

NAAA eNewsletter

Why Farming Farmland is the Safer Long-term Play Than Wind/Solar Leasing, Plus More NAAA Tower Resources

In an *Indiana PrairieFarmer* article on FarmProgress.com, Steve Slonaker, a farm manager and owner of an Indiana farm, explained how he looks at the economics of wind and solar energy leasing.

For solar, he thinks farming is a much better long-term investment than the payout from a 20- or 30-year solar lease. When it comes to wind farms, he assumes that about 8 acres will be removed from production and/or damaged for each tower and the loss of that productive farmland could offset any gains an appraiser adds to the land value for leasing a portion of it for wind turbines.

“There is some sales evidence from northwest Indiana that indicates tower leases add no extra value over just regular cropland,” *Indiana PrairieFarmer* quotes Slonaker as saying. “Factor in potential problems with drainage tile that may be created during construction. And remember, people who own the towers are your land partners for life.”

The economics for solar have more question marks because there are more open-ended questions around future recovery of the land after, say, a 30-year lease, according to Slonaker.

The full article is available in the [Towers News and Views](#) page of the [Towers Policy](#) section of NAAA's website.

Tower Safety Resources

The [Towers Policy](#) section of AgAviation.org features a variety of tower safety resources. Here are some of them.

Tower Issue Brief: NAAA's tower issue brief provides the history and current status of tower marking efforts on the national level and is updated several times a year to account for current developments. This valuable resource, NAAA's primary resource when talking to federal legislators, serves as an informational guide for members and state legislators when discussing tower issues.

Public Outreach Tools: Landowners are being asked to make crucial decisions that will impact farmers and their neighbors for years to come. It's up to everybody in the industry to educate the public about the consequences that ill-planned wind energy development can have on agriculture and aviation. NAAA created a series of [Wind Tower Safety Ad Slicks](#), [radio scripts](#), [Tower Safety Stuffers](#) and [MET warning letters](#) for members to use in their markets that raise awareness about the worrisome effects of wind energy development on agriculture and aviation.

“[Learn Before You Lease](#)” is the newest ad in NAAA's suite of wind tower safety ads, which are made for co-branding. [Offered in multiple sizes](#), operators and state associations can localize the ad by adding their logo to it.

You'll discover more tower safety tools in the [Towers Policy](#) section when you explore it further.

NAAA Submits Opposing Comments to FAA for Drone Exemption Request from FAR Part 107 Due to Safety Concerns

Indro Robotics has requested an exemption from certain parts of 14 CFR Part 107, the rule regulating drones less than 55 pounds. To view the request for relief, click [here](#). In the request for relief, Indro Robotics proposed operations allowing the remote pilot to be off-site. Preflight inspections and observations that a qualified certified pilot would normally handle would be performed in part by a visual observer (VO). Having the pilot on-site is a safety requirement under Part 107 for certain duties. NAAA, in its comments to the FAA, stated that allowing the pilot to be off-site would degrade the safety level provided for by Part 107.

In the description of relief sought and in other documents used for the petition, the petitioner states that operations will be over privately owned property with owner permission, in rural settings and in Class G uncontrolled airspace. NAAA reminded the FAA that the National Airspace is not privately owned and is accessible and necessary for operations such as agricultural operations. The request for the exemption itself indicated that the requirements of Part 107.15 and 107.49 could not adequately be accomplished by the VO with the pilot off-site.

Indro Robotics uses drones to inspect solar farms. NAAA has noticed, and stated in its comments to the FAA, a disturbing trend in that many involved with unmanned aircraft believe that no manned aircraft operate within 100 feet of a structure or less than 100 feet AGL. Protecting all pilots from midair collisions when they are operating near unmanned aircraft is vitally important. In the case of agricultural aviators, timely treatment of the crop is an issue of great importance to the safe, affordable and abundant production of food, fiber and bioenergy for our global population.

NAAA continues to comment to the FAA regarding these issues. To read NAAA's comments on Indro Robotics' request, click [here](#).

Remote Identification of Drones Possibly Available this Fall, Opportunity for App Developers

As a result of a 14 CFR **Part 89 final rule** published in January 2021, new drones manufactured on or after Sept. 16, 2022, will need to comply with the requirement to be capable of transmitting their geospatial and timestamped identification of their drones' location. They will have to start transmitting this information on Sept. 16, 2023. This is referred to as remote identification (RID). Existing drones manufactured before Sept. 16, 2022, will need to be retrofitted with the same technology and be operational by Sept. 16, 2023.

As reported in the **January 14 NAAA eNewsletter**, RID is a method to obtain information from an operating drone, such as an identifying number by anyone with a personal electronic device, such as a smartphone, that receives Wi-Fi or Bluetooth signals. That identifying number can then be given to law enforcement and regulatory agencies that can use it to identify the owner/operator to investigate complaints.

