SOUTH CENTRAL
NATURAL GAS PROJECT

connecting communities

greenhouse sector

The Canadian Greenhouse Vegetable Sector

This sector is the largest and fastest growing segment of Canadian horticulture. Greenhouse farming produces agricultural products in self-contained "controlled environments" with systems supplying heat, water and nutrients, and often employing artificial lighting (in addition to sunlight) to nourish the plants. In recent years Canada emerged as the largest producer of greenhouse products in North America.

Canada's greenhouse industry produces tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, peppers, green beans, eggplants and various herbs, microgreen vegetables and bedding plants. Tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers are the main greenhouse vegetable crops grown in the country.

There has been a steady increase in the area of greenhouse vegetables in Canada for several years and in 2016 the total area of greenhouses was over 15 million square feet. This does not include the square footage of the bedding plant greenhouse sector which is also a significant contributor to the greenhouse sector.

Greenhouses in Manitoba

Manitoba greenhouses produce everything from floral crops, such as cut flowers and bedding plants, to herbs and vegetables. Given the cost of production for greenhouses in Manitoba, due to the extremely cold climate in winter, the majority of greenhouses in Manitoba operate on a seasonal basis usually from February-March to September (7 months). A small number of greenhouses operate on a year-round basis producing high value crops for specialty markets.

The greenhouse industry is well established in the province and the markets vary by region and season. In 2013, the greenhouse vegetable industry in Manitoba was estimated to be only about 4-1/2 acres, out of a total of about 73 acres of greenhouses in the province. The total sector, which includes bedding plants and ornamentals, generates $59 million in annual sales.

The Local Opportunity

Experts in the industry tend to agree that marketing, not crop production should be the first consideration when thinking of starting a greenhouse operation because it is market forces that will determine the viability of any operation. Areas to consider include:

- Researching customers. Know what they want and when they want it.
- Determine what is available in your area and who is producing it.
- Identify niche markets.
- Determine the type of outlet that best suits your personal ability and services the identified needs of the area. (Wholesale vs Retail)
- Determine your ability to produce for the market at a return that covers your expenses.
- Find a great location…

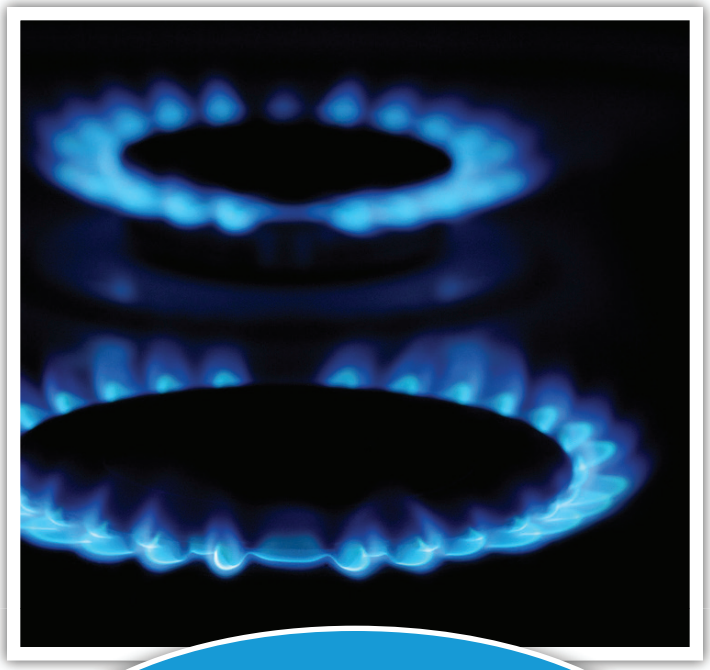
South Central Manitoba has high quality water and ample land availability. There is great farm diversification in the region, so expanding into new farming sectors is well understood. It is a low-density region with few competitors and emerging market demand for local and niche products.

Opportunities in retail greenhouse production include specialty crops such as herbs and spices, pharmaceutical plants, medicinal plants, cannabis, cut flowers, exotic vegetables and organically produced plants.

South Central Manitoba has easy access to markets which is important for selling greenhouse products. With a great highway and access to rail network, the region is two hours from major city centers Winnipeg and Brandon, and close to US border.

GREENHOUSE CONSTRUCTION COSTS:

The most common greenhouse structure in Manitoba is the double poly Quonset style or the double-poly gutter-connected greenhouse. The average cost of construction for a double poly greenhouse (most common type of greenhouse in Manitoba) including benches and internal equipment averages between $12 - $17/square foot.



Each new greenhouse creates 31 operational jobs, and annual GDP of $1.68M and over $431k in tax revenue. Not to mention 12 construction jobs.

2018 South Central Manitoba Natural Gas Economic Impact Assessment

Natural Gas – A Key to Greenhouses in South Central Manitoba

Another major consideration when considering the development of a greenhouse operation is ready access to utilities given the energy intense nature of greenhouses, especially in harsher climates like Manitoba. Currently there is no source of abundant and cost-efficient fuel in the region to even allow the development of large-scale greenhouse operations. The development of a gas pipeline would eliminate this significant barrier to entry and help allow for an investment increasing the supply of locally grown food, produce freshness and, of course, employment in the community.

Heating during power outages, which are becoming more frequent with aging electrical grid infrastructure and intensity of storms, is a major concern for livestock producers and greenhouse production. Reliable, efficient energy sources are vital for the greenhouse sector.

South Central Manitoba Infrastructure Profile:

Water Availability:	Public Network – Miami, Somerset, Swan Lake, Notre Dame de Lourdes, Pilot Mound, Holland, Cypress River, Treherne, Rathwell, includes surrounding rural areas; Private Well- Mariapolis, Crystal City, and Glenboro
Sewer and Waste Water Treatment:	Available in all towns, rural areas have private lagoons or septic fields
Industrial Park or Serviced Land:	Available in Treherne, Swan Lake, Glenboro, and Notre Dame
Transportation Routes:	North-South Highways # 5 and #34, East-West Highways #23, # 2, and #3, 2 hours from major city centers Winnipeg or Brandon, close to US border
Rail Service:	CPR and CN to Rathwell
Energy:	Wind, Solar, and Hydro Electricity (Phase 3 Electricity available where capacity exists), Biomass (where feedstock is available), Geothermal, Coal, Oil, Propane, proposed Natural Gas available in 2021

Sources:

Statistics Canada
Canada Pork International
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Manitoba Pork Council
Agriculture Manitoba
Growth and Prosperity Stakeholders Group

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