

NEW HORIZONS

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JULY 2010

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Peter Hansen

As I write this report, it's the middle of June and I'm looking out the window at heavy rain, enjoying the rain; but also ready for some sunshine and to get on with the season.

Something positive for our industry is happening in Calgary this July. The Aero Space Museum and the Calgary Stampede have partnered together to give tribute to the Aerial application industry at this year's Calgary Stampede. It will recognize the role of ag-aviation as a important part of our aviation history and its role it has played in agriculture both past and present. The exhibit will include but not be limited to a Cessna AgTruck and the Associations' display booth. The aircraft mentioned was originally donated to the Museum by a local operator, Greg Scott (Air Support) of Mossleigh, AB. Recognition of this kind from outside our industry is truly appreciated and an important tool in the education of the general public.

The office will continue to take care of the continuing issues that arise during the summer allowing our board members time to focus on running their own businesses. The results of our members Business Survey is completed and will continue to give us valuable information when dealing with different issues of the Association. Also the CAAA hosted another successful series of Calibration Clinics throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We were fortunate again this year to benefit from the knowledge that Dennis Gardisser supplied to these clinics. Continued communication with Transport Canada in regards to SMS (Safety management Systems) and Revising 702/ Flying Farmer Regulations is one of the Associations' ongoing projects and progress on these has been slow. The CAAA has also developed an information sheet when working around Towers (Wind Farms, Cell Towers, etc) and Power lines and is available on our web site, I urge you to use this information in developing your own safe guidelines when working around these Obstructions.

Monsanto's confidence in our industry was truly

appreciated by many this spring. Their new preseed registration for Roundup could not have been timelier. Many farmers benefitted by being able to use aerial application where otherwise their preseed applications would have been impossible. Appreciation is also given to the other Crop Protection companies for their continued support and development of new products for Aerial application.

As I close off this report I'd like to wish everyone a safe and prosperous season. Thanks again to our suppliers for their continued support and to all our members that do so much to support the CAAA.

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PROVINCIAL REPORTS

PROVINCIAL REPORTS ALBERTA

Mark Kinniburgh

Hello from soggy Wild Rose Country. What a difference a year makes! Last June, northern and central Alberta were in the grips of a vicious drought. In the past 90 days the majority of the province has received above average rainfall, excellent news for aerial applicators. Another positive development has been the addition of a Weathermax label for pre-seed and in crop applications. Kudos to Monsanto for finally instituting a complete label (albeit with a wet field condition caveat). These positive moisture and label developments have been tempered somewhat by the inevitable encroachment of wind turbine developments in central Alberta. I'll use my allotted space to detail our companies experience with a specific project, in the hope it proves useful to other applicators dealing with renewable energy developers.

When we first heard rumors in 2008 of a potential Suncor sponsored wind turbine project located south east of Drumheller our first step was to consult with Manitoba applicators who had been through the process. Armed with a battle plan we met with the few affected landowners opposed to the project in the hopes our combined numbers would influence the Wheatland county planning commission to halt the project in its infancy. This proved futile and approval at the RM level was quickly granted. The next stage began in late 2009 when the Alberta Utilities Commission invited submissions regarding two development permit applications related to the project. We put forth a submission based in large part on the Australian AAA wind farm policy, detailing our concerns regarding pilot safety and the negative economic consequences for both ourselves and producers unable to treat wet or insect infested fields within the project boundary. The AUC, (to my cynical surprise), took our concerns

seriously and requested another submission consisting of our response to their follow up questions. This turn of events brought Suncor to the table and two personable young fellows visited Drumheller to discuss our concerns. In the meantime, due to our intervention letters, the AUC convened a hearing for May 27th, 2010 in Drumheller. This had the potential to delay Suncor's construction schedule and they requested another meeting, this time with a more senior member of their wind development team. The end result of a second meeting with the project manager was a signed operational safety agreement between Suncor and our company, incorporating many of the safety measures detailed in the CAAA wind policy developed by Nelson Almey (and found on the CAAA website). Suncor agreed to provide a detailed map containing dimensions and coordinates of the project boundary, all wind turbines, temporary and permanent met towers and substations. We'll receive the project construction managers contact information and the construction schedule. All met towers will be painted bright orange and white and tower guy wires will be clearly marked with extended guy wire guards. Wind turbines on the project boundary will be equipped with navigation lights. With 12 hours notice the project manager will shut down specific turbines so we can spray within or around the project boundary without the danger of wake turbulence or spatial disorientation; I'm sure working around the stationary blades will be challenging enough! Although in a perfect world Suncor would have located their project on marginal grassland far from prime cultivated farmland, we feel our company achieved the best possible outcome considering strong producer support for the project. The point of my (rather long winded) story is applicators contesting wind projects would be well served to focus on influencing producers targeted by developers. If this proves unsuccessful, correspond with regulators at every

