

# NAAA eNewsletter

## Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application, History Book of the Industry, Hits the Shelves at the Smithsonian Institute's Air & Space Museum

After more than a year of working with Smithsonian Enterprises, we are excited to announce that *Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application*, the industry's 100th anniversary **book**, is for sale in the Smithsonian Institute's Air & Space Museum gift shop in Washington, DC. The book is a great addition to the museum's gift shop for aviation enthusiasts and those who want to learn more about a century of technological evolution protecting farms, forests, and public health by aircraft.

The **hard-copy book** chronicles the agricultural aviation industry's growth from its birth in 1921 through the boom times after World War II, and on to today's modern era of high-tech aerial application, containing 268 pages of historical information, personal stories, and photos. Now prominently featured and celebrated in the esteemed Smithsonian Air & Space Museum's gift shop, this comprehensive book takes readers on a captivating flight through history, technology, and into the intersection of agriculture and aviation that is aerial application. Its inclusion in the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum bookshop marks a fitting tribute to a century of aviation history and innovation. If you haven't ordered a book yet, it will make a great gift under the Christmas tree; Order your copy today at [www.agaviation.org/book](http://www.agaviation.org/book).

## CropLife Retail Week Podcast Discusses NAAA Industry Activity Survey Results

*CropLife Magazine's* Nov. 10th podcast, **CropLife Retail Week**, discussed NAAA's Industry Activity Survey results that appeared in the **Fall 2023 Agricultural Aviation magazine**. Of particular importance, the hosts Eric Sfiligoj and Lara Sowinski, focused their discussion on the percentage of aerial application work operators performed in various crop input categories in 2023.

As noted in the chart below from the **article**, Sfiligoj referenced that 23% of operator loads in 2023 were fungicide-insecticide mixtures. Sfiligoj stated, "I've heard for years that aerial application was used for fungicide more than anything, but insect resistance has been on the rise for the past several years, so if you can apply and control pests and diseases in the same application pass, it sounds like that is what a lot of growers are having their applicator do for them, which is interesting." One might interpret that there was a bit of surprise in Sfiligoj's voice that aerial application did more than fungicide work so the attention that he brought to our survey and the diversity of work conducted by aerial applicators to *CropLife Magazine's* retailer audience was a benefit to the industry. There were also some interesting drone comments uttered by Sfiligoj and Sowinski. Listen to the podcast **here** (minutes: (10:45-13:10)).

**CropLife Retail Week** is a weekly podcast for members of the ag retail community to keep track of the news of the week. The podcast hosts are Eric Sfiligoj, Editor for both *CropLife* and *CropLife IRON* magazines, and Lara Sowinski, Group Editor for the *CropLife Media* Group at Meister Media Worldwide.

## Register for the Palm Springs Wire Avoidance Course and NAAREF Karaoke Fundraiser (Singing Not Required!)

NAAA is excited to host our annual convention in Palm Springs, CA Dec. 4-7. In addition to **attendee registration**, please also register for the following events:

1. Flying in the Wire and Obstruction Environment Course, which is acclaimed by professional airplane and helicopter operators world-wide. It gives low-altitude aviators the essential skills needed to safely operate an aircraft in wire and obstruction environments. This course is for both aircraft and helicopter pilots. Learn how to identify signs of wires and why ag aviators hit wires they already knew were there. This course may very well save your life—don't miss it. \$150 per person; 8-hour course; **register online**.
2. Pitch Perfect for PAASS is a karaoke fundraising event for NAAREF's PAASS program. **You do not need to sing to attend this fun fundraiser!** This is a terrific social event with the added benefit of raising money for NAAREF and PAASS and the lifesaving and environmental stewardship benefits those entities achieve. Join us Sunday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m. \$110 donation to NAAREF per person; **register online**.
3. Support Committee's Monday Cooking Demonstration & Wine Pairing with the chef of the Palm Springs Convention Center. Event RSVP is required to **Cathy Ellett**.

While pre-registration has ended, we still urge you to **register for the Ag Aviation Expo** in advance of attending to help us reduce lines at the registration desk and have accurate food/beverage counts, especially if you're attending the **Kickoff Breakfast** to hear from Burt Rutan, Aerospace entrepreneur and Virgin Galactic spacecraft designer.

We look forward to seeing you in December for networking, education, **CEUs** and a really good time!