A limited number of apps are becoming available that claim to be able to perform this function. Apps such as "Remote ID," an FAA remote ID scanner, are available on Google Play. Wi-Fi signals are currently used to track drones for operational control, and some information from them may be available before Sept. 16, 2023. NAAA has not tested these apps.

NAAA has reported on situations when drones operating in an area did not give way to a manned ag aircraft. It is often difficult to determine who is operating these drones, and law enforcement and regulatory agencies have limited resources to investigate these complaints. The RID requirement is designed to correct this situation. When this system is operational, drones will be required to broadcast a signal that includes, among other information, the drones' ID serial number, latitude/longitude, altitude, velocity, emergency status and time mark. The identification of the owner/operator of the serial numbered drone will only be available to law enforcement and regulatory agencies. If you have an encounter with a drone and don't know what to do, consult NAAA's Ag Pilot-UAV Encounter Checklist. On this list is an FAA Safety Hotline number, 1-800-255-1111, which goes directly to FAA headquarters. The FAA is required to follow up on these reported encounters when submitted in this manner.

NAAA has urged the FAA to require identification of drones before they were first approved for commercial use in 2014. NAAA was instrumental in obtaining the requirement that RID and other regulations affect all drones over 0.55 pounds.

With the drone industry urging the FAA to allow them to perform beyond visual line of sight operations, RID and other technology are becoming essential for agricultural aviation safety.

Repetitive Inspection AD Proposed for Main Rotor Blades on Bell 206 Helicopter

The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Bell Textron Canada Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3 and 206L-4 helicopters with a certain part-numbered main rotor (M/R) blade installed under Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) SR02684LA. This proposed AD was prompted by delamination of M/R blades. This proposed AD would require a repetitive inspection for delamination and, depending on the results, removing the M/R blade from service and reporting certain information.

If adopted, this proposed AD would require action before the M/R blade accumulates 400 total hours time-in-service (TIS) or 2,400 engine starts since initial installation on any helicopter (whichever occurs first) or within 100 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD. Comments are requested and must be received before May 9. View or comment on the proposed AD [here](#).

NAAA Ag Aviation Expo Hotel Room Block Open

Join us for the 2022 Ag Aviation Expo in Knoxville, Tennessee, Dec. 5-8. The Ag Aviation Expo will provide you with networking, education and fun in a wonderful city full of restaurants, nightlife, shopping and attractions. The NAAA hotel room block is now open! It is important for attendees to stay in the NAAA room block. We get the best hotel room rates for our attendees, and if the NAAA hotel block is not filled, we cannot offer great rates for future years!

We have five hotels at different price points and in different sections of the city. View a list of the hotel and maps below or online [here](#). Use the information below to book your hotel rooms and after you book your hotel room, learn more about Knoxville [here](#).

NAAA Knoxville Hotel Choices

1. Marriott Knoxville: \$139/night + taxes. Click [here](#) to book a room.

- A brand-new hotel across the street from the Knoxville Convention Center.
- 525 Henley Street, Knoxville, TN. Local Phone: 865-522-2800; Toll-Free: 888-236-2427 (Code: National Agricultural Aviation Association)

2. The Tennessean: \$219/night for King or \$229 for Queen/Queen + taxes. Click [here](#) to book a room (in the Add Code box: NAAA and leave as Group Attendee, click Add in Group Attendee box)

- A luxury boutique hotel across the street from the Knoxville Convention Center.
- 531 Henley Street, Knoxville, TN. Local phone: 865-232-1800

3. Hilton: \$159/night + taxes. Click [here](#) to book a room.

- One-block walk to the Knoxville Convention Center.
- 501 West Church Avenue, Knoxville, TN. Phone: 888-225-9664 (Group Code AV22)

4. Crowne Plaza: \$149/night + taxes. Click [here](#) to book a room.

- Five-block walk to the Knoxville Convention Center.
- 401 W. Summit Hill Drive, Knoxville, TN. Toll-Free: 877 424-2449. Local Phone: 865 522-2600 (Group code NAA)

5. Hyatt Place, \$159/night + taxes. Click [here](#) to book a room.

- Sleeping rooms available Dec. 4-8 only
- Four-block walk to the Knoxville Convention Center and located on Gay Street, a historic street with many restaurants and bars.
- 530 S. Gay Street, Knoxville, TN. Local Phone: 865-544-9977 (Group code G-NAAA)

