Mauricio Claverí – Chief Economist, CILFA



Argentina's strongest calling card is quality, our medicines are both price-competitive and internationally recognised.

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Argentina's pharmaceutical industry combines a robust domestic manufacturing base with growing international reach and regulatory credibility. In this interview, Mauricio Claverí, Chief Economist at CILFA, explores how local companies are positioning themselves as regional leaders in biosimilars, vaccines, and clinical research, despite persistent inflation and global supply chain pressures. From export expansion to technological integration, he outlines the factors driving the sector's resilience and competitiveness.

How would you describe your role at CILFA, and what are the organisation's core mission and current priorities?

As an economist with over two decades of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, both directly and indirectly, I lead the Department of Economic Affairs. My work focuses on the economic and regulatory dimensions of the sector, with a particular emphasis on supporting the daily operations and long-term development of Argentina's national pharmaceutical ecosystem.

Preparation of technical reports and working documents of the chamber on matters of economic relevance.

CILFA represents Argentine-owned pharmaceutical laboratories, primarily large-scale companies. We advocate for their interests at the national, regional, and international levels. A key part of our mission is to highlight the strategic importance of the domestic pharmaceutical industry. To that

end, we maintain active dialogue with other industrial sectors, business chambers, and most importantly, the government, to help shape public policies that promote sustainable growth, innovation, and competitiveness.

How does CILFA view the strategic importance of the pharmaceutical sector, and what steps are being taken to ensure its recognition at the national and international levels?

CILFA firmly considers the pharmaceutical industry to be a highly strategic sector, not only for Argentina, but also for Latin America and the broader global landscape. It is one of the most advanced industrial sectors in the country, delivering substantial added value. Argentine pharmaceutical companies have a long-standing presence, having pioneered development in the region and established deep roots in the national economy.

Today, the industry accounts for nearly 5 percent of Argentina’s total industrial value added, generates over USD 1 billion in annual exports, and provides employment to more than 43,000 people, many of whom are highly trained professionals. Notably, Argentina is among the few countries where domestic companies supply between 65% and 70% of the local pharmaceutical market, both in volume and value. Several of these firms have also expanded internationally and maintain a strong presence across Latin America and other global markets, either independently or through partnerships or strategic alliances with foreign laboratories.

What public policy priorities do you consider most important for supporting the pharmaceutical sector in Argentina today?

Public policies in Argentina have historically lacked consistency, which has created challenges for long-term sector planning. Nevertheless, we see four core pillars as particularly important: education, balanced regulation, innovation policies, tax burden and healthcare system financing.

Argentina’s strong university system has been instrumental in developing the highly skilled talent that drives the pharmaceutical industry.

On the regulatory front, it is essential to maintain a legal framework that fosters competition and prevents monopolistic practices.

A key aspect in this context is the ongoing reform process, marked by the external opening of the Argentine market and various deregulation measures. This situation, combined with the recent

tariff changes driven by the Trump administration, creates a risky scenario for the formulation of public health policies, with potentially significant impacts on the population's access to medicines.

Despite the current government's strong reformist and deregulatory approach, the tax burden on the formal industrial productive sector in Argentina remains one of the highest in the world. This burden must be reduced in order to make local production competitive and to encourage investment.

Finally, from a financing perspective, labour formalisation is essential, as it brings employment into the formal sector, which, in combination with a robust social security system, ensures broad and equitable access to medicines.

How has CILFA supported its members in maintaining access to medicines amid inflationary pressures, while ensuring the sector's long-term sustainability?

The decision to limit price increases has been a clear demonstration of social responsibility by local pharmaceutical companies. While each company sets its prices independently, CILFA has worked to foster an environment of balance and cooperation. In 2024, for instance, medicine prices rose by 90%, compared to an overall inflation rate of 117%. This year, despite inflation standing at around 15%, prices for medicines have increased by only ten percent.

This collective effort has helped safeguard access to treatment, supported a recovery in medicine sales in terms of volume, and encouraged continued patient adherence. The overarching challenge remains ensuring the sustainability of the healthcare system as a whole – across the public, private, and social security sectors – despite ongoing economic pressures.

How would you characterise Argentina's current strengths in biotechnology, and what recent developments stand out in terms of investment and clinical research?

