

NAAA eNewsletter

Raise Awareness about Ag Aviation Activities in Your Area with NAAA's Customizable 'Preseason' Press Release, Available to Members Only

With the 2023 aerial application season underway or soon to be underway in different parts of the country, NAAA has prepared a customizable, [do-it-yourself press release](#) that members can use to call attention to the fact that ag aircraft will soon be a common sight as ag pilots assist local farmers during the new growing season.

The press release emphasizes the vital role aerial applicators play in the production of abundant food, fiber and bioenergy, especially now amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its potential effect on reducing global food supply. The release also details the training, professionalism and safety of aerial applicators by highlighting the drift-reduction technologies they employ, recurrent training they receive and credentials they must maintain to work as a professional ag pilot.

NAAA encourages members to adapt the [generic "preseason" press release](#) for their own use and distribute it to the public via traditional and social media outlets. Just fill in the blanks, add your own comments and either insert your company logo at the top or print it on company letterhead. Rename the file, save it to your computer, and send it to your local media outlets via mail, email or through their website.

The minor outlay of time and effort is worth it. Some extra attention and publicity up front could avoid misunderstandings down the road once the season enters full swing. The press release template is available for download [here](#).

Besides the [preseason ag aviation awareness press release template](#), the following do-it-yourself press release templates may be adapted to suit member applicators' specific needs. Log into your NAAA account to access them:

- [Importance of Aerial Application DIY Press Release](#)
- [Environmental Safety DIY Press Release](#)
- [Towers and Obstructions DIY Press Release](#)
- [Ag Aviation Security DIY Press Release](#)
- [Drone Safety DIY Press Release](#)

Each press release template has been updated to include the latest industry facts and figures using data gleaned from the FAA, USDA and NAAA, including the 2019 NAAA Aerial Application Industry Survey.

These PR resources and more are available in the [NAAA Media Relations Kit](#) on our website.

NAAA Addresses Drone and Ag Aviator Safety on RFD-TV's Market Day Report

NAAA CEO Andrew Moore discussed the association's safety recommendations for drone operators operating within the vicinity of low-altitude manned ag aircraft on RFD-TV's *Market Day Report* on Monday. He spoke with anchor Tammi Arender by phone from NAAA's headquarters in Virginia. During the live phone interview, Moore was asked how common encounters between manned ag aircraft and drones are and how important agricultural aviators are to farmers. He also emphasized some of NAAA's key recommendations to unmanned aircraft operators. Watch the full 2 ½-minute segment below.

To ensure the safety of low-altitude manned aircraft, NAAA recommends that unmanned aircraft operators:

- **Give the right of way to a manned aircraft. It's the law.**
- **Equip drones with visible strobe lights, highly visible markings and tracking technology, like an ADS-B In system so you will know ADS-B Out-equipped manned aircraft positions.**
- **Get certified and well-trained in operating an unmanned aircraft.**
- **Contact local agricultural aviation operations before flying by consulting [AgAviation.org/findapplicator](https://www.agaviation.org/findapplicator).**
- **Land your unmanned aircraft immediately when a low-flying aircraft is nearby.**
- **Carry unmanned aircraft liability insurance.**

Tim McPherson Hosts Open House at Fargo Air Museum

Tall Towers Aviation operator Tim “Toby” McPherson hosted an open house at the Fargo Air Museum on Wednesday, his second showing in as many years at the air museum. Prior to 2022, McPherson had hosted an open house at his hangar in Page, North Dakota, every spring since 1989.

The full-day event showcased various ag aircraft, including McPherson’s refurbished serial #1 Ag-Cat. For added exposure, 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.

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.

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

NAAA’s ‘Ag Wings of Tomorrow’ Scholarship Returns with \$20K Available in ’23

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 [2023 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 2023 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.

Last year NAAA awarded \$5,000 scholarships to Ross Edwards of Sherwood, Arkansas; Tommy Koebel of Geneva, Illinois; Drew Kroeplin of Highmore, South Dakota; and Adam Jacobs of Graymont, Illinois (pictured above with his sponsor, Scott Petersen, at left, of Pontiac Flying LLC). NAAA will announce the recipients of the 2023 “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarships in December at the Ag Aviation Expo in Palm Springs, California.