opportunity, detailing the negative impact wind power will have on aerial application and consequently producers. Insist the developer drafts an operational safety agreement ensuring all equipment is well marked and a process is put in place, with prior notice, to eliminate wake turbulence and vertigo from the spraying equation.

All the best with your season. I hope it's safe, fun, and profitable.

ECC

Paul Zimmer

When I received my prompting last week from the CAAA requesting I get my provincial newsletter submission in I wondered what topic I would tackle this time round. The day to day operation of our business is really pretty mundane. This season will not be all that different from the last. The variables that make the difference are usually related to the weather, insect/weed pressure, an occasional government funded forest defoliator program, and of course the economy.

Well, in spite the increase in job numbers and GDP, and a consensus that the economy is heading in the right direction we have not seen a recovery yet. As previously mentioned in Ontario any Budworm programs contemplated were cancelled because of budget restraints, although other Provincial governments found money to combat their forest defoliator problems.

After two years of cooler wetter weather in Ontario and parts east this is the year that was predicted to be hot and dry. Although we are not getting the unrelenting soaking the Prairie Provinces are being subjected too, it is far from hot and dry. Weather prognostics seem to have as much luck with long term forecast trends as I have at the Vegas Black Jack Tables. Not Good!

Commodity prices seem to fluctuate more in line with the price of crude than worldwide demand for the grower's products, and if prices are down so is the

demand for plant health products such as Headline, which in turn reduces our potential revenue.

In Eastern Canada the aerial application industry is small and decreasing in size. Ontario once had its own member organization. Today there are hardly enough members to support the Eastern Canada Association of the CAAA comprised of 6 Provinces. Why is that?

In Ontario there are only three operators that can say they carry out agricultural aviation on a full time basis. Two of those are single Pawnee operators looking for buyers so they can retire, the other is Zimmer Air. All other companies, which I can count on one hand, rely on other business activities to bolster their bottom line, and service the ag industry sporadically at best.

The PMRA are tasked with the evaluation and Registration of pesticides for Canada. Yet in Ontario that is not good enough. No product can be used unless it is Scheduled by the Ministry of the Environment. We all know the layering of Regulations is never conducive to profitable business, nor does it guarantee increased environmental stewardship.

Last year a new Regulation 63/09 of the Ontario Pesticide Act came in effect replacing the old Reg. 914. Having sat in on a number of information sessions, it was sold primarily to address changes in the use of Pesticides for Cosmetic Purposes. In other words the Provincial banning of pesticides for lawn care, private horticulture, and vegetable gardens, just to name a few; changes not based on scientific evidence, but driven by a government with a biased political agenda. These changes in regulation however did not leave the aerial application industry untouched. More restrictive regulation was introduced, and at the end of the day our industry is slowly being regulated out of the business of crop protection. You need only to look at the number of aerial applicators left serving the ag market to confirm the end is approaching.

Over the years the PMRA reassessed and removed many of the silent label products for aerial use. Combine that with a reduction of the number of new generation pesticides that were not deemed to be economically viable to spend the Millions of extra \$\$\$ to have aerial application added and you can see where our industry was headed. This lack of tools in our tool box has played a significant role in the shrinking of the Eastern Canada aerial applicator market. A decade ago Ontario had a pretty viable potato spraying market until new crop protection products were brought on line that were

not registered for aerial application. In PEI aerial application was simply banned. This doesn't mean any less pesticide is used; its use is just less visible to the public.


Due to the amount of rainfall earlier this month we were contracted by some local growers to spray some tomato crops. The growers were very appreciative and impressed with our capabilities but were disappointed we could no longer spray any copper fungicide on the tomatoes as that was

Continued on page 4

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Continued from page 3

one of the products that had been removed because of its silent label. The grower was not aware that this tool was removed from us as the last time we had sprayed for him was over 12 years ago. Hard to stay afloat with that level of repeat business.

