

NAAA eNewsletter

FAA Approves Some UAS BVLOS Operations Without Visual Observers

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently released decisions on several Petitions for Exemption from commercial Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) operators seeking to conduct beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations without the use of visual observers (VOs). These Petitions were opened for public comment in June of this year along with a broader request for comment on UAS BVLOS operations in general. **NAAA provided comments for each of these**, alongside several other industry partners.

On September 6, 2023, the FAA granted UPS Flight Forward, Inc. (UPSFF) an amended **Exemption** for Part 135 package delivery operations utilizing its Matternet M2 UAS. UPSFF will now be permitted to utilize its Ground-Based Surveillance System (GBSS) in lieu of VOs to conduct BVLOS operations.

NAAA submitted **comments** on UPSFF's Petition for Exemption in June, with a primary concern being a lack of evidence supporting the efficacy of this GBSS with respect to low-altitude crewed Part 137 operations. In their response to NAAA's comments, the FAA clarified that this exemption enables the petitioner's operations to use its GBSS with the associated display tool, which combined make up its detect and avoid (DAA) system, once the system is approved and documented in their OpSpecs. This exemption does not authorize the system itself.

The FAA pointed to the potential benefits of a technical solution, such as GBSS, that avoid the human factor challenges of reliance on VOs for deconfliction. Such challenges would include, but not be limited to, fatigue and distraction. A collision and avoidance plan will be required to be submitted to the FAA for each area where the system will operate, and a NOTAM (D) indicating the actual area to be flown each day, as defined by a point and the minimum radius, must be filed. This decision specifically states: *"Commercial agricultural aircraft operators and others engaged in aviation activities at altitudes below 400 ft. AGL can maintain awareness of UA activities in their areas of operation by regularly reviewing these NOTAMs."*

The Conditions & Limitations to this Exemption, however, explicitly uphold **right-of-way rules** stating *"The PIC must ensure that the UA remain clear of, and give way to, any manned aircraft at all times..."*

On September 18, 2023, the FAA granted Zipline, Inc. a similar amended **Exemption** for Part 135 package delivery operations utilizing UAS. Zipline will now be permitted to utilize its proprietary DAA technology in lieu of VOs to conduct BVLOS operations. The FAA cited the above UPSFF Exemption, stating that Zipline's reasons for requesting an exemption were *"similar in all material respects to relief previously granted."* Further, *"the reasons stated by the FAA for granting [the UPSFF Exemption] also apply to [Zipline's] situation."* As with UPSFF, the FAA approved Zipline's use of its DAA technology in lieu of VOs to conduct BVLOS operations but did not approve the DAA technology itself.

The FAA indirectly referenced the other Exemptions recently granted and made clear their intentions for future rulemaking, stating:

"The exemptions that have been issued contain specific conditions and limitations related to data collection and will enable the FAA to obtain the information that it needs to provide the basis for further rulemaking efforts. The FAA intends for this exemption to add to the foundational framework to safely enable UAS cargo delivery operations for compensation or hire within the NAS that will ultimately be reflected in a final rule. The FAA views this exemption, and the other exemptions it has issued, as steps toward rulemaking."

On September 20, 2023, the FAA granted uAvionix Corp. a similar **Exemption**. This Exemption differed, though, in that FAA's approval of their DAA system *"explicitly includes approval of the Vantis surveillance and communications link capabilities as a third-party service provider when the Vantis network is used..."* In this Exemption, the FAA also provided insight to its philosophy on DAA system approval:

"DAA technology comes in various forms such as third-party service providers, on-board DAA systems capable of detecting other aircraft by means of acoustics or radar and ground based DAA systems that provide live feeds directly to a UA. The FAA recognizes that these examples are not all-encompassing, and that industry will continue to develop different ways for UA to detect and avoid other aircraft during BVLOS operations. Some DAA systems may be more beneficial for certain types of operation. For example, an operator conducting a linear infrastructure inspection may choose to use an on-board DAA system, as opposed to a third-party service provider, as that type of operation would account for more limited airborne traffic in the proximity to the infrastructure in which is the only airspace that those operations will occur. Conversely, a package delivery operator may choose to utilize a third-party service provider which could provide a larger scale airborne traffic layout along multiple routes of flight. The FAA does not intend to specify which DAA system is applicable to which type of operation; rather, the FAA is requiring the operator to use a system that is able to detect ADS-B equipped and non-ADS-B equipped (cooperative and non-cooperative) aircraft in order to remain "well clear" of other detected aircraft. For the purposes of this exemption, "well clear" means maintaining a horizontal distance of 2,000 feet and 250 feet above and below a detected aircraft..."