Details for the 2022 Ag Aviation Expo

- **Dates:** Dec. 5-8, 2022
- **Location:** Knoxville Convention Center
- **Kickoff Breakfast Speaker:** **Captain Scott Kelly**, first astronaut to complete year-in-space mission.
- **General Session Speakers:** **Dr. Stan Musick & Michelle Miller**
- **Schedule of Events:** See the current, tentative schedule [here](#).
- **Hotel:** Details [here](#).
- **Attendee Registration:** Opens July 1.
- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Large booth sales open in late March. 10'x10' and 10'x20' booth sales open on July 14. Please [email Lindsay Barber](#) if you would like to secure a large booth space.
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** Sponsorships are now available. View the [opportunities online](#). Please [email Lindsay](#) if you would like to secure a sponsorship from last year or would like to be contacted about 2022 opportunities! We have sponsorships available for all budget sizes.
- **Auction Donations: Thank you to Pratt & Whitney Canada for donating a PT6-34AG to this year's NAAA Live Auction.** While we are still several months away from the Ag Aviation Expo, we are already accepting donations for the [Live and Silent Auction](#). The earlier you inform us of your auction donation, the more advertising you will receive on the NAAA website and in NAAA publications. Support the aerial application industry by donating an item today. [Email Lindsay](#) with your donation details.

Smashing Success! NAAA Touts the Importance of Ag Aviation at Ag Day on the Mall

The weather, the turnout and NAAA's location in the center of the action couldn't have been better at Ag Day on the Mall last week. NAAA representatives made the most of the two-day event that coincided with National Ag Day on March 22 by talking to a multitude of policymakers, regulators, media members and everyday citizens who checked out the Bell 206 LongRanger helicopter on display halfway between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument.

In a continuation of its efforts to leverage the industry's 100th anniversary into positive coverage, NAAA supplemented a big media relations push organized by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) with pre-event media advisories to smaller markets and by sending interesting photos and captions of U.S. senators stopping by NAAA's helicopter display to the media, along with regular updates on NAAA's social media channels throughout the event.

NAAA CEO Andrew Moore and President Jim Perrin were interviewed by numerous media outlets, including RFD-TV, Agri-Pulse, USDA Radio, and legendary broadcaster Max Armstrong. Armstrong is the director of broadcasting for Farm Progress and the producer and host of the *Farm Progress America* and *Max Armstrong's Midwest Digest* daily radio programs, which are carried on more than 140 local radio stations. He is also the co-host of *This Week In AgriBusiness*, a weekly TV show that airs three times each weekend on RFD-TV and once a week on more than 100 local commercial television stations.

NAAA also addressed several groups of EPA staffers and agency leaders. In one group, Michal Ilana Freedhoff, the EPA's assistant administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP), and Ya-Wei "Jake" Li, the deputy assistant

administrator for pesticide programs at OCSPP, were joined by Ed Messina, the director of the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, and members of their staff. Staff from the EPA's Office of Water made up another group.

NAAA also had extended visits with Sens. John Boozman (R-Ark.), the ranking member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.), who also sits on the agriculture committee.

A mix of curiosity and bona fide interest attracted too many passersby to count, but having a Bell 206 from Helicopter Applicators Inc. (HAI) in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on display with spray booms and a bucket for water scooping out was enough to get scores of onlookers passing by to ask questions and take pictures by the helicopter.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack reflected on the creation of the USDA 160 years ago in remarks he delivered at Ag Day on the Mall on National Ag Day. The secretary may have drawn an even larger crowd as he visited with several exhibitors and checked out the impressive machinery during a walk around the "floor" of the outdoor event. Monday's keynote speaker was Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), the chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

NAAA enjoyed spending two very productive days taking advantage of the opportunity to educate policymakers and the public about the importance of agricultural aviation. The association greatly appreciates HAI operator Glenn Martin for supplying a helicopter and allowing members of his crew to participate in the multi-day event, including the setup day last Friday. Special thanks also go to HAI Director of Safety Joe Stambaugh and pilot Brock Heffner for their constant availability to visit with people stopping by the helicopter and their willingness to show them around and discuss the myriad types of application work helicopters and ag planes do.

President Perrin was an outstanding spokesperson in his interactions with the media and policymakers. He and his wife, Julie, were also extremely welcoming to anybody who stopped to check out the helicopter display.

Of course, Ag Day on the Mall would not have been possible without the tremendous planning and effort by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers to organize this fantastic event.

More Photos, Videos on NAAA's Ag Day on the Mall Page

More photos and videos from the event are available on our [Ag Day on the Mall webpage](#).

NAAA Member Tim McPherson Hosts Open House at Fargo Air Museum on National Ag Day

Tall Towers Aviation operator Tim "Toby" McPherson has been hosting an open house at his hangar in Page, North Dakota, every spring since 1989—until now. This year, instead of receiving some city dwellers who had driven from Fargo, North Dakota, at his company, McPherson decided to bring the open house to them. In conjunction with National Ag Day, McPherson hosted an open house at the Fargo Air Museum March 22.