In Ontario you even need an MOE Permit to apply many of the MCPA Amine formulations to control weeds in cereals. That's right; western operators can spray Roundup but we need a permit to spray MCPA on weeds in a wheat crop! As aerial application is often the choice of last resort by the time the grower calls for our service, the crop needs to be sprayed immediately, if not sooner. Environment Ministry pesticide specialists do not respond well or favourably to requests for a Permit to be issued on such short notice.

The result is we leave the grower with the impression that we cannot carry out the job so they quit calling.

In Ontario the permit system is not new. This process has been in place since my introduction to the industry, used for forestry applications on Crown land, water exterminations, and the use of some highly toxic pesticides on agricultural land. At one point an MOE Pesticide Specialist would actually go out and assess the risk of the application. That practice was long ago discontinued for budgetary reasons, and now that assessment is made using a hand drawn field map in the confines of an office. It is simply now another paperwork exercise, but allows the government to leave the impression that the public interest is being served and the environment is being adequately protected. In reality the issuance of the Permit does neither.

With each passing year it is becoming apparent that agricultural aviation is becoming less and less viable in my province. Although I enjoy the business, it may be time to hang up the helmet and go get a job in the wind energy field. I won't have far to look. I am surrounded by wind farms now with hundreds more coming to my immediate area; some as close as 2 kilometres from my base.

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CAAA Mentorship Program

The CAAA's Mentorship Program provides a confidential source of advice and mentoring to all new applicators. The CAAA has gathered names of mentors who have agreed to confidentially dialogue with applicators throughout the season. Below is a list of applicators who have agreed to participate in the program, with their contact information. They are available to speak with any new applicator on a totally confidential basis. Contact anyone one of them if you have questions or need advice during the season:

Jon Bagley	Bus: 204-763-8998	Cell: 204-729-7723
Matt Bestland	Bus: 204-736-2476	Cell: 204-771-1980
Allan Denesowych	Bus: 306-786-7007	
Fran de Kock	Bus: 306-445-3099	Cell: 306-441-0547
Bruce Gair	Bus: 780-352-7833	Cell: 780-352-1278
Brent Lange	Bus: 780-352-7833	Cell: 780-361-8831
Clarion Seib	Bus: 306-786-6072	Cell: 306-621-7171
Wayne Silzer	Bus: 306-598-2033	Cell: 306-231-7109

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CAAA Members Services

CAAA Bulletin

The CAAA email bulletin is circulated to Corporate, Individual and Allied members to keep members current regarding time-sensitive and urgent material.

CAAA New Horizons Newsletter

Distributed quarterly, the newsletter contains informative articles, industry perspectives, reminders, plus classified advertising.

CAAA Annual Membership Directory

The CAAA Directory is produced annually in the spring and contains key contact and company information.

CAAA Annual Wall Planner

The CAAA Wall Planner, (year at a glance), contains the important dates to remember.

CAAA Website

The CAAA website is an excellent tool to provide information to assist current and potential members. Check it out at www.CanadianAerialApplicators.com.

CAAA Annual Conference & Tradeshow

The CAAA Annual Conference & Tradeshow is an educational forum providing members with information on safety, new product developments, research, governmental regulations, and industry trends. License re-certification credits are also available for attendees.

CAP Clinics

The CAAA provides association supported CAP Clinics at numerous locations across the prairies.

Business Survey

The Business Survey provides valuable industry specific information to assist participants with on-going management decisions.

Self-Audit

The Self-Audit program provides operators with a checklist of regulatory requirements and is designed to assist with spring start up.

Classified Advertising

Available to all members in the New Horizons newsletter and on the CAAA website.

Pilot Registry Program

Assists operators to locate a pilot and pilots to find viable permanent and temporary employment.

Mentorship Program

The Mentorship Program provides a confidential source of advice and mentoring to all new applicators.

CAIR & Misapplication Insurance

CAAA membership provides applicators an opportunity to apply for both CAIR Hull Insurance and CAAA Misapplication Insurance through provincial drift insurance programs.

For information regarding any of the above CAAA services, go to www.canadianaerialapplicators.com.



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Crop Dusting: There is More To the Aerial Application Aviation Than You Ever Imagined.

The most wonderful thing about aviation is that there are so many different ways to fly. Gliders, helicopters, ultralights, biplanes. You name it. There isn't enough time in our lives to learn how to fly all of the aircraft available in the world. There are very few individuals across the globe that hold all certificates and are type rated in every single aircraft.