Put together, these recently granted Exemptions are plainly a foundation upon which the FAA intends to build policy integrating UAS BVLOS operations into the national airspace. As this plays out, NAAA will continue to impress upon the FAA the importance of maintaining

a safe airspace for agricultural aviators.

CropLife Magazine eNews Publishes NAAA Cover Crops Press Release

In continued coverage from [NAAA's press release](#) alerting communities about ag pilots working to seed cover crops, CropLife, a U.S. agribusiness publication, has published the information on their [website](#). The CropLife website receives 35,000 visitors per month, which is great awareness for the good work of aerial applicators, to ag retailers, distributors, manufacturers and suppliers.

NAAA CEO Andrew Moore was interviewed by RFD-TV's Tammi Arender on Wednesday, Sept. 20 in a segment for Market Day Report. View the broadcast [here](#). Market Day Report impressions average 500,000 people per week and is one of RFD-TV's top watched shows. RFD-TV is the #1 cable network for farmers & ranchers.

Moore was also interviewed by Jesse Allen on the daily news program, [Agriculture of America](#) produced by the American Ag Network, a nationwide radio, digital and multimedia ag news network. Listen to Moore on the early part of the episode [here](#). Agriculture of America can be heard nationwide on over 40 radio stations (including SiriusXM Rural Radio Channel 147 on Satellite Radio). Nearly 1.65 million listeners tuned in during August 2023 with an average of 10,515 podcast downloads for 2023. The news release was also picked up by the American Ag Network [website](#).

If your operation is still seeding cover crops by air this Fall, NAAA has prepared a cover crops [sample press release](#) (*this link will open a Word document*) that you can personalize to your own aerial application business and send to your local media outlets.

Is Operation S.A.F.E. on your End-of-Season Checklist?

If your aircraft has not been through Operation S.A.F.E. in 2022 or 2023, NAAREF recommends doing so prior to the start of the 2024 season. While many across the country have their aircraft pattern tested in the Spring, it is not at all uncommon to do so in the Fall. Performing this critical testing on your equipment in the Fall presents several benefits. The operational pace, for one, is typically milder in Fall compared to Spring. You also may have ideas for application setup changes fresh in your mind after a season focused on your work.

If you are unable to attend a traditional Fly-In this Fall, as an NAAA member, you have alternative options.

Earlier this year, [NAAA announced the release of DropFlight](#), an iPhone/iPad app which allows extremely fast scanning and analysis of water-sensitive spray cards, all on your Apple mobile devices. This tool, created under the direction of a U.S. aerial applicator, is targeted specifically for aerial applicators to use in assessing spray pattern uniformity, effective swath width and droplet size across the swath.

Download DropFlight on the App Store

Use NAAA member code: **NAAA23**

Another option for conducting your own spray pattern testing is to use AccuPatt, the same desktop (Windows/MacOS) software that Operation S.A.F.E. Analysts use. Originally developed to run the string testing systems you may have seen at a Fly-In, AccuPatt has grown to include spray-card-analysis functionality that can be used independently to perform spray-card-only pattern testing. Now, it is being offered to NAAA members for use in their own operation at no cost. A flatbed scanner is required to digitize the spray-cards for analysis.

Download AccuPatt for Windows/MacOS

Consult the [User Manual](#) to get up and running

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, their card mounting system makes it simple to lay out cards uniformly and in the correct orientation to the wind. This testing gear will work with both DropFlight and AccuPatt and is the fastest and most convenient way to acquire all the equipment you need to conduct your own pattern testing.

As always, 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.

The application window for 2023 C-PAASS Certification will close shortly after the Ag Aviation Expo. Make sure your name is on this prestigious list for the inaugural year of C-PAASS; if Operation S.A.F.E. credit is the only box left for you to tick before applying, this is your opportunity. If you haven't done so yet, you can [check your 2023 C-PAASS eligibility here](#).

Tenth Fatal Ag Accident of 2023 Claims the Life of Lawrence Polries

NAAA is saddened to report that Lawrence (Larry) Polries from Jamestown, ND was killed in an ag accident on September 19, 2023. He was 63 years old at the time of his death. Larry was born on January 6, 1960, and grew up on a farm near Sykeston, ND, where he graduated from high school in 1978. The members and staff of NAAA offer their deepest sympathies and condolences to Larry's friends and family.