Application Process

To learn more about the 2023 NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship, review the [application instructions and checklist](#).

Applicants must apply using NAAA’s online application. A link to the online application is available below. The applicant will fill out ALL applicant and sponsor information. The NAAA Operator Sponsor must write a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant. Upload all required material noted in the Application Checklist and any additional supporting documentation using the turbine scholarship’s online application portal.

A link to the scholarship application portal can also be found at 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 2023 “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship is Aug. 31.

Restrictions

With the introduction of the new [Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship](#) this year, applicants may only apply for one NAAA pilot-training scholarship per year. They can apply for the NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship or the Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship, *but not both in the same year*.

NAAA Operator members may only sponsor one NAAA “Ag Wings of Tomorrow” Scholarship applicant a year. They can also sponsor a Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship applicant in the same year, but the applicants cannot be the same person applying for both scholarships in the same year.

Two \$3,000 scholarships are available for turbine training to eligible NAAA Operator and Pilot members applying for the [2023 Charles Stokes Memorial Turbine Training Scholarship](#).

Announcing DropFlight: An App That Makes Spray Pattern Testing a Snap

With Operation S.A.F.E. season in full swing across much of the country, it's time to get your aircraft pattern tested!

NAAREF recommends having your pattern assessed, at minimum, every other year or when major changes are made. This is vitally important to ensuring your aircraft is ready to make effective applications this season. Accordingly, NAAA has included biennial Operation S.A.F.E. participation as a core component of its [C-PAASS](#) professional aerial applicator certification.

A new tool—DropFlight—is now available to NAAA members to conduct their own spray pattern testing. DropFlight is an iPhone/iPad app that was recently released, which allows extremely fast scanning and analysis of water-sensitive spray cards, all on your mobile devices. This tool, created in part by an aerial applicator, is targeted specifically for aerial applicators to use in assessing spray pattern uniformity, effective swath width and droplet size across the swath.

DropFlight is being offered exclusively to NAAA members for a one-time cost of \$799 for unlimited use of the app. This represents a significant value in time savings alone compared to traditional methods of scanning cards for pattern analysis. The DropFlight tool will make obtaining actionable results easy (and fast!).

To further reduce friction in getting your spray pattern testing underway, DropFlight is also offering all the needed [testing gear](#). Available as a [convenient kit](#) or by the piece, DropFlight's card mounting system makes it simple to lay out cards uniformly and in the correct orientation to the wind.

Whether you have never pattern tested your aircraft, or you simply weren't able to test all your desired boom setups or application rates at your last fly-in, performing your own pattern testing is a sound investment in the quality of your work.

As an added benefit, if you consult with a [NAAREF-recognized Operation S.A.F.E. Analyst](#) about your pattern testing data, they can report this to NAAREF as participation in Operation S.A.F.E. NAAA members will receive an official letter of participation and credit toward C-PAASS certification.

[Download DropFlight on the App Store](#)

Use NAAA member code: NAAA23

The DropFlight team is eager to help and answer any questions you might have. Contact them directly at (616) 953-6423.

Proposed AD for GE M601 and H80 Series Propeller Governors

The FAA has proposed adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain GE Aviation M601E–11AS, M601E–11S, H75–100, H80–100 and H85–100 model turboprop engines. These engines are known to be installed on Air Tractor AT-400 and AT-500 series; Allied Ag Cat Productions Inc. (formerly Grumman) G-164 series; and Thrush Aircraft (formerly Quality, Ayres, Rockwell) 510G and S-2R series.

This proposed AD was prompted by reports of multiple failures of the needle bearing installed in propeller governors having part numbers (P/Ns) P–W11–1 or P–W11–2, caused by self-generated debris from the needle bearing, which led to oil contamination.

This proposed AD would require replacement of the affected propeller governors with a redesigned propeller governor having P/N P–W11–4 or P–W11–5.

The FAA is currently accepting comments on this proposed AD through May 22. View the complete proposed AD [here](#).