The full-day event showcased various ag aircraft, including McPherson's refurbished serial #1 Ag-Cat, an Air Tractor AT-402 from Airborne Custom Spraying in Halstad, Minnesota, courtesy of operator Rob Aslesen, and a Piper Pawnee 150 spray plane.

Radio broadcaster Joel Heitkamp hosted his show at the museum from 8 to 11 a.m. News & Views with Joel Heitkamp airs locally during the 8 o'clock hour, while the last two hours from 9 to 11 a.m. reach seven states and three Canadian provinces. North Dakota Ag Commissioner Doug Goehring called into the show and was interviewed by Heitkamp.

The event included representatives from the wheat, corn, soybean, sugar beet and edible bean associations, chemical and seed reps, and members of the public, which was the main point of the event. While the annual open house he hosts at his hangar has worked well for the years, Toby was struck by some of the people who would show up. "The last couple years, people have come up from Fargo, which is 50 miles away, and they had questions. You'd almost think they weren't from an agriculture state," McPherson said. "They had no idea what we actually do. I just always emphasize to everybody I talk to, 'We enjoy the safest, most abundant, most affordable food supply in the world.'"

That gave Toby the idea of hosting his open house at the Fargo Air Museum this year. He is on the museum's board and was one of the driving forces behind the museum's establishment when it opened almost 21 years ago, on Sept. 30, 2001. The fact that the open house took place on National Ag Day was fortuitous but somewhat coincidental. McPherson knew that National Ag Day fell on March 22, but he checked with Heitkamp about broadcasting his radio show from Fargo Air Museum during the open house. March 22 was the only availability Heitkamp had on his schedule, so McPherson got to work on organizing and promoting the open house at the museum. Toby estimates that about 25% of the visitors were customers of his and 75% were from the general public.

“The timing on everything worked out. It worked out well,” McPherson said. The event was well-received, and he heard more feedback about it on Heitkamp’s show yesterday morning. “That’s what we like to hear is more questions asked,” he said.

NAAA commends McPherson for promoting agricultural aviation on National Ag Day in such a public manner. Way to go, Toby!

Idaho Governor Signs Right to Farm Act Amendment Protecting Aerial Applicators into Law

An ag plane banks above potato field in Southern Idaho.

On March 18, Idaho Gov. Brad Little signed a bill expanding the definition of “Agricultural Operations” under the state’s Right to Farm Act (RFA) to include the ingress and egress of agricultural aircraft to agricultural lands or treatment areas into law. The change will take effect on July 1.

The Idaho Agricultural Aviation Association encountered little to no resistance in its quest to get aerial applicators’ transit to and from application sites officially designated as an agricultural operation in the Idaho Code’s definitions related to the Right to Farm. The [Idaho House of Representatives](#) unanimously passed House Bill 606 on Feb. 25. The [State Senate](#) also passed HB 606 by a unanimous vote on March 14. By the end of the week, Gov. Little officially codified the expanded definition of “Agricultural Operations” under the RFA.

The RFA protects agricultural activities conducted on farmland in urbanizing areas from being subjected to nuisance lawsuits. An increase in complaints from urban transplants prompted the Idaho AAA to seek to amend the RFA to include the ingress and egress of aircraft in agricultural areas in the right to farm territory. “Agricultural aircraft must be able to travel to and from agricultural lands and treatment areas to perform their vital functions. With a growing agricultural/urban interface in Idaho, it is important to recognize and protect the ability for agricultural aircraft to access agricultural lands,” stated key members of the Idaho legislature.

Getting the RFA amended to recognize that agricultural operations for ag pilots extend from takeoff to landing and not just when they are at an application site is a tremendous win for the Idaho AAA. It also comes on the heels of another lobbying victory for the state association after the enactment of legislation exempting ag aircraft and related parts from state sales tax. Kudos to the Idaho AAA for advancing this vital state legislative work!

See last month’s [board meeting article](#) under state reports for more background information.

More Drone Airworthiness Criteria Issued by the FAA, NAAA Comments to Agency Acknowledged

On March 17, the FAA approved airworthiness criteria for four drone models—[Wingcopter](#), [Telegrid](#), [Flirtey](#) and [3DRobotics](#). NAAA submitted comments to the FAA in November of 2021 opposing the approval due to a dearth of safety provisions in the proposals.

NAAA reported on the proposed airworthiness criteria in the [December 3, 2020 eNewsletter](#). In the comments, NAAA stressed the importance of aerial application and the necessity for safe, low-altitude airspace to ensure that agricultural pilots flying manned aircraft can continue to do their jobs safely and questioned that the drone proposal could do that due to exempting drones from airworthiness criteria and not requiring drones have any type of sense-and-avoid technology. Lack of sense-and-avoid technology is especially dangerous for UAS operating beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), which was being proposed in the airworthiness criteria for some of the drone models. NAAA also registered concerns with the proposals allowing a 20-to-1 UAS-to-pilot ratio and statements in the proposals such as “the aircraft must not require exceptional piloting skill or alertness”—conditions adding peril to low-altitude manned aviators.