Larry was involved with farming most of his life except for some time spent coal mining. He purchased an ultra-light aircraft in the 1980's to scare blackbirds away from sunflowers and in doing so discovered his passion for flying. This eventually grew into his own ag aviation operation that served hundreds of farmers near Carrington, ND.

Besides flying, Larry loved spending time on the beach in the Gulf of Mexico collecting seashells with his family, growing crops, and visiting with his customers. He also enjoyed skiing, snowmobiling, riding motorcycles, and boating. He was a member of the ND Agricultural Aviation Association and squadron member of the Civil Air Patrol for several years.

Larry has survived by his wife, six daughters, nine grandchildren, sisters, a brother, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. His visitation was held on September 22, 2023, followed by his funeral in Sykeston, ND, on September 23. Click [here](#) to read Larry's full obituary and offer online condolences to his family.

Aerial Application Represents at Mississippi Commemorative Air Force Event

This past weekend, the Mississippi Wing of the Commemorative Air Force hosted a [Hangar Hangover](#) event in Madison, MS. The event hosts a wide range of aircraft and cars for spectators to view, including fully restored aircraft from the World War II era.

An exciting addition this year was aerial application aircraft on display with the Snow S-2, an Air Tractor 502 and a couple of Stearmans. Attendees were able to view the AT-502 and Snow S-2 side-by-side to see the evolution of the aircraft.

John Byrd, pilot of Dixie Dusters in Itta Bena, MS, displayed an Air Tractor 502. Baylor Bryant, operator of Valley Air Applicators in Indianola, MS flew in and displayed the Snow S-2. Stearmans were flown in and displayed by Pete Jones of Air Repair in Cleveland, MS and Richard Davidson, operator of Southland Flying Service in Tchula, MS.

Many other general aviation aircraft were on display, including T-6 Texan, Beech 10, a C-47 and DC-3. The event organizers target young children through teenage years to bring awareness about aviation and aerospace training as a future career.

If you're hosting or exhibiting at a similar event in the future, don't forget to share [NAAA's Career webpage](#), which is chocked full of information, such as flight schools and scholarship opportunities.

AD Amended for Continental Engines Oil Filter Adapter Gasket

The FAA has issued [Airworthiness Directive \(AD\) 2023-17-04](#) (superseding AD 2022-04-04) which requires replacing the oil filter adapter gasket on certain Continental Aerospace Technologies Inc. engines.

NAAA reported on this in [September 2022](#) and [June 2023](#) when the FAA initially proposed applicability changes to AD 2022-04-04, expanded replacement gasket part numbers and later updated the applicability once again.

This AD affects certain Continental Model C-125, C145, IO-360, IO-470, IO-550, O-300, O-470, TSIO-360, and TSIO-520 series engines and certain Continental Motors IO-520 series engines with a certain oil filter adapter installed. On affected engines, this AD requires replacement of the oil filter adapter fiber gasket with a copper or stainless-steel PTFE gasket.

This AD is effective October 23, 2023 – [View the AD](#) to check applicability details.

NAAA & NAAREF Board Meetings Begin Next Week in Dayton, OH

The October 2023 NAAA & NAAREF Board and Committee meetings will take place in Dayton, Ohio. Click [here](#) to view a schedule.

Please note: All board books will now be provided electronically. Board and committee members should have already received a link and directions to download the electronic board book. If you have not received instructions, please contact [Lauren Henretty](#) for more details. The board book can be downloaded to your computer, tablet or you can print your committee items.

All meetings are open to NAAA members. If you are not a board or committee member but you're interested in attending, please contact [Lauren Henretty](#) for more details.

Meeting Details: Dayton Convention Center

Meetings will take place at the Dayton Convention Center, which is a couple of miles from the hotel. All meetings will be on the third floor of the convention center. NAAA will offer a continuous shuttle on Friday and Saturday. Members can also uber, walk or take the hotel shuttle (runs within a five mile radius). Transportation details are in the electronic board book, provided to board and committee members.

Hotel Details

The Marriott at the University of Dayton
1414 South Patterson Blvd.
Dayton, OH 45409

The room block has closed. If you're interested in a room, please contact [Lauren Henretty](#).

Dayton, OH Information: Further information on Dayton can be found online at www.daytoncvb.com.