NAAA Cautions Hobbyist and Professional Drone Operators Not to Interfere with Low-Altitude Manned Agricultural Aircraft This Growing Season

With another growing season getting underway at a time when aerial application services are expected to be in high demand, on April 4, NAAA sent a [news release](#) to aviation and agricultural media outlets advising unmanned aircraft (UA) operators to be mindful of low-flying manned agricultural aircraft operations.

The press release recommends that unmanned aircraft operators:

- **Give the right of way to a manned aircraft. It's the law.**
- **Equip drones with visible strobe lights, highly visible markings and tracking technology, like an ADS-B In system.**
- **Get certified and well-trained in operating an unmanned aircraft.**
- **Contact local agricultural aviation operations before flying by consulting AgAviation.org/findapplicator.**
- **Land an unmanned aircraft immediately when a low-flying aircraft is nearby.**
- **Carry unmanned aircraft liability insurance.**

NAAA's unmanned aircraft advisory was distributed to trade media outlets covering agriculture, aviation and drones. The extent of coverage the news release garnered is still being determined, but it earned a return invitation for NAAA CEO Andrew Moore to appear on RFD-TV's daily news program. Moore will be interviewed about drone and ag aviator safety issues on RFD-TV's *Market Day Report* on April 10.

"With the growing number of drones over the last few years, it is critical for their operators to be aware of low-flying, manned agricultural aircraft," Moore said in the [news release](#). "It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for manned aircraft to see a drone while conducting crop-enhancing and other aerial applications 10 feet off the ground at speeds as fast as 140 mph. We encourage professional and hobbyist drone operators to keep this in mind to ensure a safe 2023 growing season."

This is the seventh year NAAA has reached out to the media regarding safe drone operations heading into the spring growing season.

NAAA Aerial Advocacy in St. Louis: Headquarters of Kynetec, Corn and Bayer's, Oh My!

NAAA closed out March by continuing its visits with key stakeholders involved in the collection on use-data, registration and use of pesticides for crop safety and production. These visits were with Bayer CropScience, Kynetec and the National Corn Growers Association.

The Bayer meeting's focus was to continue to work together to help facilitate the registration of pesticide products manufactured by the company for aerial use by using more realistic industry data—much of which NAAA collects about the ag aviation industry via its surveys—and more realistic aerial application variables within Tier 3 of the AgDRIFT atmospheric drift model, which more accurately reflects the application conditions of acres treated by air today. The discussion also included the aerial application industry's constant embrace of new technologies and the development of a new software concept identified as site-specific risk assessment, which would allow environmental conditions at an application site (nearby waterbodies, endangered species, etc.), and the application equipment used (nozzle, boom width, pressure, etc.) to be inputted into the software. The software would then output either additional protections needed for the applicator to implement to protect a sensitive area, or perhaps grant leeway to the applicator, such as allowing a wider boom width, etc. Bayer CropScience has been a generous supporter of NAAA throughout the years, whether it be sponsoring our educational program, PAASS, and the annual Ag Aviation Expo's general session.

NAAA also visited with crop protection data company Kynetec. Kynetec is an agricultural data company and collects pesticide data through farmer surveys that are used by pesticide manufacturers for marketing and registrations purposes. Kynetec data is also used by the USDA and EPA for registration purposes. Kynetec conducts nearly 26,000 grower surveys a year. NAAA shared data with Kynetec on NAAA's own industry surveys to establish how the results show the significant acreage of cropland treated by aerial application (127 million acres annually), and discussed ways to fine-tune the robustness of aerial application data.

NAAA also visited with Neil Casky, CEO of the National Corn Growers (more corn is treated by air in the U.S. than any other crop), and discussed the site-specific risk assessment software concept to help cropland better treat areas more efficiently in nearby endangered species locations.

***Pictured at top, from right to left:* Sabih Javed, Bayer CropScience North America Product Management Crop Protection Row Crops; Jay Vroom, DCLRS, former president and CEO of CropLife America; Damon Reabe, NAAA Government Relations chairman and board member, aerial application operator of Dairyland Aviation; John Chambers, Bayer CropScience Vice President, North American Market Development; Andrew Moore, NAAA CEO; Scott Bretthauer, NAAA director of policy, education and safety.**

***Pictured at bottom, right to left:* Andrew Moore, NAAA CEO; Neil Casky, National Corn Growers Association CEO; and Jay Vroom, DCLRS, and former president and CEO of CropLife America.**

C-PAASS Debut Makes Cover of AgAir Update's New Issue

The launch of NAAA and NAAREF's new C-PAASS program made the cover of *AgAir Update's* April issue. In the cover story, *AgAir Update* takes an in-depth look at the groundbreaking certification program for aerial applicators. Read all about it [here](#).