NAAA’s comments also touched on the overreliance of software with drones and lack of human oversight. Additionally, the proposal lacked ADS-B In/Out and traffic avoidance technology on the drones, in addition to lacking strobe lights and high-visibility paint schemes. While the FAA did not find it necessary to change the airworthiness criteria, the FAA did state that several of NAAA’s comments will be addressed during operational approval for these drones, which is forthcoming. NAAA continues to monitor these requests and insist that our recommendations, if not included in the airworthiness criteria, be included in the operational approval.

NAAA’s ‘Ag Wings of Tomorrow’ Scholarship Returns with \$20K Available in ’22

Attention, operators and aspiring ag pilots: The NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship is back again! Thanks to the generous support of BASF and Thrush Aircraft, \$20,000 in aid is available through the [2022 NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship Program](#) to assist four aspiring ag pilots in their journey.

The goal of NAAA’s “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship Program is to strengthen the aerial application industry by helping operator members bring new pilots into the profession and help fund their training. Applicants must be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member. Scholarship recipients may use the proceeds for flight training or aviation or ag-related coursework at a university, college, community college or other institution of higher learning. A stipend for a trainee in an NAAA Operator-sponsored apprentice program is also permissible. The scholarship program is administered by NAAA and funded by educational grants from BASF and Thrush.

This year, NAAA will award up to four scholarships valued at \$5,000 each. Investing in aspiring ag aviators is a win-win for NAAA Operator members and individuals seeking training funds to support their pursuit of becoming a professional ag pilot.

How to Apply

To be considered for the 2022 scholarship, along with completing the two-part application, every applicant must submit:

- **A letter of recommendation** from the NAAA Operator member sponsoring the applicant.
- **An essay of 250 words or less** explaining why the applicant wants to pursue a career in agricultural aviation and how they would use NAAA's "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship to further their education and training.
- **A one-page résumé or list of activities** detailing all agricultural and aviation experiences, education and training.

Pictured above from left to right, last year NAAA awarded \$5,000 scholarships to Thomas Wiltz of Lafayette, Louisiana; Kolby Pfyl of Orland, California; Weston Meise of Moses Lake, Washington; and Autumn Smith of Cozad, Nebraska. NAAA will announce the recipients of the 2022 "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarships in December at the Ag Aviation Expo in Knoxville, Tennessee.

To learn more about the 2022 NAAA "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship, review the instructions included with the [2022 application](#). The scholarship application can also be found at [AgAviation.org/scholarship](https://www.agaviation.org/scholarship). Please contact NAAA at (202) 546-5722 or information@agaviation.org for clarification about any of the application requirements.

While the applicant must be sponsored by an NAAA Operator member, NAAA membership is not a prerequisite for applying for the scholarship. Still, becoming an NAAA Associate member is an excellent way for candidates to learn more about the industry and augment their training.

The deadline to apply for the 2022 "Ag Wings of Tomorrow" Scholarship is Aug. 31.

President Biden Signs \$1.5 Trillion Fiscal 2022 Spending Deal—Language Supporting Aerial Application Research Funding Included

In mid-March, President Biden signed a \$1.5 trillion spending bill that will fund the U.S. government through the remainder of fiscal year 2022, which ends Sept. 30. The 2022 fiscal year started on Oct. 1, 2021, but lawmakers averted a government shutdown by passing a stopgap measure on the Sept. 30 deadline to fund the government and proceeded to do this another two times. The spending package provides domestic agencies with a 6.7% budget increase.

In addition to mandatory spending on nutrition and other programs, the bill provides the USDA with \$25.125 billion in discretionary funding, an increase of \$1.426 billion above fiscal year 2021. The bill also includes \$3.5 billion for agricultural research. Of the key provisions, NAAA was again successful in urging the House Appropriations Committee to insert language into the Agricultural Appropriations Spending Bill Committee Report indicating Congress's continued support of the USDA-ARS Aerial Application Technology Program. NAAA has secured nearly \$12 million for the USDA's AATRU since 2002. Favorable committee report language sends a strong message to the USDA to continue to sustain appropriate funding for aerial application research. The language in the Committee Report reads:

Aerial Application.—The Committee recognizes the importance of aerial application to control crop pests and diseases and to fertilize and seed crops and forests. Aerial application is useful not only to ensure overall food safety and food security, but also to promote public health through improved mosquito control and public health application techniques. The ARS Aerial Application Technology Program conducts innovative research making aerial applications more efficient, effective, and precise. This program has yielded more effective public health control programs, as well as increased efficiencies and greater crop production. Research for aerial application serves the public interest as a vital tool for the future.