Pre-Register for the Ag Aviation Expo to Avoid Long Lines Onsite

We urge you to pre-register before Nov. 3 for the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo, which saves you \$75 per person. Pre-registration helps us to have accurate food, beverage and seating counts at our events. [Attendee registration](#) and [booth sales](#) are open for the NAAA Expo in Palm Springs Dec. 4-7! You'll hear from Burt Rutan, Aerospace entrepreneur and Virgin Galactic spacecraft designer, at the Monday [Kickoff Breakfast](#). Tuesday's [General Session](#) features Ed Messina, Director of EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, and Terry Kippley, President of the Council of Producers and Distributors of Agrotechnology.

If you're looking to grow your business, find a job or sell a product or service in the aerial application industry, the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo is the place for you! Our expo has everything from a world-class trade show floor featuring aircraft and helicopters to education sessions, expert speakers and many networking opportunities!

Getting to Palm Springs

[Palm Springs International Airport \(PSP\)](#) offers 12 airlines flying nonstop from 32 destinations and connecting from more than 500 destinations worldwide.

As you search your airfare options into Palm Springs for the Ag Aviation Expo, visit NAAA's [Transportation Discount](#) webpage and explore tickets on Delta and United Airlines.

If you'd like to fly into another airport and drive to Palm Springs, below are driving times from several airports. *Contact your [hotel](#) for parking details.* Book your hotel room [online](#).

- Los Angeles – 2 hours
- San Diego – 2 hours 15 minutes
- Anaheim – 1 hour 45 minutes
- Phoenix, Arizona – 4 hours
- Las Vegas, Nevada – 4 hours

Low-Time Pilot Registration

If you are an ag pilot with less than five years of experience or are interested in becoming an ag pilot, we are offering a special price to attend the NAAA Ag Aviation Expo for pilots like you. Further details are 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
- **General Session Speakers:** [Ed Messina & Terry Kippley & Turn Smart Safety Session](#)
- **Schedule of Events:** See the current, tentative schedule [here](#).
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- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Booth Sales Open [here](#).
- **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. In addition to their generous engine donation, Pratt & Whitney will also have an additional surprise donation at the NAAA Live Auction to celebrate their 60th anniversary of the PT6 family of engines and for reaching nearly 1 billion hours flown since the company was founded in 1928. Please consider [making a donation](#) for the Live and Silent Auction. Support the aerial application industry by donating an item today. Email [Lauren](#) with your donation details.

NAAA Membership Renewal Open for 2024; Renew Your Membership Today

Thank you for your support of NAAA as a 2023 member. We request your continued support by [renewing your NAAA membership](#) for 2024. While you have been busy aiding farmers to produce a safe, affordable, and abundant supply of food, fiber, and bioenergy, NAAA has been busy making sure low altitude airspace is safe for your aerial application business to operate, as well as ensuring that you have the pesticide products you need to do your job.

Several of NAAA's accomplishments this year, on your behalf, include:

- NAAA launched **C-PAASS**, for aerial applicators that take additional steps to augment their professionalism through education and testing who may be recognized and rewarded by their insurance providers, pesticide manufacturers, and customers.
- Since 2017, NAAA has submitted a total of 267 comments to the EPA to keep aerial applications on pesticide labels with great success enabling you to keep a deep inventory of pesticide tools without unnecessary and burdensome restrictions.
- Due to NAAA's advocacy work, the House passed FAA Reauthorization bill directing FAA to broaden protections ensuring the safety of manned aircraft from drones operating beyond visual line of site in addition to those drones operating under Part 107 and those above 55 pounds.
- NAAA is actively advocating Congress for Farm Bill inclusion of exempting NPDES Permits for pesticide applicators and other key unnecessary, burdensome and duplicative regulatory relief provisions, in addition to continuing substantive USDA research for developing safer, more efficient aerial application technologies.
- NAAA's "Aerial Application: Above All Forms of Crop Care" ad campaign and accompanying [web search tool](#) identifying member businesses is widely circulated to hundreds of thousands of potential aerial application users.

You will also continue to receive ongoing benefits, such as legal consultation on federal aviation laws, discounts for attending or exhibiting at the Ag Aviation Expo, staying connected to members through the print and online NAAA Membership Directory and receiving Association publications and eNewsletters, social media briefings and substantive web content at [AgAviation.org](#).

Please make it a priority to [renew your NAAA membership](#)---the payoff far exceeds what you will spend in dues in the form of effective advocacy that reduces regulation and taxes affecting your aerial application business and trade association membership dues are tax deductible.

