

An industry with a solid future, Alberta's greenhouse sector consists of approximately 400 growers with a combined average of 293 acres; it is estimated that there are 90 to 100 acres under greenhouse production in Southeast Alberta. In 2007 industry gain was at \$140 million with an investment of \$260 million.

Through preliminary meetings with eleven greenhouses, the Economic Development of Southeast Alberta identified two challenges facing the industry, the results showcased rising energy costs and challenging labor conditions.

Compared to some Canadians, foreign workers feel comfortable in the hot and humid environment creating higher productivity. Growers credit the Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) program with productivity and efficiency increases by up to 50%. However, current changes to the TWF program have created challenges for the operators. The EDA will be working with government policy makers, and providing information regarding recent programs and potential directions to greenhouse operators.

With increasing energy rates, the recent reprieve on prices has been welcomed by growers; high rates impact production costs. The EDA will also be working with Growers to identify effective options to stabilize energy costs, therefore increasing productivity and reducing their bottom line.

For more information on the greenhouse initiative please contact the EDA office at (403) 488-7015.