## 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 schedule [here](#).
- **Hotel:** [Details here](#). *The room block has ended, but we recommend calling hotels if you're still looking for rooms.*
- **Attendee Registration:** Open [here](#).
- **Exhibitor Booth Sales:** Booth Sales Open [here](#).
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** We still have a few sponsorships left, which can be viewed [here](#). Please email [Lindsay](#) if you would like to secure a sponsorship.
- **Auction Donations:** Thank you to Pratt & Whitney Canada for donating a PT6-34AG engine and Air Tractor for donating a custom Can Am to this year's NAAA Live Auction. In addition to their generous engine donation, Pratt & Whitney Canada 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.

## Many Auction Items Up for Bid at NAAA Live Auction; Letter of Credit Required for PT6A-34AG Engine

Thank you to the many companies that support ag pilots and their operations, as well as the industry, through donating items for the [Live and Silent Auctions](#) at the NAAA Ag Aviation Expo. The money raised from these items supports NAAA programs. To donate an item to the live or silent auction contact, [Lauren Henretty](#).

Join us for the Live Auction & Reception on Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 5:30 p.m. at the Palm Springs Convention Center. All are welcome to enjoy the auction, and food and beverages sponsored by Syngenta. The Silent Auction bidding will be open Tuesday and Wednesday during NAAA Trade Show hours; there is no electronic bidding this year.

### Pratt & Whitney Canada Engine Details

Thank you to Pratt & Whitney Canada for its generous donation of a brand-new PT6A-34AG turboprop engine. The engine is valued at \$658,000. The engine build specification is 1334, used on the Air Tractor, Thrush and Turbine Conversions STC. The winning bidder is required to pay \$20,000 down on-site, and the remainder of payment is due within 30 days. Please provide a letter of credit from a financial institution to [Deana Kissinger](#).

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.

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## Find Your Next Seat at the 2023 Ag Aviation Expo: Look for Sign-up Board at Registration for Pilots to Find Operators and Operators to Find Pilots

Looking for a pilot? Looking for an operator to work for? NAAA is excited to announce that we are bringing back the onsite job board at the [2023 Ag Aviation Expo](#) in Palm Springs. The job board is intended to help both operators looking for a pilot and pilots looking for a seat.

The NAAA job board will be located near the registration area where pilots and operators can meet to discuss available positions and qualifications. The jobs board will allow operators and pilots to post information about who they are or what they are looking for, as well as

a date and time they intend to be present at the board to meet face-to-face. Both groups can post on the board and check it throughout the week for opportunities posted that might fit their needs. There is also a space to provide a cell phone number in case a face-to-face meeting doesn't work out at Expo.

The job board will be split into two sections, one side for operators looking for pilots and the other for pilots looking for a seat. Operators looking for a pilot can post their name, operation's name, location, the hours of ag experience, if any, they are looking for, and if they need a pilot with experience with a specific type of aircraft.

The pilot section will allow those looking for a seat to include their name, location, total flight hours, tailwheel hours and ag hours. It will also have a space for pilots to list any other related experiences they have, such as prior farm work or experience with a specific aircraft type. A space for the pilot's cell phone number is also provided.

The NAAA Ag Aviation Expo job board will provide a great service to operators and pilots who are looking for each other. Don't forget about [NAAA's online job listings page](#), found in the careers section of NAAA's website. This is available year-round to NAAA members looking to post an open seat or members looking for a seat. It's just one more valuable resource NAAA offers its members.

The Ag Aviation Expo is the must-attend aerial application event of the year. This year it offers the additional opportunity of filling ag aircraft seats with pilots ready to protect our nation's food, fiber and bioenergy. [Register here](#).

For low-time pilots, don't forget to attend Compaass Rose on Sunday, Dec. 3, and "Ask the Expert" Speed Mentoring on Monday, Dec. 4.

## Support NAAA by Renewing Your Membership for 2024

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.

In 2024, NAAA will focus on external communications about the benefits of aerial application and hiring ag pilots to handle spraying work. One great example of our public relations, that will benefit your business, will be NAAA contributing articles and ads throughout 2024 in Farm Journal's publications promoting aerial application services and how their readers can directly search the location of your aerial application business to a potential circulation of 150,000 ag retailer, crop consultants and farmers throughout the U.S.!

Several of NAAA's services conducted on your behalf, include:

- The launch of **C-PAASS**, our professional certification program for aerial applicators that take additional steps to augment their professionalism through education and testing, positioning themselves to be recognized and rewarded by their insurance providers, pesticide manufacturers, and customers.
- Submitting no fewer than 270 comments since 2017 to the EPA to keep aerial applications on pesticide labels enabling you to keep a deep inventory of pesticide tools without unnecessary and burdensome restrictions.
- Passage of the House 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.
- Actively advocating to 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.
- Development of a health care insurance policy in 2024 for NAAA members to purchase for their families and business at competitive rates.