GRASSROOTS ALERT: Let EPA Know New Changes to Application Exclusion Zone Rule are Bad for Aerial Application and Agriculture

As NAAA reported [last month](#), the EPA is proposing yet another round of changes to the Application Exclusion Zone (AEZ) rule. First conceived in 2015 as part of the revisions to the Worker Protection Standard (WPS), the EPA intended the AEZ to be a moving buffer zone around pesticide application equipment to protect workers from either drift or direct spray. When someone enters the AEZ, the applicator must cease the application. Confusion and agricultural industry objections to several parts of the rule have led to several iterations of the AEZ rule, culminating in the current proposed changes.

One critical point in the AEZ rule has been how someone inside the AEZ but outside of the agricultural establishment impacts an applicator's ability to make an application. An example of this would be someone on adjacent property or on a roadside. The original AEZ rules required the application to stop when people were in this area, effectively allowing someone outside the control of the applicator or the grower to dictate whether or not the application could be made at the field edges. A 2020 AEZ revision changed this, requiring an application to stop only when someone on the agricultural establishment is within the AEZ. This positive change was quickly challenged in court, and now, in their 2023 proposed revision, the EPA is back to requiring applications be halted whenever anyone, on or off the agricultural establishment, enters the AEZ. The EPA also appears to have not included in these recent changes a 2018 clarification that allows an application to resume if the applicator determines if it is safe to do so, i.e. the wind is blowing away from anyone.

NAAA has [drafted comments](#) to the EPA explaining why this is detrimental to crop protection and completely unnecessary since the law of atmospheric physics precludes drift from traveling upwind. We need your help, though—please consider submitting your own comments to let the EPA know how the 2023 proposed changes to the AEZ will have a negative impact on you and your customers. Please feel free to use NAAA's comments as a guide to assist you with writing your comments on your operation's letterhead.

To comment:

1. Use your web browser to navigate to this webpage: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0133/document>
2. At the top you should be a proposed rule with the title "Pesticides: Agricultural Worker Protection Standard; Reconsideration of the Application Exclusion Zone Amendments" as shown below.
3. If you do not see this at the top, you can either scroll down to look for it or click the down arrow next to "Sort by" and select "Comments Due (Newer-Older)" as shown above.
4. Click on the "Comment" button.
5. You can either type your comments in the comment field or attach them as a separate file.
6. Make sure you fill out the rest of the required information and then submit your comment.

Comments are due May 12. Please reach out to NAAA's Director of Education, Safety and Policy, [Scott Bretthauer](#), if you have questions about the proposed changes to the AEZ rule or on how to comment.

Exhibitor Details for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo: Booth Sales for Aircraft & Large Booth Space Now Open

Join us for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo in [Palm Springs, California](#), Dec. 4-7. In addition to attending the NAAA Ag Aviation Expo, Palm Springs is full of great restaurants, bars, fun activities, and terrific weather! You can visit the Palm Springs Air Museum, enjoy an off road or BMW driving experience, play golf, visit museums and even gamble at a casino close to the convention center. The area offers many hiking trails and top-notch spas.

Booth Sales for Aircraft & Large Booth Space Now Open: If you plan to bring an aircraft, need a 20'x20'+ island booth, a 10'x30'+ inline booth or plan to be a Diamond or Platinum Sponsor, please contact [Lindsay Barber](#) ASAP. To ensure the best placement on the trade show floor, we appreciate knowing about aircraft and large booth spaces by the end of April.

The NAAA Trade Show will take place Dec. 5, 12 p.m.–5:30 p.m. and Dec. 6, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Review the [NAAA Exhibitor Prospectus](#) and [exhibitor webpage](#) for further details, pricing and dates. The full schedule of events is available [here](#).