There have been several significant advances in recent years. Argentina now hosts three vaccine production plants, placing the country among a select group worldwide with this level of manufacturing capacity. We are also seeing growth in the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) – some of which are already being exported to Europe – and rapid progress in the development of complex biosimilars that provide more affordable alternatives to high-cost therapies.

Argentina is also recognised as a regional benchmark for clinical trials. This reputation stems from a combination of factors, including a strong hospital infrastructure, highly trained healthcare professionals, and competitive costs. Many clinical centres integrate patient care with research activities, which has helped reinforce the ecosystem. While multinational companies continue to lead in terms of trial volume, domestic laboratories are increasingly active in this space, particularly as more complex biotech and biosimilar products demand robust clinical validation. A number of national firms already have a solid track record in clinical research, and we are seeing growing interest from mid-sized companies as well.

What international opportunities are emerging for Argentina's pharmaceutical industry, and how is the sector leveraging technology to strengthen its global competitiveness?

Argentine pharmaceutical exports have grown by more than 20% so far in 2025. While Latin America remains our traditional export destination, new opportunities are opening in Asia and Africa, largely driven by growing demand for affordable, high-quality biosimilars. In parallel, we are working closely with embassies and trade missions to actively promote this international expansion.

But, above all, industrial exports are driven by the initiative and strategic vision of company leaders who make significant efforts to expand markets and strengthen international integration.

On the technological front, the sector continues to advance. Many local manufacturing facilities already hold approvals from the FDA and EMA and are gradually integrating artificial intelligence into their operations. Processes such as electronic prescriptions and product traceability have also been digitised. Argentina's pharmaceutical distribution system is particularly sophisticated and efficient; for instance, the country's main wholesalers are already operating with state-of-the-art technology.

What lessons from Argentina's experience could benefit the wider region, and where do you see the most urgent opportunities for regional collaboration?

Argentina stands out as a compelling example of how the combination of strong productive capacity, high scientific standards, and a robust regulatory framework can support the development of the pharmaceutical sector. These favourable conditions have enabled the local production of numerous biosimilars and complex molecules.

This not only represents a significant advancement for the national pharmaceutical industry but has also led to a substantial reduction in the prices of high-budget-impact medicines, easing pressure on the healthcare system and generating significant foreign currency savings due to reduced reliance on imports.

Additionally, through ALIFAR, the Latin American Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, we have actively shared lessons from Argentina's pharmaceutical ecosystem, such as the implementation of digital prescriptions. At the most recent regional meeting in Colombia, the Argentine experience was discussed as a potential model. However, replicating it elsewhere requires strong public-sector leadership and regulatory alignment.

One of the most pressing areas for collaboration is vaccine and API production, both of which demand scale. The pandemic highlighted how vulnerable many countries are when they rely on a limited number of suppliers, such as India. Argentina fared relatively well in that context, but it was nonetheless a wake-up call. There is clear potential to jointly produce critical molecules at the regional level. We also see strong opportunities for technology transfer partnerships with institutions in Brazil and Mexico. The main challenge will be aligning financing mechanisms and determining the most effective locations for production.

What is CILFA's long-term vision for enhancing the competitiveness of Argentina's pharmaceutical industry, and what message would you share with international stakeholders?

The priority is to continue strengthening the national pharmaceutical platform, known for its competitiveness, high technological content, and close ties to the country's scientific system. This is a sector that generates highly skilled employment, has a strong presence across the region, and consistently increases foreign exchange earnings through exports. This dynamic helps reduce external dependency, strengthen the national health system, and ensure the population's access to essential medicines.

So, our long-term vision centres on expanding exports, advancing biotechnological capabilities, and integrating emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. We strongly advocate for a regulatory framework that fosters competition, discourages monopolistic practices, and ultimately improves access to medicines. Another key priority is strengthening local production of APIs and vaccines, an area in which we collaborate closely with CAPDROFAR, the national chamber of API producers.

Above all, Argentina’s greatest asset is quality. The pharmaceutical industry offers a wide range of medicines that are not only cost-effective but also internationally recognised for their quality standards. We are convinced that competition remains the most effective way to broaden access to treatment, and in this regard, Argentina is well-positioned to contribute meaningfully across the Latin American region.

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