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.

## Chlorpyrifos Makes a Comeback – NAAA Stands Ready to Keep Aerial Application on the Label

A recent decision by the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned [EPA's 2021 ban of chlorpyrifos](#) applications on all food crops. While the exact date chlorpyrifos might be reinstated is unknown, the decision is being hailed as major victory for agriculture. It offers growers who relied on chlorpyrifos for years a chance to reclaim a critical insecticide. It also sets a precedent for what EPA can and cannot do when it comes to following sound science when making decisions about pesticide registration and re-registrations.

The 8th circuit court ruled that the EPA failed to follow the conclusions from their own scientists who found that there were safe uses for chlorpyrifos on numerous crops including soybeans, wheat, sugar beets, and cherries. EPA scientists determined these crops all had high benefits from chlorpyrifos applications. EPA's scientists found options to safely use chlorpyrifos on these crops, but the EPA disregarded their findings and ignored these safe options. The ruling vacates EPA's cancelation of chlorpyrifos tolerances and restores agricultural uses of chlorpyrifos. EPA could appeal the decisions, which casts uncertainty on whether it will be available for the 2024 growing season. The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals includes the states of Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

NAAA has commented numerous times to EPA on how chlorpyrifos can be safely applied by air. Now that it's use will be reinstated for agriculture, NAAA will continue to work to ensure growers can utilize aerial applications of chlorpyrifos to ensure timely, accurate applications for controlling insect pests.

## NAAA Support Committee Events at the Ag Aviation Expo

We look forward to seeing you at the 2023 NAAA Ag Aviation Expo in Palm Springs, CA, Dec. 4-7. The NAAA Support Committee has organized several fun events at the Ag Aviation Expo for spouses/significant others, family members and office crew.

### 2023 Ag Aviation Expo Support Committee Events

#### **Monday, Dec. 4: Food & Wine Tasting (RSVP required) 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**

Enjoy a food and wine pairing cooking demonstration from the chef of the Palm Springs Convention Center. Meet other women in the industry and enjoy a great light lunch and new wines. RSVP required for event to Cathy Ellett at [catellett@gmail.com](mailto:catellett@gmail.com). *Sponsored by GarrCo Products Inc., Star-Flex, Thrush and Chem-Man.*

#### **Wednesday, Dec. 6: Athena Project Presentation (no RSVP required) 9:45–11:45 a.m.**

Attend the Wednesday Athena Project presentation titled, "Five Blades to Propel your Health and Wellness," which will cover nutrition and hydration, physical, mental and environmental health, as well as relationships. The program is written by the Athena presenters and committee members for office bookkeepers, working loaders, operators, pilots and family members. The program covers information that is beneficial to anyone working in the industry and family members. Attend this session, whether you're a spouse, office crew or family member, to gain inspiration, encouragement, and advice on better ways to serve our industry. All are invited and no RSVP is required. *Sponsored by Chuck Holzwarth Flying Service.*

#### **Wednesday, Dec. 6: NAAREF Relationship Drift (no RSVP required) 4–6 p.m.**

The Relationship Drift Session will look at how personal relationships affect pilot decision making and safety. Men and women should attend this session together, including couples and office crew. This is similar in format to the popular *Compaass* Rose program, but instead of better facilitating relations between inexperienced pilots and more experienced operators, the new session is designed to facilitate relations between operators/pilots and their spouses or significant others and office crew. All are invited! *Sponsored by Rotorcraft Repair & Manufacturing*

## Apply for C-PAASS 2023 by December 11

Join the growing number of ag pilots who are committed to enhancing safety, environmental stewardship, and application efficacy in the agricultural aviation industry.

The deadline to become 2023 **C-PAASS certified** is Dec. 11; count yourself among those committed to being the best of the best in the industry. C-PAASS 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 S.A.F.E. 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 [education.agaviation.org/cpaass](http://education.agaviation.org/cpaass).

- You will need to log in using your NAAA username/password. Contact [information@agaviation.org](mailto: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.

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 jointly launched the Certified-Professional Aerial Applicator Safety Steward (C-PAASS) program earlier this year 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.

