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## **Beef cuts for world's biggest beef eaters**

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## THE ARTICLE

Argentines, the world's biggest beef eaters, are having to cut back on meat because of strikes by farmers. Argentina's farmers are continuing their industrial action over a government increase in export taxes on soybeans and sunflower seeds. They are blocking roads and preventing trucks from entering ports and warehouses. They are head-to-head in a battle with the government. Neither the farmers nor President Cristina Kirchner seems willing to compromise. Five hours of recent talks between the two sides ended in failure. There are now nationwide food shortages and reports of clashes between farmers and truckers. President Kirchner has sent the police to some rural areas to keep the peace. Protests promised by farmers may be the biggest anti-government demonstrations in Argentina since the financial crisis in 2001.

Restaurants and supermarkets in the capital Buenos Aires have reported low supplies of beef and other meat. One steakhouse owner said: "We're out of our prime cuts and we don't know when we'll get more supplies." Kirchner has publicly blamed the farmers' greed for creating this situation. She called them "extortionists." She pointed out that record commodities prices on the world market and Argentina's devalued peso have made many farmers very wealthy. However, many farmers disagreed with her. They are complaining that government actions will push many of them out of business. A farming organization, the Argentine Rural Confederation, said the government needed to start negotiating in order to end the strike. Argentina is the biggest soybean exporter in the world. It provides China, Japan, India, southeast Asia and Europe with \$13 billion worth of beans every year.

## WARM-UPS

**1. BEEF:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about beef. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*meat / industrial action / soybeans / sunflower seeds / compromise / crisis / supermarkets / public blame / greed / wealth / complaining / negotiating*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. CUTTING BACK:** Do you ever have to cut back on things? Talk about this with your partner(s). Give a score from 10 (this would be impossible for me) to 1 (I wouldn't mind at all). Change partners and share your ideas.

Cutback	Score	Why this score?
beef		
mobile phone use		
shopping		
speaking English		
watching TV		
cakes and chocolate		
waking up late		
using transport		

**4. GREEDY:** Which of these people do you think are greedy? Why? Talk about this with your partner(s). Change partners and share your ideas.

- farmers
- English teachers
- actors
- landlords
- sports stars
- lawyers
- company CEOs
- doctors and dentists

**5. STRIKE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'strike'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. QUICK ROLE PLAY:** Students A **strongly** believe that farmers should never go on strike; Students B **strongly** disagree - there are many reasons why farmers can strike. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. The guards at the Tower of London must eat less beef.           | T / F |
| b. Argentina's government wants to increase taxes on soybeans.     | T / F |
| c. Talks between Argentina's president and farmers were a success. | T / F |
| d. Argentina suffered large economic problems in 2001.             | T / F |
| e. A restaurant owner said he has no more top quality beef.        | T / F |
| f. Argentina's president accused farmers of being too greedy.      | T / F |
| g. The value of Argentina's peso has increased slightly recently.  | T / F |
| h. China is the world's biggest producer and exporter of soybeans. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. cut back on       | a. talking                  |
| 2. industrial action | b. stopping                 |
| 3. preventing        | c. rich                     |
| 4. compromise        | d. annually                 |
| 5. rural             | e. top-quality              |
| 6. prime             | f. blackmailers             |
| 7. extortionists     | g. meet each other half way |
| 8. wealthy           | h. reduce                   |
| 9. negotiating       | i. countryside              |
| 10. every year       | j. strikes                  |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. having to cut back on             | a. entering ports               |
| 2. farmers are continuing their      | b. of them out of business      |
| 3. preventing trucks from            | c. food shortages               |
| 4. head-to-head in                   | d. and other meat               |
| 5. There are now nationwide          | e. on the world market          |
| 6. low supplies of beef              | f. industrial action            |
| 7. Kirchner has publicly             | g. meat                         |
| 8. record commodities prices         | h. blamed the farmers' greed    |
| 9. government actions will push many | i. end the strike               |
| 10. start negotiating in order to    | j. a battle with the government |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Argentines, the world's biggest beef eaters, are \_\_\_\_\_ to cut back on meat because of \_\_\_\_\_ by farmers. Argentina's farmers are continuing their industrial action over a government increase in export \_\_\_\_\_ on soybeans and sunflower seeds. They are blocking roads and preventing trucks from entering \_\_\_\_\_ and warehouses. They are head-to-head in a battle with the government. Neither the farmers nor President Cristina Kirchner seems \_\_\_\_\_ to compromise. Five hours of recent talks between the two sides ended in \_\_\_\_\_. There are now nationwide food shortages and reports of clashes between farmers and truckers. President Kirchner has sent the police to some rural areas to keep the \_\_\_\_\_. Protests promised by farmers may be the biggest anti-government demonstrations in Argentina since the \_\_\_\_\_ crisis in 2001.