The bill includes \$1.005 billion for the USDA conservation, including \$78.3 million across the USDA to address the impacts of climate change. These are funds that may be directed to farmers that seed cover crops to their land. NAAA has sent data to the USDA showing that ag aviation protects 27.4 million acres of land from being converted into farmland every year. In addition, NAAA has shown that crops seeded by air sequester 1.9 million metric tons of CO₂ annually (412,000 carbon combustion cars' engines) from the roads each year. Increasing cover crop acreage by 15% is the equivalent of sequestering another 11.9 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually.

The bill also includes \$550 million for the expansion of rural broadband, which may result in additional communication towers being erected in areas in which low altitude aerial applications are made.

The House Appropriations Committee summary of the FY 2022 Agriculture and Rural Development funding bill can be found [here](#).

The omnibus spending package includes \$102.9 billion in budgetary resources for the Department of Transportation (DOT). This is an increase of \$16.2 billion above the fiscal year 2021 enacted level and \$15.9 billion above the president's 2022 budget request. Of this appropriated money, \$18.1 billion is for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), \$495 million above fiscal year 2021, including \$15 billion for Aviation Safety and \$554 million for discretionary Airport Improvement Grants and projects. The House Appropriations Committee summary of the FY 2022 Transportation funding bill can be found [here](#).

For the EPA, the package includes \$9.56 billion, \$323 million above the 2021 enacted level. Of this amount, the bill contains a total of \$129.376 for the Office of Pesticide Programs, which is above last year's funding and above the \$128.3 million required by the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA).

The bill also includes \$100 million for Environmental Justice activities, an \$83 million increase above the 2021 enacted level.

Report language accompanying the bill directs the EPA to continue stakeholder engagement related to Endangered Species Act consultations for pesticide registrations. The language reads:

Pesticide licensing and Stakeholder Engagement.—The Committees urge EPA to consult with public health, environmental, and other non-governmental organizations, industry stakeholders, and other interested parties in advance of the deadline for progress reports required by Sec. 10115 of Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334) and to provide updates to stakeholders as appropriate. The Committees also request that EPA continue to keep the Committees apprised of stakeholder engagement activities, consistent with the timing of progress reports to Congress on Endangered Species Act consultation.

In addition, the bill includes \$14.1 billion in discretionary appropriations for the Department of Interior, \$776 million above the 2021 enacted level. This funding level includes \$1.65 billion for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The House Appropriations Committee summary of the FY 2022 Interior and Environment funding bill can be found [here](#).

Details on Entry-Level Driver Training for CDL Applicants

How do the Department of Transportation's (DOT) new Entry-Level Driver (ELD) training requirements affect your aerial application business? Well, if you have new employees who are applicants for an unrestricted Commercial Driver's License (CDL), they will have to take the new ELD training before they are eligible to take the CDL knowledge and skills tests. Drivers who have obtained a CDL before Feb. 7, 2022, are exempt from the requirement.

ELD training is provided at driver training facilities recognized by the DOT's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). To find more information about the training, click [here](#). The FMCSA sets the requirements for who must have a CDL but allows individual states discretion to make some exceptions to the requirements. The exceptions that may be allowed are found in 49 CFR [Part 383](#) and include:

1. Operators of a farm vehicle which is:
 - i. Controlled and operated by a farmer, including operation by employees or family members;
 - ii. Used to transport either agricultural products, farm machinery, farm supplies or both to or from a farm;
 - iii. Not used in the operations of a for-hire motor carrier, except for an exempt motor carrier as defined in section 390.5 of this subchapter; and
 - iv. Used within 241 kilometers (150 miles) of the farmer's farm.
2. A State may, at its discretion, waive the required knowledge and skills tests of [Subpart H](#) of this part and issue restricted CDLs to employees of these designated farm-related service industries:
 - i. Agri-chemical businesses;
 - ii. Custom harvesters;
 - iii. Farm retail outlets and suppliers;
 - iv. Livestock feeders.

It is common for states to allow the farm vehicle exception but less common to allow for the "agri-chemical businesses" exemption. Since drivers' licenses are issued by the state, contact your state to determine your employee's requirements. If your employees currently are required to have a CDL, then new drivers operating similar equipment will likely also be required to take the new ELD training.

For more information on CDL and by association ELD training, click [here](#).

EPA Updates Endangered Species Protection Bulletins

The EPA recently updated its endangered species protection bulletins, which are designed to allow pesticide applicators to check for threatened and endangered species in areas where they intend to make an application. The new bulletin system is called Bulletins Live! Two (BLT). The bulletins offer geographical information about the location of threatened and endangered species and their designated critical habitat.