Details for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo

- **Dates:** Dec. 4-7, 2023
- **Location:** Palm Springs Convention Center and Renaissance (the two facilities are attached)
- **Kickoff Breakfast Speaker:** [Burt Rutan](#), Aerospace Legend
- **Schedule of Events:** See the current, tentative schedule [here](#).
- **Hotel:** [Details here](#).
- **Attendee Registration:** Opens in August.
- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Details [here](#) for large booth sales that open in late March and 10'x10' and 10'x20' booth sales that open on July 13. Please email [Lindsay Barber](#) if you would like to secure a large booth space (any booth size 10'x30' or larger).
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** View the sponsorships opportunities [here](#). We have sponsorships available for all budget sizes. Please email [Lindsay](#) if you would like to secure a sponsorship from last year or be contacted about 2023 opportunities!
- **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.

FAA's GA Survey Data Collection for 2022 Continues – Please Participate if Invited

The FAA's annual General Aviation and Part 135 Activity Survey (GA Survey) is ongoing. There has been a strong start, but they still need many more responses to reach their targeted response rate. **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.**

The survey is for collecting aviation activity for the calendar year 2022. The GA Survey is the only source of information available that provides reliable data on the GA fleet, including number of aircraft and hours flown. The data is used by the FAA, other government agencies, and the aviation industry for a variety of things, including assessing safety and understanding the economic impact of aviation.

The GA Survey is especially critical to the agricultural aviation industry. NAAA uses the results of the GA Survey, in conjunction with NTSB accident numbers, to calculate an overall accident rate and a fatal accident rate for Part 137 operations. This allows NAAA to track and document the safety of the agricultural aviation industry and provide evidence to the FAA and NTSB that PAASS and other safety programs are working to reduce Part 137 accidents. This is especially helpful in the event additional regulations may be proposed.

Participation in the GA Survey is voluntary, but the agricultural aviation industry needs your input if you are selected to participate. For those who chose to not complete the survey online, a mail survey is sent which includes a postage-paid return envelope. The information is confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes and will not be published or released in any form that would reveal an individual participant. It only takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.

If you are contacted, please respond to the survey even if you did not fly your aircraft during 2022, sold it, or if the aircraft was damaged. If you own three or more aircraft, there is an abbreviated survey form you can use instead of needing to complete a survey for each aircraft. About 30% of the total number of GA aircraft are surveyed every year, so you may be asked to participate two or more years in a row. 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. Results from prior surveys can be found [here](#).

NAAA Visits Corteva Headquarters to Discuss Aerial Application Technologies and Pesticide Registrations for Aerial Applications

NAAA visited Corteva, the global crop protection product manufacturer, at its headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, in late March. The meeting's focus was to continue to work together to help facilitate the registration of pesticide products manufactured by the company for aerial use by using more realistic industry data—much of which NAAA collects about the ag aviation industry via its surveys—and more realistic aerial application variables within Tier 3 of the AgDRIFT atmospheric model on drift, which more accurately reflects the application conditions of acres treated by air today.

The discussion also included the aerial application industry's constant embrace of new technologies and the new software development concept identified as site-specific risk assessment, which would allow environmental conditions at an application site (nearby waterbodies, endangered species, etc.), and the application equipment used (nozzle, boom width, pressure, etc.) to be inputted. The output would be either additional protections needed for the applicator to implement to protect a sensitive area, or perhaps grant leeway to the applicator, such as allowing the application to take place in wind speeds more than existing limitations.

Corteva has been a generous supporter of NAAA throughout the years and the company's evolution, whether it be sponsoring our educational program, PAASS, educational events at the annual Ag Aviation Expo or the Expo's closing Excellence in Ag Aviation Banquet.

Later in the week, NAAA will meet with representatives at Bayer CropScience's corporate headquarters and the crop protection data company Kynetec in St. Louis, Missouri.