In my search for both interesting aircraft and exciting career opportunities, I have come across some very intriguing pilots, recruiters and organizations with great stories to tell. None, however, like the age-old discipline of aerial application.

The first known aerial application of agricultural materials was flown by John Chaytor, who, in 1906, spread seed over a swamped valley floor in Wairoa, New Zealand, using a hot air balloon with mobile tethers. The first known powered aircraft to spread agricultural materials was a U.S. Army Air Service Curtiss JN4, or "Jenny," piloted by John MacReady spraying lead arsenate from a makeshift metal hopper to kill catalpa sphinx caterpillars that had infested

an orchard near Troy, Ohio in 1921. A subsequent study revealed that the pesky caterpillars were virtually wiped out from the application and "crop dusting" was born. The first commercial operation to lead the charge in aerial application was Continental Dusters, once part of Delta Airlines, using insecticides and fungicides to treat a host of crops and tackle insects and other infestations.

Today, organizations like the National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) and the Canadian Aerial Applicators Association (CAAA) are working successfully to change this stereotype of the cavalier ag pilot. The mission of the NAAA & CAAA has always been to promote and foster the development of aerial application and the significance that it plays on a global scale. By promoting research, new technologies and new application techniques, the associations have changed what it means to be an ag pilot. Education, training and safety are the highest priorities for the NAAA & CAAA. They lobby for this niche flight industry and protect its growth by thwarting and abating certain governmental regulation that may hinder their field.

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We All Have To Eat

From the ground up, pilots who are currently entering this industry are trained in all aspects of aerial application, safe pesticide use and entomology, all the while minimizing the risk to the environment. Without pesticide use, the world's food supply would be reduced by 40 to 50 percent, resulting in an increase in food prices estimated at more than 50 percent.

To produce future foods, fiber and bio-fuels, increased production on the land already in use will be critical. The use of fungicides, insecticides and herbicides has helped to increase crop yields, allowing more people and animals to be fed and clothed. And it has opened the way for advancements in alternative energies. High-yield agriculture benefits the environment by producing maximum crop yields from fewer acres. Aerial application is a critical component in maximizing this production from the land used.

It's estimated that, with the increase in the world's population, food, fiber and bio-fuel production will need to double by the year 2050 to meet the growing demand. Due to the large economic growth and middle class surges in India and China—accounting for almost 40 percent of the world's population—the demand for beef has grown tremendously. As the demand for meat rises, the demand for grain and protein feeds rises as well. It takes eight pounds of grain to make one pound of beef, so the demand for growth in grain production is at an unprecedented high.

The use and development of pesticides and other agricultural application materials comes with its share of environmental concerns. Spray drift, soil contamination, water pollution and occupational disease (often in the form of increased risk to cancer) are a few. Increased environmental regulations implemented by the PMRA and EPA in recent years have reduced emissions and dangerous contaminations. In order to stay current, aircraft and equipment in the ag industry are state-of-the-art. Crop-dusting planes today have on-board computers that monitor the rate of application and GPS units to make each field pass more accurate. The days of attaching a 50-gallon drum of chemicals to a rickety airplane are over, as the aircraft today have sophisticated spraying capabilities to improve efficiencies and reduce environmental impact.

Recent technology developments such as GPS swath guidance, aerial imaging and prescription mapping and dispersal systems, have revolutionized the discipline. Fertilizer prices have increased due to the demand, and

operators and legislators are looking for a balance between environmental impact and operation cost. Therefore, manufacturers of application systems and aircraft are designing equipment that is aerodynamically “clean,” including optimal boom and nozzle placements resulting in a more predictable spray pattern. Aircraft calibration and patternization are monitored and kept in top form at annual calibration clinics.

So, now that you are intrigued with the agricultural industry, the technology and the growing need for aerial application, what's next? You want to be an ag pilot? Ag pilots are trained from the ground up, literally, loading the aircraft for the day, understanding the intricacies of the application systems and aircraft, all the while obtaining the training and flight certification to earn the insurance for a career position. This process takes time, however with the increase in demand for food, fiber and bio-fuels, there is plenty of opportunity out there. Pay rates can vary from one operator to another. For newer pilots, you can get paid a percentage of the gross application or per-acre rate. Your overall experience, your total time in specific aircraft and knowledge of the application processes will dictate your success as an ag pilot.