**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.

## EPA Approves Final Revised Restricted Use Pesticide Applicator Certification Plans

On November 2nd, the EPA announced the final approval of 67 updated plans for certifying applicators of Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs). All 50 states, 5 territories, 6 federal agencies, 6 tribes, and the District of Columbia (certifying authorities) worked with EPA to complete the plan approval process. The approved plans comply with the 2017 Certification of Pesticide Applicators (CPA) final rule, which established stronger standards for people who apply restricted-use pesticides (RUPs), including aerial applicators.

The 2017 CPA rule mandated that certifying authorities with existing RUP certification plans submit proposed modifications to comply with these new standards to EPA for approval by November 4, 2023. Requirements in the rule included the following:

- More comprehensive training programs or an exam for certifying RUP applicators.
- New specialized categories for certain types of applications, one being aerial. This means all aerial applicators throughout the U.S. must have training/testing specifically designed for aerial application. With PAASS, Operation S.A.F.E. and C-PAASS curriculum available for states to use in this capacity, NAAA is urging these programs' use for this purpose.
- Set the minimum age to 18 for RUP applicators (16 for on family farms if under supervision of certified applicator).
- Requires safety training in a language they can understand for noncertified applicators working under the direction of a certified applicator.
- Stipulates that certifications are valid for a maximum of five years.

This will affect the state pesticide certification process for all aerial applicators as states, tribes, territories, and federal agencies begin implementing their plans. Copies of EPA approved RUP certifications plans can be found on the [Certification Plan and Reporting Database \(CPARD\)](#). For more information on the requirements for RUP applicators, visit EPA's [Certification Standards for Pesticide Applicators website](#). If you want to reach out to your state's pesticide lead agency to find out more details on implementation plans, you can find the appropriate contact [here](#). NAAA will continue working to ensure certifying authorities are aware of existing aerial application education opportunities including PAASS, Operation S.A.F.E. and C-PAASS.

## Proposed Multi-UAS Night Spraying Operations without Visual Observers; NAAA Responds

On November 2, NAAA submitted comments to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding a recently published [petition](#) by [Hylio, Inc.](#) (Hylio) for exemption from 14 CFR Parts 61, 91 and 137 to conduct spraying operations with its AG-230 Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS). The **AG-230** is an 8-gallon capacity octocopter marketed by Hylio to produce up to a 35 ft swath width and treat up to 50 acres per hour at 1 GPA. Specifically, Hylio petitioned for relief to operate up to 3 UAS under one operator, each weighing over 55 pounds, during night, and without visual observers (VOs), within visual line of sight (VLOS) of the pilot in command (PIC).

While much of the petition was written to match relief in previously granted exemptions for other operators, it also uniquely requests to conduct self-titled advanced operations (at night, multi-ship and without a VO) simultaneously, in any combination. The petition offered no justification for why the relief should be granted. Instead, the petition repeatedly states:

*"THE COMPANY believes that an equivalent level of safety will can be achieved by following additional protocols. The proprietary manuals outline these protocols and should provide the support necessary to grant the exemption and demonstrate how an equivalent level of safety is achieved."*

Overall, NAAA commented in opposition to the operations as proposed by the petitioner. Of specific concern was the proposed multi-ship (swarm) operation without VOs. NAAA did not find sufficient evidence that a single PIC would be able to maintain vigilance, in accordance with §91.113(b), to see and avoid other aircraft. Because crewed ag aircraft will share the Part 137 airspace, they are the most likely risk-bearers of this reduction in safety.

For night operations, the petitioner plans to utilize strobe lighting visible for 3 statute miles. NAAA requested that the equipped strobe lighting be required to be on for all (night and day) operations as an additional means for collision mitigation.

NAAA also reminded the FAA of the unique gravity of dispensing economic poisons, and questioned whether a single PIC can fulfill his/her **§137.37** duty (to not dispense in creation of a hazard) while tasked with operating 3 aircraft, potentially at night and without VOs.

In the petitioner's Benefit to Public Interest section, they tout that *"UAS may be used in the event that there is no other way to safely spray a certain land area. This will reduce the chance of manned aircraft attempting to spray certain dangerous areas."* NAAA agrees with this; UAS can allow operators to keep crewed aircraft out of the most dangerous fields. However, they then state *"UAS allow for methods of precision spraying that are not possible with manned aircraft."* NAAA took great issue with this statement, citing the distinct lack of efficacy data available to support it and referencing a **letter** sent by NAAA to EPA on this subject in 2020, **previously reported in this newsletter**.

You can view NAAA's comments **here**.