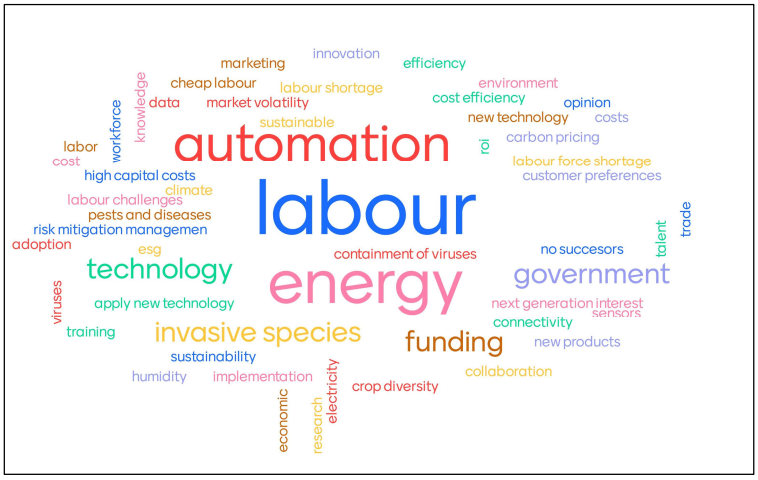
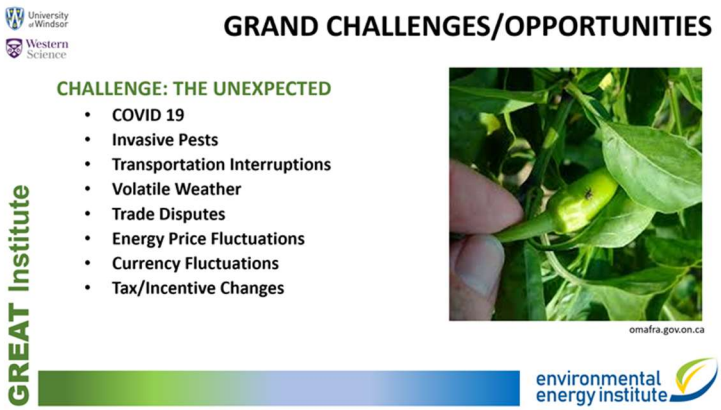
Greenhouse Research and Education Training (GREAT) Grand Challenges/Opportunities Webinar High Level Summary

Grand Challenges

This GREAT Webinar focused on exploring the major technical, economic, and social challenges to be addressed to radically advance the expansion, profitability, and sustainability of the Canadian CEA Sector over the next 5 years. Eight challenges were presented to begin the discussion, including: Labour, Training, R&D Projects & Investments, Tech Adoption, Sustainability, High Costs/Low Margins, Food Security, and The Unexpected. Sample linkages were also discussed, for example, how a lack of available labour could potentially drive investment in automation. The identified challenges were also viewed and discussed as opportunities, noting that local production and controlled environments will lead to a more resilient, traceable and trustworthy supply chain.





Stakeholder Inputs & Expert Commentary

Stakeholders were asked to provide insights on the Grand Challenges. When asked "What Do You Believe To Be The Grand Challenges Facing the Controlled Environment Agricultural (CEA) Sector?", Labour, Automation, and Energy were the top concerns. Labour was also identified as being the challenge that could be the most difficult to address, followed by low profit margins and energy availability and costs. Following the stakeholder engagement, five experts from various organizations (Vineland, Michael Keegan and Associates, OGVG, Under Sun Acres, and Nature Fresh) provided their commentary on the challenges and offered their perspectives on the most efficient pathways and mechanisms to enable the potential in Canadian CEA.

Key Takeaway & Next Steps

It was emphasized by participants that an interdisciplinary and coordinated approach is critical to addressing the most pressing challenges and capitalizing on the exciting opportunities surrounding Canadian CEA. Actions to support this pursuit were identified including the development of an industry challenge/opportunity roadmap to educate the government and public and potentially attract funding. The GREAT Institute will continue to connect stakeholders and explore opportunities to enable forward progress. EEI is also working on compiling a list of Canadian expertise in collaboration with the GTN. Please stay tuned for our next events!