Pictured at top from left to right:

- Travis Bui—Corteva Regulatory Manager
- Tami Jones-Jefferson—Corteva North America Regulatory Leader
- Morgan Bohlander—Corteva Portfolio Marketing Lead, U.S. Range & Pasture
- Reuben Baris—Corteva Regulatory Policy Leader
- Damon Reabe—NAAA Government Relations Committee Chairman, Board Member and Wisconsin aerial application operator of Dairyland Aviation
- Damon Palmer—Corteva Marketing Leader – U.S. Specialties (Non-Crop)
- Andrew Moore—NAAA CEO
- Dr. Scott Bretthauer—NAAA Director of Policy, Education and Safety
- Elisha Modisett-Kemp—Corteva State Affairs Leader

Aerial Applicator Michael Cruce Discusses the Advantages of Aerial Application in New Syngenta Video

Fungicides Flying High: The Speed a...



Watch Michael Cruce, the president of the Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association, discuss the benefits of aerial fungicide spraying and how aerial application in general improves crop yields for farmers in a new Syngenta video titled, **“Fungicides Flying High: The Speed and Precision of Aerial Application.”**

Cruce operates Cruce Agricultural Aviation in Marquette Heights, Illinois. As he explains in the video, “We have a short window, especially in the Midwest, to apply these fungicides, and the airplanes, we can cover a lot of ground in a short amount of time. So, the timing of the applications is critical sometimes. We can cover quite a few acres in day, so we have the advantage of getting there, getting it done, and getting back and on to the next grower.”

Cruce also notes that aerial application does not cause soil compaction or disturb the crop since ag aircraft apply products from above the crop canopy rather than within it. Watch the full video above.

A companion article on NAAREF’s Operation S.A.F.E. calibration clinics is scheduled to go live on Syngenta’s [Thrive website](#) in May. The article originally appeared in *Thrive*’s recently retired print magazine in its first quarter 2023 issue, the print magazine’s final edition.

It’s Here! Application Now Open for C-PAASS 2023—Certified-Professional Aerial Applicator Safety Steward

Aerial applicators, now more than ever, operate in an environment of competing interests. An ever-increasing demand for timely and effective applications is challenged by factors such as added regulatory burden, rising insurance costs and stiffer pesticide label language, just to name a few. The agricultural aviation industry is rising to these challenges and, in character, has moved to advance education, rather than regulation, as the path forward.

NAAA and NAAREF have jointly launched the Certified-Professional Aerial Applicator Safety Steward (C-PAASS) program to serve as the industry’s flagship certification and as a roadmap for the pursuit of the best educational opportunities currently available. This voluntary program allows those aerial applicators who strive to constantly educate themselves to better their safety and application quality to be recognized for their efforts. Secondly, the certification can signal to customers, regulators and others outside the industry their commitment to professionalism.

C-PAASS certification is offered on an annual basis to individual ag pilots, both operator and non-operator. As the first year for C-PAASS, its requirements are based entirely upon education and professional opportunities already available:

1. **Annual PAASS Attendance for three (3) years**
 - 2020-2021 season, AND
 - 2021-2022 season, AND
 - 2022-2023 season
2. **Biennial Operation SAFE Participation**
 - 2022 season, AND/OR
 - 2023 season
3. **Annual Membership in NAAA**
 - 2023
4. **Annual Membership in a State/Regional agricultural aviation association**
 - 2023

To submit a 2023 C-PAASS application:

1. Check your eligibility at <https://education.agaviation.org/cpaass>
 - You will need to log in using your NAAA username/password. Contact information@agaviation.org if you need assistance.

2. If eligible, scroll to the bottom of the page and locate the **2023 C-PAASS Application** tile. Hover over it and click the green **Register (Free!)** button.
3. You will be prompted to attest to your completion of each of the requirements and directed to upload documentation of your 2023 membership in a State/Regional agricultural aviation association. NAAA Staff will be automatically notified to review your application once this documentation is submitted.
4. Your application will be reviewed within three (3) business days.
5. If your application is accepted, you will be provided a link to pay the certification fee (currently \$100) and obtain your digital certificate.

This is only the beginning. As NAAA develops its own Learning Management System (LMS), new on-demand courses and content will be incorporated into C-PAASS. A wide variety of topics will eventually be included in the LMS, including those covered in 14 CFR Part 137 knowledge and skills and those on how to properly set up agricultural aircraft to make on-target applications.