NAAA Earns Solid Media Coverage for Cover Crops Press Release

On Monday, Sept. 18, NAAA sent a press release about ag pilots working to seed cover crops to national agriculture and aviation media contacts. It has only been a few days, but the release has been picked up by RFD-TV and American Ag Network.

NAAA CEO Andrew Moore was interviewed by RFD-TV's Tammi Arender on Wednesday, Sept. 20 in a segment for Market Day Report. View the broadcast [here](#). Market Day Report impressions average 500,000 people per week and is one of RFD-TV's top watched shows. RFD-TV is the #1 cable network for farmers & ranchers.

Moore was also interviewed by Jesse Allen on the daily news program, [Agriculture of America](#) produced by the American Ag Network, a nationwide radio, digital and multimedia ag news network. Listen to Moore on the early part of the episode [here](#). Agriculture of America can be heard nationwide on over 40 radio stations (including SiriusXM Rural Radio Channel 147 on Satellite Radio). Nearly 1.65 million listeners tuned in during August 2023 with an average of 10,515 podcast downloads for 2023. The news release was also picked up by the American Ag Network [website](#).

During the interviews, Moore reiterated the positive benefits of aerial applicators seeding cover crops. Aerial application offers the ability to spread cover crop seeds over the existing cash crop without any disruption to the standing crop. This means the cover crop can already be established when the cash crop is harvested.

As reported in [last week's](#) eNewsletter, NAAA has prepared a cover crops [sample press release](#) (*this link will open a Word document*) that you can personalize to your own aerial application business and send to your local media outlets.

As the press release states, "Using a drill to plant cover crops requires a terrestrial vehicle and for the grower to wait until their cash crop is out of the field, which might not be the best timing for establishing a healthy cover crop. This can be especially true in northern parts of

the U.S. where the first frost can interfere with cover crop growth if they are seeded too late. Aerial application can also be used when the soil is wet and can seed many acres quickly."

Vote for AgAir Update's Bill Lavender for the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame

This past month, *AgAir Update* Founder **Bill Lavender** was nominated to be inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame.

According to the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame website, candidates are nominated based on their "outstanding and lasting contributions to the advancement of aviation or manned space flight. Inductees are selected based on the total number of votes after their nomination."

Bill began his aviation career in 1973 and has amassed over 14,000 flight hours. In his early career, he progressed from flying banners and skydivers to active agricultural aviation flying as an operator and pilot in central Georgia until the early 2000s when he retired to focus on his publications, including *AgAir Update*. Bill retired from general aviation flying in 2021. During his four-decade aviation career, he has owned and operated over 15 aircraft, from AgWagons to Turbine Thrush and Barons. Bill taught his son, Graham, to fly at a very early age, continuing the family aviation tradition.

Bill was inducted into the National Agricultural Aviation Hall of Fame in 2017. The NAAHOF is housed at the Mississippi Ag Museum in Jackson, Miss. Bill has also received the following NAAA awards:

- Richard "Dick" Reade Memorial Award (previously the Related Industry Award) in 1992.
- NAAA Falcon Club Pin in 2002.

Read more about Bill and vote before September 30th [here](#). We're rooting for you, Bill!

NAAA Mourns the loss of Tylor Johnson – Fatally Injured in Ninth Fatal Accident in 2023

The members and staff of NAAA offer their condolences to the loved ones of Tylor Johnson. Born on October 8, 1989, Tylor passed away on September 12, 2023, at the age of 33. He was fatally injured in the ninth fatal ag accident of 2023.

Tylor grew up in Argyle, MN, and after graduating from Stephen-Argyle High School in 2008, he attended South Dakota State University. He had a passion for flying and knew he was going to be a pilot, so while attending college he also became a commercial pilot. He married his wife in 2017 and they resided in Grand Forks, ND.

Tylor began his career as a third-generation aerial applicator at Johnson Airspray in Argyle, MN. He later started his own ag aviation business, Flyiton Ag., out of Oslo, MN. He was a hard worker who had other projects going on besides ag aviation including a commercial flooring business.

Besides flying, Tylor loved spending time with his friends and family. Other interests included hunting, snowmobiling, and ice fishing. He is survived by his wife, parents, sister, brothers, several nieces, a nephew, and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Tylor's funeral was held on September 16, 2023, with burial followed in Grand Forks, ND. To read Tylor's full obituary and offer your condolences online click [here](#). Please pray for Tylor's family and friends as they mourn his passing.