*failure**ports**strikes**willing**financial**having**peace**taxes*

Restaurants and supermarkets in the capital Buenos Aires have \_\_\_\_\_ low supplies of beef and other meat. One steakhouse owner said: "We're out of our prime cuts and we don't know when we'll get more \_\_\_\_\_." Kirchner has publicly blamed the farmers' greed for \_\_\_\_\_ this situation. She called them "extortionists." She pointed out that record commodities prices on the world market and Argentina's \_\_\_\_\_ peso have made many farmers very \_\_\_\_\_. However, many farmers disagreed with her. They are complaining that government actions will \_\_\_\_\_ many of them out of business. A farming organization, the Argentine Rural Confederation, said the government needed to start negotiating in \_\_\_\_\_ to end the strike. Argentina is the biggest soybean exporter in the world. It provides China, Japan, India, southeast Asia and Europe with \$13 billion \_\_\_\_\_ of beans every year.

*push**supplies**devalued**worth**creating**wealthy**reported**order*

**LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.**

Argentines, the world's biggest beef eaters, \_\_\_\_\_ back on meat because of strikes by farmers. Argentina's farmers are continuing their \_\_\_\_\_ government increase in export taxes on soybeans and sunflower seeds. They are blocking roads and preventing trucks \_\_\_\_\_ warehouses. They are head-to-head in a battle with the government. Neither the farmers nor President Cristina Kirchner seems \_\_\_\_\_. Five hours of recent talks between the two sides ended in failure. There are now nationwide \_\_\_\_\_ reports of clashes between farmers and truckers. President Kirchner has sent the police to some rural \_\_\_\_\_. Protests promised by farmers may be the biggest anti-government demonstrations in Argentina \_\_\_\_\_ in 2001.

Restaurants and supermarkets in the capital Buenos Aires have reported \_\_\_\_\_ other meat. One steakhouse owner said: "We're out of our prime cuts and we don't know \_\_\_\_\_ supplies." Kirchner has publicly blamed the farmers' greed \_\_\_\_\_. She called them "extortionists." She pointed out that record commodities prices on the world market and Argentina's devalued peso have made many \_\_\_\_\_. However, many farmers disagreed with her. They are complaining that government actions will \_\_\_\_\_ out of business. A farming organization, the Argentine Rural Confederation, said the government needed to start negotiating \_\_\_\_\_ strike. Argentina is the biggest soybean exporter in the world. It provides China, Japan, India, southeast Asia and Europe with \_\_\_\_\_ beans every year.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'cut' and 'back'.

<b>cut</b>	<b>back</b>
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- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having</li> <li>• increase</li> <li>• battle</li> <li>• willing</li> <li>• nationwide</li> <li>• peace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low</li> <li>• publicly</li> <li>• greed</li> <li>• push</li> <li>• order</li> <li>• worth</li> </ul>
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## STUDENT BEEF SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about beef in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
  - b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'beef'?
  - c) Have you heard anything about the crisis in Argentina?
  - d) Do you like beef?
  - e) Do you think the farmers are doing the right thing by taking industrial action?
  - f) Who has had a head-to-head battle with your government recently?
  - g) Have you ever had to cut back on anything?
  - h) Do you always compromise in arguments?
  - i) What do you think of people who go on strike?
- 

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Have there ever been food shortages in your country?
- c) Do you think the farmers are being greedy?
- d) Should farmers be banned from going on strike?
- e) Should the government do a U-turn if farmers start going out of business?
- f) Do you think it's wrong of the government to accuse farmers of being wealthy?
- g) What would you do to end this crisis?
- h) What questions would you like to ask President Cristina Kirchner?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

## LANGUAGE

**CORRECT WORD:** Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Argentines, the world's biggest beef eaters, are (1) \_\_\_\_\_ to cut back on meat because of strikes (2) \_\_\_\_\_ farmers. Argentina's farmers are continuing their industrial action over a government increase in export taxes on soybeans and sunflower seeds. They are blocking roads and preventing trucks from entering (3) \_\_\_\_\_ and warehouses. They are head-to-(4) \_\_\_\_\_ in a battle with the government. Neither the farmers nor President Cristina Kirchner seems willing to compromise. Five hours of recent talks between the two sides ended (5) \_\_\_\_\_ failure. There are now nationwide food shortages and reports of clashes between farmers and truckers. President Kirchner has sent the police to some rural areas to keep the (6) \_\_\_\_\_. Protests promised by farmers may be the biggest anti-government demonstrations in Argentina since the financial crisis in 2001.

