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Building

Concrete industry looking at environmental issues

The biggest contribution to CO2 production comes from the cement component



BY JOHN MINER
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Bart Kanters: "We have to look at all of our construction materials and find out what we can do to try to minimize impacts..."

Stratford - An environmental solution has turned into a problem for Ontario's concrete industry, participants at the Canadian Farm Builders Association annual conference were told.

A key component of the concrete used in agricultural projects is fly ash, a byproduct of burning coal.

But with the push to cut coal-fired generating plants and other uses of coal, the fly ash supply is dwindling.

"It is a big issue and it is one we are going to have to face in the long run," said Bart Kanters, president of Concrete Ontario.

In a presentation to the conference, Kanters said environmental sustainability issues can't be ignored by the construction industry.

"We need to look at all of our construction materials and find out what we can do to try to minimize impacts when it comes to global warming," he said.

In looking at the environmental footprint of the concrete industry, most of the carbon dioxide comes from the production of the cement pow-

environment because of its high slag content, Kanters said.

"When we are thinking about sustainability the critical issue really comes back to how do we reduce the total amount of cement that is in the mix," he said.

A second major issue facing Ontario's concrete industry is the supply of aggregate.

Even in the GTA, the industry is having to travel two hours to obtain aggregate. To get a new quarry or pit licensed takes more than 10 years, Kanters said.

"It is just crazy," he said.

The industry has told the provincial government it needs the evaluation criteria for new pits and quarries clearly spelled out.

"Make the list a mile long of what you want to see for testing and reporting and we will do all of that up front, but this revolving door of never getting a sign-off is a critical issue for us," he said.

CFIA hikes fees

Effective March 31, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is hiking its fees by 2.2 per cent.

It said in an online posting that fees are increasing at the rate of inflation and will be adjusted every March 31 from now on.

Fees for animal health, plant health and plant production are not included.

But fees such as parking and photocopying are included.

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