Apply for C-PAASS certification today! Utilize it to inform regulatory officials and insurance agents and to market to your customers that you have undergone additional training and development to ensure you can provide the highest quality service.

Nominations Open for 2023 NAAA Awards!

Do you have a rising pilot within your ranks? Do you admire certain NAAA members for their outstanding service to the industry or their community? The aerial application industry is filled with exceptional people who go above and beyond the call of duty, often with little fanfare. Make someone's day or year by nominating them for a 2023 NAAA Award.

NAAA's online submission form is the fastest and simplest way to nominate someone in just a few clicks, but a printable PDF version of the awards nomination form is also available. The following submission methods are available at AgAviation.org/awards.

- **2023 Awards Nomination Online Submission Form** (recommended)
- **2023 Award Nomination Form** (print version)

Completed entries using the PDF form may be emailed or faxed to NAAA at information@agaviation.org or (202) 546-5726 (fax).

There are nine NAAA Award categories and one NAAREF Award. The nomination deadline is Sept. 8, but early nominations are encouraged. The longer you wait, the busier you'll get as the summer season approaches.

Nine recipients received NAAA Awards in 2022. Who will be among this year's awardees? Nominations are due by Sept. 8.

NAAA Award Categories

Agrinaut Award: Honors an agricultural aircraft operator, operating organization or allied member company that has made an outstanding contribution in the field of ag aircraft operations. The achievement cited shall have contributed to the "state-of-the-art" for the benefit of the agricultural aircraft industry as a whole.

Allied Industry Individual Award: Recognizes an NAAA member or staff and/or an allied industry individual who has significantly contributed their efforts for the benefit of the allied industry and the aerial application industry. *(Presented by the NAAA Allied Industry Committee.)*

Delta Air Lines "Puffer" Award: Recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the design of agricultural aircraft and/or related equipment.

Evans-Christopher Operation S.A.F.E. Award: Recognizes individuals or entities that have made outstanding contributions to the Operation S.A.F.E. program. *(Presented by NAAREF.)*

John Robert Horne Memorial Award: Honors a pilot with five or fewer years of experience in the agricultural aviation industry who has an exemplary safety record and has contributed to safety in ag aviation. ***This award no longer has carryover nominations from year to year; a new nomination must be submitted every year.***

Larsen-Miller Community Service Award: Recognizes outstanding contributions by a member to his or her community.

Opal and Bill Binnion Memorial Award: Acknowledges those who contribute to NAAA in its efforts to educate the public about aerial application.

Richard "Dick" Reade Memorial Award: Recognizes outstanding contributions by an allied industry member and their company.

William O. Marsh Safety Award: Recognizes significant achievements in safety, safety education or an outstanding operational safety program.

Zoren and Joan O'Brien Memorial Outstanding Service Award: Awards outstanding service to the commercial agricultural aviation industry or to its association.

The 2023 NAAA Award recipients will be honored at the Excellence in Ag Aviation Banquet Dec. 7 in Palm Springs, California.

NAAA Ag Aviation Expo Hotel Room Block Open

The NAAA hotel room block is now open for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo in Palm Springs, California, Dec. 4-7. The Ag Aviation Expo will provide you with networking, education and fun in a great city full of restaurants and bars, nightlife, shopping and attractions. 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 rooms available at three hotels; view the map below showing the hotels' locations or view them [here](#). You can learn more about Palm Springs [here](#).

Renaissance (connected to the convention center)

Reservations: Book your room [online here](#) or call 1-800-468-3571 and identify National Agricultural Aviation Association Convention for the discounted room rate.

Rate: \$159/night

Room block deadline: Nov. 9

Hilton (two blocks from the convention center)

Reservations: Book your room [online here](#) or call 1-800-216-1952 and identify group code: NAA

Rate: \$154/night + taxes

Room block deadline: Nov. 10

Cancellation: Should you need to cancel your reservation, please contact the hotel three weeks prior to arrival or by Nov. 10 to avoid a late cancellation penalty equivalent to the first night's room deposit.