Pesticide applicators need to check pesticide labels for threatened and endangered species instructions. If the label directs the user to the BLT website, then the applicator is required to check the bulletins to determine if a threatened or endangered species or critical habitat exists near their application site. The bulletins relay this geographical information by showing designated Pesticide Use Limitation Areas (PULAs). If an application is to be made within a PULA, the bulletins contain additional use limitations that are enforceable under FIFRA and therefore must be followed during the application.

When using BLT, be sure to have the EPA registration number for the product you intend to apply and the month and year in which you intend to make the application. Once you have entered this information and zoomed into the general area in which you intend to make the application or applications, you can download and print a PDF of the bulletin that includes the additional pesticide use limitations.

You can read more about the EPA's endangered species protection bulletins [here](#). A BLT tutorial can be found [here](#), and the BLTs themselves are located [here](#).

FAA Issues Airworthiness Concern Sheet for Certain Thrush Models/Serial Numbers

The FAA has issued an airworthiness concern sheet (ACS) for certain Thrush Aircraft models/serial numbers. The affected models/serial numbers can be found on the ACS, which can be viewed [here](#). The ACS was released due to what the FAA believes is a misunderstanding in how to comply with [AD 2009-26-11](#), which addresses fatigue cracks that can occur in the lower spar caps.

Specifically, the ACS details the FAA's concern that the options for required repetitive inspections, which are based on the available methods for replacing the wing front lower spar cap, can be misinterpreted. If the Avenger STC SA03654AT is not used for lower spar cap replacement and if the maximum inspection interval is to be used, [Thrush Custom Kit CK-AG-41 Rev A](#) must be followed in its entirety with no deviations allowed.

The ACS requests information from owners and operators of affected Thrush aircraft. There are four questions relating to the method used to replace the front lower spar cap. The ACS provides the appropriate FAA contact to reply to with the requested information.

FAA's GA Survey for '21 Actively Collecting Valuable Data

[Last month NAAA reported](#) that the FAA's annual General Aviation and Part 135 Activity Survey (GA Survey) had launched. The survey is now fully underway. A round of postcards and email blasts have already been sent out to operators with two or fewer aircraft. Operators with three or more aircraft have been sent a paper survey. The survey is off to a strong start, but more responses are needed in order to have statistically valid results. More communication efforts will take place in the next several weeks to help increase participation.

The GAA Survey is for reporting on activity for the calendar year 2021. It is the only source of information available that provides reliable data on the GA fleet, including the number of aircraft and hours flown. The GA Survey is especially critical to the agricultural aviation industry. NAAA uses the results to calculate an overall accident rate and a fatal accident rate for Part 137 operations.

Participation in the GA Survey is voluntary, but the agricultural aviation industry needs your input. If you are selected to participate in the GA Survey, you will receive an email or postcard invitation asking you to complete the survey online. It only takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey, and the information is confidential. If you have questions, please contact Tetra Tech, the independent research firm that conducts the GA Survey for the FAA, toll-free at 1-800-826-1797 or by email at infoaviationsurvey@tetratech.com.

Bell Airworthiness Directive Expanded Effecting a Number of Helicopter Models

The FAA is superseding Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2022-02-02, which applied to certain Bell Textron Inc. model 204B, 205A, 205A-1, 205B, 210 and 212 helicopters with a certain main rotor hub strap pin installed. AD 2022-02-02 required removing certain outboard pins from service and prohibited installing them on any helicopter. This AD expands the applicability to all affected pins, regardless of whether they are outboard or inboard. To view this AD or to comment, click [here](#). This AD is effective March 16. The FAA must receive any comments on this AD by April 28.

The expansion also includes the military version UH (Huey) model helicopters originally manufactured by Bell, now operated in a restricted category by various companies. The expanded parts affected are similar to the above description but are addressed in a separate AD. The UH AD may be viewed [here](#).

We All Have a Telling History: Use Yours and NAAA's Materials to Broadly Communicate Agricultural Aviation's

By Andrew Moore, NAAA CEO

If you are an active citizen in the world of aerial application, don't be a static audience member during this epic centennial event. Take the stage with us and bring out your inner thespian as we enunciate the gospel of agricultural aviation to the public.

History is not just documenting famous or infamous people, times and events. We all have a history—a story to tell about ourselves that can contribute to the next and future generations' betterment. One could also believe that sharing our history is one of the meanings of life—to improve and evolve our world by sharing the key to living a good life and sharing the hazards and obstacles that may hinder such living.