The renegade crop-dusting pilot is a relic. Today, aerial application is a sophisticated and rapidly growing industry.

By Gates Scott – Reproduced in part from The Airliners. Net – The Wings of the Web



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2010 CAAA Calibration Clinics

The 2010 Calibration (CAP) Clinics are now complete and were a tremendous success. Dr. Dennis Gardisser, Analyst and Clayton Rempel, Clinic Assistant conducted clinics at the following locations:

Taber, Alberta: May 18th
Shaunavon, Saskatchewan: May 18th
Yorkton, Saskatchewan: May 19th
Minnedosa, Manitoba: May 20th
Brandon, Manitoba: May 21st
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba: May 21st
Altona, Manitoba: May 21st
Niverville, Manitoba: May 22nd
Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba: May 24th

Over nine days and 5,000 km (2,200 miles) of travel, calibration of 27 aircraft took place (3-Taber, 1-Shaunavon, 5-Yorkton, 4-Minnedosa, 3-Brandon, 2-Portage la Prairie, 4-Altona, 1-Niverville and 4-Lac du Bonnet). Weather conditions were favorable for the duration of the week with the exception of May 23rd when inclement weather forced a much deserved break in the schedule.

Support from the 2010 CAP Clinic hosts and sponsors was paramount to the success of the clinics and the generous contributions made are appreciated.

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Ted Anderson: T.C. Aerial Ltd.
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Ken Kane: Ken Kane Aerial Spray (1988) Ltd.
Jon Bagley: Westman Aerial Spraying Ltd.
John Bodie: Jonair (1988) Ltd.
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I have just finished a fly-in at my 32nd location since February 15th, 2010. The CAP clinics went really well again this year. Mother nature, especially wind, kept us from working a couple of days. The temperatures were warm and it was dry almost every day. We started very early several days to be able to beat some of the predicted wind conditions – the days in Canada are much longer than I'm used to here in the South.

It was really nice having Clayton along this year to help with logistics and paperwork. I think I may actually be able to find my way across central Canada if I keep coming back for the CAP clinics.

We experienced some extraordinary hospitality and cooperation from applicators along the way this season. In addition to helping with the spray systems, I enjoyed getting to know many of the applicators a little better. We could not have finished on time without this excellent cooperation.

As a general rule spray patterns and aircraft configurations were better than last year. The biggest thing that I noticed is what I would call overwinter effects. Many of the spray systems had not been used much yet this season. Those systems that had been used a fair bit had all the diaphragms working properly and overwinter corrosion had worked its way out. I know everyone gets tired by the time the season is over. I would encourage everyone to carefully clean, lubricate, and corrosion proof all components of the spray season during any extended idle period. Brass check valve caps are particularly susceptible to corrosion and should have a shot of Corrosion X or something similar squirted in the top of the cap to keep them in top shape. Attention at the end of one season will pay dividends in terms of accurate performance at the start of the next.

I truly enjoy the one-on-one give and take analysis of the aircraft involved. Many systems just needed a little tweaking and many needed a little more.

I hope to be able to do these CAP clinics again in the future. Clayton read a lot of calibration materials I had given him and asked a lot of questions. It may not be too long until he takes my job!

I'm always available for counseling and/or opinionated advice – feel free to call at any time.

Regards to all.

WRK of Arkansas LLC
Dennis R. Gardisser, PhD, P.E.
153 92nd West

Lonoke, AR 72086
501 676-1762 cell
501 676-5959 office
888 806-1924 fax

dgardisser@wrkofar.com
www.wrkofar.com



Well all you fellow Ag Pilots and participants of the 2010 CAP clinics. I could tell by the faces of the Operators and Pilots alike that we are all excited for the Spray season of 2010. Looks like the Clinics are complete and behind us for another year.

This was my first year working for CAAA with the calibration clinics. From my perspective I feel the clinics went exceptionally well. The locations were set up well, and were ready for us to go to work when we arrived. The schedule prepared by Joy in the CAAA office was an indispensable resource for Dennis and me on the road. I believe I can speak for both Dennis and I that we appreciated Joy's hard work in planning the logistics for this year's clinics. The weather cooperated for the most part, with some minor flexibility on the part of Dennis and I, as well as the Pilots and Operators we completed the clinics ahead of schedule.