Hyatt (five blocks – a half mile from the convention center)

The Hyatt is located on the main road of Palm Springs—N. Palm Canyon Drive—where there are dozens of restaurants, bars, boutiques and shops. ***Transportation will be provided in the morning and late afternoon/evening.***

Reservations: Book your room [online here](#) (if you get to a screen where it asks you to select hotel, please select Hyatt Palm Springs) or call 1-877-803-7534 and identify group code: G-NA12

Rate: \$149/night + taxes

Room block deadline: Nov. 10

Cancellation: Should you need to cancel your reservation, please contact the hotel three weeks prior to arrival or by Nov. 10 to avoid a late cancellation penalty equivalent to the first night's room deposit.

NOTE: No one from (or on behalf of) any of the hotels or NAAA will contact you to book a hotel room. NAAA recommends that you make your own hotel reservations using the information we provide. Do not book a room with any company that calls you directly.

Details for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo

- **Dates:** Dec. 4-7, 2023
- **Location:** Palm Springs Convention Center and Renaissance (the two facilities are attached)
- **Kickoff Breakfast Speaker:** [Burt Rutan](#), Aerospace Legend
- **Schedule of Events:** See the current, tentative schedule [here](#).
- **Hotel:** [Details here](#).
- **Attendee Registration:** Opens in August.
- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Details [here](#) for large booth sales that open in late March and 10'x10' and 10'x20' booth sales that open on July 13. Please email [Lindsay Barber](#) if you would like to secure a large booth space (any booth size 10'x30' or larger).
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** View the sponsorships opportunities [here](#). We have sponsorships available for all budget sizes. Please email [Lindsay](#) if you would like to secure a sponsorship from last year or be contacted about 2023 opportunities!
- **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.

Important Call for GPS Data to Protect Manned Ag Aircraft from Drones

In 2022, an FAA advisory committee weighted with drone interests from Amazon, Google and other unmanned corporate interests suggested that the agency promulgate rules that drones operating beyond visual line of sight be permitted to:

- Increase their weight to 1,320 pounds
- Not equip with ADS-B identification technology
- Not give the right of way to manned aircraft when operating in rural, low-altitude airspace because they claimed there are no other users of this airspace.

As an ag aviator, you know these requests to be patently unsafe and based on false premises. As such, we call on you to help us collect information on ag aircraft's use of the low-altitude airspace. NAAA is working with and supports Mississippi State University's (MSU) Raspet Flight Research Laboratory and its continuing research on safe operational distances between low-altitude, manned aircraft and drones. The study's objectives are to:

1. Identify Ag Aircraft Operational Trends
2. Develop Ag Aircraft Operational Model
3. Validate Model through Observation/Collection of Empirical Data
4. Inform/Educate UAS Operators
5. Promote Safety in all Low-Altitude Ag Environments

Your voluntary participation in this study is critical to achieving these objectives. NAAA encourages you to donate your GPS flight log data to participate in this timely research. Logs from any year(s) are welcome and will be washed of any identifying information prior to use.

Many of you have previously contributed during the first stage of data collection from 2017 to 2020 when NAAA members donated 49,180 flight logs from 20 states. The second stage of the study began in 2021 and seeks to additionally include aircraft make and model info. These details are important, as the airspace modeling will be impacted by aircraft types differently, such as fixed-wing versus helicopter operations.

More GPS flight log data is needed to continue this study. Because of the diverse growing areas and unique geographical challenges experienced by aerial applicators, it is imperative that as many states and regions as possible are represented. This will ultimately help facilitate the safe integration of unmanned aircraft into these different airspaces.

As a reminder, NAAA and Raspet have agreed that all submitted information will remain confidential, and all GPS flight logs will be stripped of any personally identifying information before any research is conducted using the data.

There are several methods available to submit your data:

1. Request a secure upload link for larger uploads OR email directly to Madison Dixon, Research Director.
Email: mdixon@raspet.msstate.edu
2. Mail a flash drive or other storage device to the address below. (The device will be immediately mailed back once data is received if a return address is provided):

Address:

Attn: Madison Dixon
Raspet Flight Research Lab – Bldg. 2
114 Airport Rd.
Starkville, MS 39759

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 published excerpts from *Agriculture's Air Force* and continued 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](#).