Restaurants and supermarkets in the capital Buenos Aires have reported low (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of beef and other meat. One steakhouse owner said: "We're out of our prime cuts and we don't know when we'll get more supplies." Kirchner has publicly (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the farmers' greed for creating this situation. She called them "extortionists." She pointed out that (9) \_\_\_\_\_ commodities prices on the world market and Argentina's devalued peso have made many farmers very wealthy. However, many farmers disagreed with her. They are complaining that government actions will push many of them (10) \_\_\_\_\_ of business. A farming organization, the Argentine Rural Confederation, said the government needed to start negotiating (11) \_\_\_\_\_ order to end the strike. Argentina is the biggest soybean exporter in the world. It provides China, Japan, India, southeast Asia and Europe with \$13 billion (12) \_\_\_\_\_ of beans every year.

- |     |              |              |              |               |
|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) has      | (b) have     | (c) had      | (d) having    |
| 2.  | (a) by       | (b) with     | (c) for      | (d) to        |
| 3.  | (a) sports   | (b) parts    | (c) ports    | (d) port      |
| 4.  | (a) back     | (b) head     | (c) leg      | (d) brain     |
| 5.  | (a) on       | (b) in       | (c) to       | (d) for       |
| 6.  | (a) peas     | (b) beans    | (c) peace    | (d) piece     |
| 7.  | (a) supplies | (b) supply   | (c) supplier | (d) suppliers |
| 8.  | (a) banned   | (b) branded  | (c) braided  | (d) blamed    |
| 9.  | (a) DVD      | (b) cassette | (c) tape     | (d) record    |
| 10. | (a) against  | (b) out      | (c) with     | (d) all       |
| 11. | (a) in       | (b) on       | (c) an       | (d) all       |
| 12. | (a) waste    | (b) with     | (c) worth    | (d) world     |



## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out about the farmers' protests in Argentina. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. BEANS:** Make a poster about different beans. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar beans?

**4. INDUSTRIAL ACTION:** Write a magazine article about the farmers going on strike. Include imaginary interviews with a poor farmer and a restaurant customer wanting beef.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to President Cristina Kirchner. Ask her three questions about the chaos in her country. Give her three pieces of advice on what she should do to bring beef back to supermarket shelves and restaurant tables. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

**6. DIARY / JOURNAL:** Imagine you have to cut back on three things you really don't want to cut back on. Write your diary / journal entry for one week of cutting back. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. T      f. T      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. cut back on       | a. reduce                   |
| 2. industrial action | b. strikes                  |
| 3. preventing        | c. stopping                 |
| 4. compromise        | d. meet each other half way |
| 5. rural             | e. countryside              |
| 6. prime             | f. top-quality              |
| 7. extortionists     | g. blackmailers             |
| 8. wealthy           | h. rich                     |
| 9. negotiating       | i. talking                  |
| 10. every year       | j. annually                 |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. having to cut back on             | a. meat                         |
| 2. farmers are continuing their      | b. industrial action            |
| 3. preventing trucks from            | c. entering ports               |
| 4. head-to-head in                   | d. a battle with the government |
| 5. There are now nationwide          | e. food shortages               |
| 6. low supplies of beef              | f. and other meat               |
| 7. Kirchner has publicly             | g. blamed the farmers' greed    |
| 8. record commodities prices         | h. on the world market          |
| 9. government actions will push many | i. of them out of business      |
| 10. start negotiating in order to    | j. end the strike               |

### GAP FILL:

#### Beef cuts for world's biggest beef eaters

Argentines, the world's biggest beef eaters, are **having** to cut back on meat because of **strikes** by farmers. Argentina's farmers are continuing their industrial action over a government increase in export **taxes** on soybeans and sunflower seeds. They are blocking roads and preventing trucks from entering **ports** and warehouses. They are head-to-head in a battle with the government. Neither the farmers nor President Cristina Kirchner seems **willing** to compromise. Five hours of recent talks between the two sides ended in **failure**. There are now nationwide food shortages and reports of clashes between farmers and truckers. President Kirchner has sent the police to some rural areas to keep the **peace**. Protests promised by farmers may be the biggest anti-government demonstrations in Argentina since the **financial** crisis in 2001.

Restaurants and supermarkets in the capital Buenos Aires have **reported** low supplies of beef and other meat. One steakhouse owner said: "We're out of our prime cuts and we don't know when we'll get more **supplies**." Kirchner has publicly blamed the farmers' greed for **creating** this situation. She called them "extortionists." She pointed out that record commodities prices on the world market and Argentina's **devalued** peso have made many farmers very **wealthy**. However, many farmers disagreed with her. They are complaining that government actions will **push** many of them out of business. A farming organization, the Argentine Rural Confederation, said the government needed to start negotiating in **order** to end the strike. Argentina is the biggest soybean exporter in the world. It provides China, Japan, India, southeast Asia and Europe with \$13 billion **worth** of beans every year.

### LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - a    3 - c    4 - b    5 - b    6 - c    7 - a    8 - d    9 - d    10 - b    11 - a    12 - c