California Operator Nick Macy Killed in Accident at Reno Air Races

Nick Macy, owner of Macy's Flying Service in Tulelake, CA, was killed in a mid-air collision at the National Championship Air Races in Reno, NV. The accident occurred on Sunday, September 17 at the conclusion of the T-6 Gold Race. Nick, who placed second in the race, and the winner, Chris Rushing, collided while landing. Chris was also fatally injured in the accident.

Macy's Flying Service has been providing aerial application services for growers in northern California and southern Oregon since 1966 when it was started by Nick's father Paul, who had been a B-24 instructor in World War II. Nick earned his pilot's license at the age of 16 and a degree in agricultural science-pest management from the University of Nevada at Reno.

Nick's loss will weigh heavily on his community. Macy's Flying Service was the largest single employer in the Tulelake Basin. The City of Tulelake announced they will be flying flags at half mass during this week in honor of Nick. Please keep Nick's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.

Another Fun Children's Book Available on Aerial Application: The Story of Amelia Airedale

If you want to have a doggone good time reading to a little tyke on the subject of aerial application fetch yourself a copy of "The Story of Amelia Airedale," a book for younglings about an Airedale pooch named Amelia that is fascinated by the aerial applicators treating spuds in Idaho. Amelia—spoiler alert—lives in a kennel besides a runway and she and her fellow Airedale friends rescue Crop Duster Bob when he loses ground visibility flying in the clouds. Crop Duster Bob hears the dogs' barking to safely identify the runway's location and land his ag aircraft. The dogs are then treated to a delicious feast of aerially treated scalloped, baked and fried taters. Amelia even gets to fly with

Crop Duster Bob in his newly painted ag aircraft that has Amelia's picture painted on its tail. The fun little book, written by Mike Weiss and illustrated by Jodi Hill-Toombs, is currently available on-line at [Barnes and Noble](#), or by contacting [Mike Weiss](#).

Thank You, NAAA Ag Aviation Expo Sponsors! Attendees, Register Today!

Attendee registration and **booth sales** are open! NAAA sincerely appreciates the companies that support NAAA and the agricultural aviation industry by sponsoring the **2023 Ag Aviation Expo** in Palm Springs, California, Dec. 4-7. We have been fortunate over the years to be able to count on many of our Allied Industry members to sponsor a convention program, activity or item that benefits attendees. We appreciate them taking advantage of the opportunity to reach thousands of potential customers in the agricultural aviation industry. More opportunities to participate in the auction and to sponsor are listed below.

Sponsoring companies help ensure the success of our annual Ag Aviation Expo, and we still have many opportunities **available!** Seventy-five percent of attendees surveyed in a post-convention survey stated they would be "very likely" to use the products and services of a company that sponsors the NAAA Ag Aviation Expo.

Thank you to our 2023 Ag Aviation Expo sponsors:

- **Diamond Sponsors:** BASF, Pratt & Whitney Canada, Syngenta, UPL North America
- **Platinum Sponsor:** Transland
- **Gold Sponsors:** AG-NAV, AgriSmart Information Systems/Flight Plan Online, Air Tractor, Covington Aircraft, Bayer CropScience, GarrCo Products, Insero, Old Republic Aerospace, Starr Insurance Companies
- **Silver Sponsors:** Aeris Insurance Solutions, AgAir Update, AIG, AssuredPartners, CapstanAG, Chuck Holzwarth Flying Service, Davidson Solid Rock Insurance, FMC, Kimmel Aviation Insurance Agency, Lane Aviation, North Star Aviation Inc., Perfect Flight App, Rotorcraft Repair & Manufacturing, Southeastern Aircraft Sales & Service, Star-Flex, Turbine Conversions, US Specialty Insurance Company/Tokio Marine HCC
- **Bronze Sponsors:** Chem-Man by DataSmart, Praxidyn

We know that sponsoring companies have the opportunity to support many organizations, and we appreciate their support of NAAA! We still have sponsorships available for this year's Ag Aviation Expo. Learn more about sponsorship [here](#) or contact [Lindsay Barber](#) at (202) 546-5722.

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- **Auction Donations:** Thank you to Pratt & Whitney Canada for donating a PT6-34AG to this year's NAAA Live Auction. Please consider [making a donation](#) 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 [Lauren](#) 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