NAAA has reached the climax in the centennial epic of sharing our industry's history to the public, which of course was Aug. 3, 2021. But just because the official centennial anniversary date is behind us doesn't mean all efforts to share the importance of our industry to the public have passed you by. We will be celebrating the centennial of agricultural aviation for an entire year. We continue to reach out to policymakers, our brethren in the fields of agriculture and aviation, to the trade press, to the public and to the national news media. We continue to share our history of improving the cultivation of food, fiber and bioenergy consumed globally and how we've learned from harrowing experiences and evolved technologically to fine-tune our craft, use less product to cover more acres and better care for Mother Earth. We are continuing to use all types of media to educate the public—three different length video documentaries, a comprehensive book of our history, social, print, trade and news media releases and a special website, AgAviation100.com, to share the 10-decade story of ag aviation and we will continue to do so through July of 2022.

If you are an active citizen in the world of aerial application—whether an operator, pilot, crew member, service-parts-equipment provider or related tangentially to the industry in another way—don't be a static audience member during this epic, year-long centennial event. Take

the stage with us as we enunciate the gospel of agricultural aviation to the public. Inform your local television stations, newspapers and radio stations about the industry's 100th anniversary, even if it is by simply directing them to [AgAviation100.com](https://www.agaviation100.com). On that site, there is a "Get Involved" tab with a draft press release about the 100th that discusses the importance of the industry, its progressive evolution, and directs readers to [AgAviation100.com](https://www.agaviation100.com) to learn more. Feel free to cater that press release to your own operation and experience and send it to your local news outlets.

You can also brush up on the ag aviation script about the importance of ag aviation, environmental safeguards that are common practice today and other industry talking points on NAAA's media relations kit webpage that may be found [here](#).

The media relations kit also includes suggestions on how to best communicate to the media and public when espousing ag aviation's significance. If you don't feel comfortable communicating directly, no worries. NAAA staff and an assortment of ag aviation ambassadors can be used as understudies and take over that role, but do make sure the public and news media in your area are informed of our centennial milestone to maximize the value of this pivotal once-in-a-lifetime event.

Don't forget, we all have a great story to tell about this industry. Whether it is how one got into the industry; the training to fine-tune ag aircraft and the application equipment; how ag aviation provides to local employment and the local economy; or how after five generations, our technology and experience are such that we produce more per acre, showing that our care for the environment continues to progress—all of these anecdotes are both important and fascinating to public audiences.

It's up to us all to tell the story to continue this industry's remarkable legacy. And again, just because the official anniversary date has occurred, our centennial lasts a year and you can still contribute plenty. Please join the ag aviation cast for this once-in-a-100-year performance that is leading to glowing public reviews and will continue to do so throughout the year.

NAAA Releases Book of the Century! Buy It Today

NAAA has released the book of the century—a century of agricultural aviation, that is.

One hundred years ago, an aerial crop dusting experiment spawned the birth of the agricultural aviation industry. To commemorate agricultural aviation's 100th anniversary, NAAA is pleased to present *Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application*.

Agriculture's Air Force provides a new, updated account of aerial application's history, 35 years after Mabry Anderson's masterpiece, *Low & Slow: An Insider's History of Agricultural Aviation*, was published. NAAA's meticulously sourced book is based on a collective history of the agricultural aviation industry based on material from *Agricultural Aviation* magazine, *AgAir Update*, *Low & Slow* and other resources.

Beginning with *Agricultural Aviation's* Spring 2021 issue, NAAA has been publishing excerpts from *Agriculture's Air Force* and will continue to do so through the Fall 2021 issue. Those stories are just a small slice of what's in the 268-page hardback edition, however. The complete book contains so much more.

Agriculture's Air Force delves into the intersection of agriculture and aviation. It chronicles the agricultural aviation industry's growth from its infancy in 1921 through the boom times after World War II and on to today's modern era of high-tech aerial application.

The finished hardback book has been years in the making but well worth the effort. "This is a significant piece of work covering not just the industry's history, but its essence," NAAA CEO Andrew Moore said. "We are proud of it and believe it will make a lasting contribution to the industry."

The story of agricultural aviation is much like the broader story of aviation: It is mostly punctuated with interesting smaller moments sandwiched between milestone developments. Aerial application is also the story of technological leaps and bounds.

Agriculture's Air Force covers five eras spanning more than 10 decades. In addition, it features 34 Spotlight pieces focused on significant individuals, organizations, trends, technologies and topics related to aerial application.

Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application may well be NAAA's most enduring 100th anniversary initiative. One thing's for sure: It is no textbook. The commemorative book is written from a fresh perspective that is entertaining and enlightening. Readers will come away with a new appreciation for agricultural aviation as a profession and the dedicated individuals who propel it forward.

Order Your Copy of Agriculture's Air Force Today!

Agriculture's Air Force retails for \$45, excluding shipping. Order it from [AgAir Update's Online Store](#).