ensure access to medicines in Argentina, especially for high-complexity treatments?

There is no medicine shortage in Argentina. The country’s 12,000+ pharmacies are well stocked, and there are active agreements in place with both public and private payers, such as PAMI, to ensure universal access. These agreements allow for fair pricing and timely delivery, even for oncology and high-complexity treatments. At Cooperala, we are also working to replicate these models with provincial social security entities and other institutions to further expand access.

What are the benefits and challenges of digitalising medicine dispensing, and why is it crucial to maintain traceability in the system?

Argentina’s health system is rapidly digitalising. Electronic prescriptions are now mandatory, and Cooperala supports this shift while advocating for physician prescribing autonomy. However, we are concerned about non-sector actors operating without regulation, which may compromise medicine traceability—one of the system’s greatest strengths. Traceability allows us to track the origin, batch, distributor, and expiry date of each product dispensed at pharmacies—something essential to patient safety.

What concrete examples demonstrate the Argentine pharmaceutical industry’s commitment to research, development, and biotechnology?

R&D is a strategic pillar for the local industry. Several national laboratories are investing in vaccines, biosimilars, and biotechnology. A standout example is an Argentine vaccine developed through a public-private partnership between a local lab, CONICET, and a national university. This project involved more than 500 professionals and created a platform applicable to multiple

diseases. Model plants are also being built for regional biotech production, including those authorised by foreign companies without a local presence.

How does ANMAT contribute to Argentina’s role as a regional pharmaceutical reference, and what cooperation initiatives are underway?

Argentina has a top-tier regulatory agency—ANMAT—internationally recognised for its independence and rigour. This has helped position the national industry as a regional benchmark in Latin America. As a chamber, we are actively involved in ALIFAR and promote regional cooperation. We are driving regulatory harmonisation, binational projects, and financing mechanisms that strengthen regional health sovereignty.

What factors make Argentina attractive for clinical trials, and how are national laboratories participating in this space?

Although most clinical trials are still led by international companies, local firms have begun to develop their own—particularly in vaccines and biosimilars. Argentina boasts highly skilled medical professionals and a strong scientific tradition, making it an ideal environment for clinical research.

What are the main obstacles to the growth of the Argentine pharmaceutical industry, and what opportunities lie ahead?

The pharmaceutical sector in Argentina faces several key challenges. Chief among them is the need for better financing to support R&D and investment. Public policies that recognise the pharmaceutical industry as strategic to the national economy are also needed. Tax reform is crucial to ease the burden at the national, provincial, and municipal levels.

At the same time, there are several promising opportunities ahead. These include boosting biosimilar production, developing local supply chains to reduce import dependency, and strengthening exports. Another important growth area is achieving greater autonomy in the production of raw materials, which would increase the industry’s self-sufficiency.

How does Cooperala plan to support its members in adapting to technological advances and increasing market competitiveness?

Cooperala’s vision is to stand beside its members, providing tools to enhance competitiveness, expand internationally, and adapt to new technological demands. We offer expert advice, free training on topics such as AI in the sector, and work to ensure the voices of national laboratories are heard both locally and internationally. Our goal is to be the ear that listens to their needs and the arm that supports their growth.

What key message would you like to share with potential investors and strategic partners about the potential of Argentina’s pharmaceutical industry?

Argentina is a country full of talent, scientific infrastructure, and industrial capacity. Despite macroeconomic difficulties, we are moving toward stability. At Cooperala, we invite investors and strategic partners to look toward our country—not only for its internal market potential but also for its capacity for innovation and export. Many of our member laboratories are already exporting across LATAM, Southeast Asia, and North Africa. We want the world to see Argentina as a reliable partner, with high quality standards and a commitment to shared growth.

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