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by Barbara Khol

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On Aug. 22, daily newspaper La Nacion reported that Argentine trade with partners in MERCOSUR (Southern Cone common market) increased by 17% in the first quarter of the year, accounting for slightly less than one-seventh of total trade. Argentina ran a trade surplus of nearly \$102 million in transactions with Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Exports to the three nations were valued at \$248 million, up 39% compared to first quarter 1990. Brazil accounted for 83% of Argentine exports to MERCOSUR partners, Uruguay 14%, and Paraguay, 3%. While cereals headed the list of exports, imports included machinery, electrical materials, chemical products and metals. Meanwhile, Argentina's total trade surplus dropped from \$2.351 to \$1.66 billion. According to the National Statistics Institute, the trade surplus declined 45% in the first seven months of 1991, result of a 75% increase in import spending, and a 10% reduction of export earnings. [Basic data from La Nacion (Argentina), Inter Press Service, 08/22/91]

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