

Farmers reject incinerators as environment hazard

By ROB SAVAGE
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Thomson News Service

TORONTO - Pleas to oppose garbage incinerators went to waste at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's annual meeting Tuesday.

OFA delegates rejected a resolution from the Lambton County Federation of Agriculture that labelled waste incinerators as an environmental hazard.

Some delegates said they didn't have information that incinerators are unsafe. Others said incinerators are useful because they can turn waste into energy.

"There does come a point when there is refuge to get rid of," said George Strachan of Wellington.

"Why not use it for energy?"

Strachan said the OFA can push for environmental concerns without being extremist.

"Moderation is called for. Not extremism."

The Lambton resolution was based in part on problems in Moore Township, where the municipality was debating the establishment of an incinerator.

Darrell Randell, of Lambton County, told OFA delegates Tuesday that alarming information about incinerators was heard during the municipal debates.

Randell, who supported the Lambton resolution, said toxic ash from incinerators could contaminate ground water. Such risks don't have to be taken," Randell said.

"If you're recycling, reusing and reducing all that you can, what are you going to burn?" Randell asked.

But other delegates said the question was unrealistic. While they support the recycling and other environmental efforts, they still believed there would be waste.

It is better the waste goes to incinerators, rather than landfill sites, those delegates said.

"We're looking at massive costs of landfilling," said Ken Durham of Niagara North.

Betty Semeniuk, of Oxford County, said one problem may be that there isn't enough public knowledge about incinerators. For example, she said an incinerator proposal for Woodstock

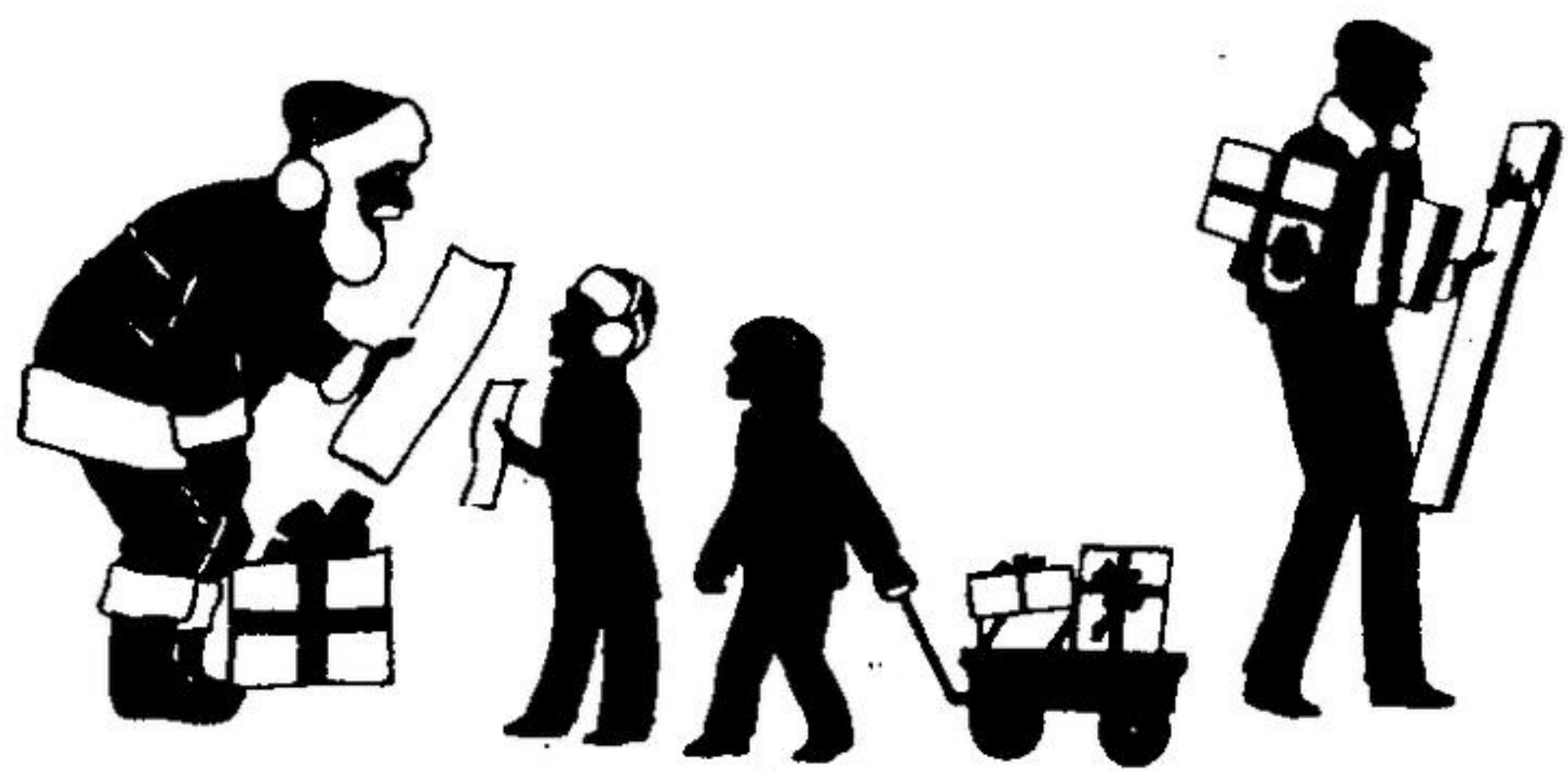
has created confusion because people don't know if it's safe.

"Not enough information is reaching the public about what a safe incinerator is," she said. "If it's not safe, we need to stress that information reach us so that

we can make a qualified decision."

Dona Stewardson, of Thedford, said she wanted to see the OFA's position on incinerators clarified.

"It's very important that everyone state their position."



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