This Trip was a learning experience for me in many ways, and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn from Dennis's experience and work for the CAAA. I could tell there are many knowledgeable and professional operators across the prairies. I look forward to working with you all at next years CAP clinics should the opportunity arise. We hope to make continuous improvements in the way we run the clinics and if there are any suggestions we would appreciate the feedback, comments, and ideas for next year. Please forward those to the CAAA office.



Something to remember as the Season accelerates into full swing. I asked a veteran Pilot after a short flight recently. "how was it out there today?" He replied "Yup, it is still the best job in world"

I wish you all a productive, profitable and safe season. See you next year!

Submitted by Clayton Rempel



'Unprecedented' wet weather across Prairies dampens crop forecast

By: The Canadian Press – ONLINE EDITION
Originally Printed 11/06/2010 3:04 PM

WINNIPEG - Unprecedented wet weather across the Prairies has dampened the crop forecast.

The Canadian Wheat Board said in its preliminary crop outlook released Friday that about 7.7 million hectares will be seeded to wheat — the smallest area since 1971. The barley crop is looking at its worst seeding since 1965 with about 2.7 million hectares planted.

Three million to five million hectares could go fallow this year in Western Canada because the fields are too wet, said the board.

“The excess rain has washed away the hope of seeding for many farmers,” said Bruce Burnett, director of weather and market analysis.

It's been wet from southern Alberta through Saskatchewan and into eastern Manitoba. The board said the region had record wet weather from April 1 until early this week. Burnett said it was “by far and away” the wettest April and May since 1900 for the area around Saskatoon.

“This is an unprecedented event in Western Canada. Certainly in the last 40 years we haven't seen conditions over such a large area this bad,” said Burnett.

Overall across the Prairies, seeding of major crops is just under 80 per cent complete. It's normally done by this time of year.

The situation is particularly bad in Saskatchewan where many fields, especially in the province's northeast, are flooded and can't be seeded. Those that have been planted are waterlogged, meaning what's there could be lost because of excess moisture.

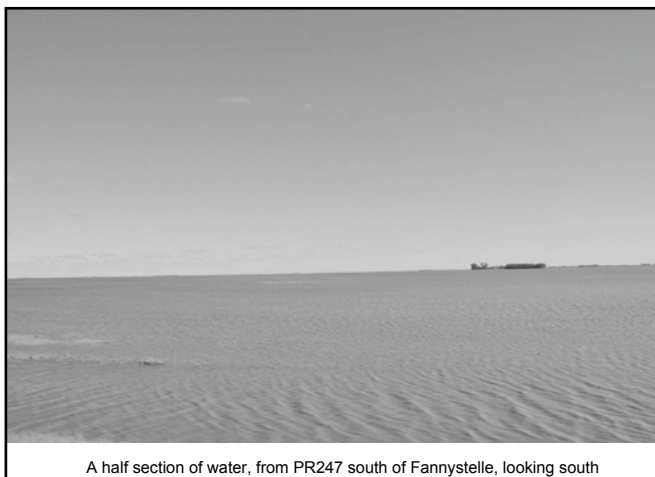
Nearly 40 rural municipalities have declared themselves agricultural disaster areas because they are too wet for farmers to plant crops.

Greg Marshall, president of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, said he's seen the problem first-hand from the ground and from the air.

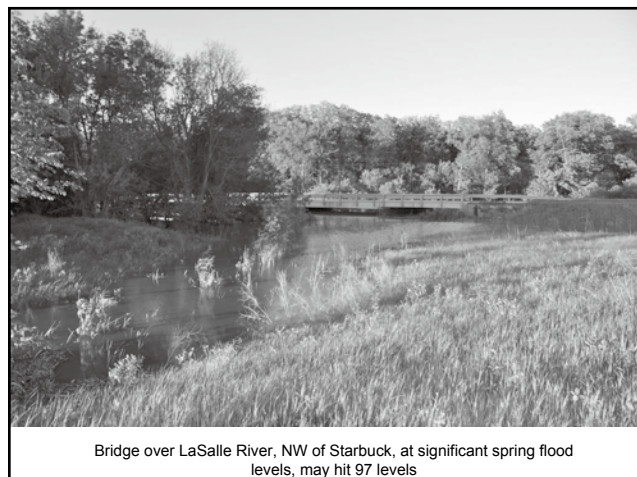
“I'm astounded,” said Marshall.

“The amount of water that's lying around, the amount of acres that aren't seeded. You can see where people have tried to seed, have started to seed a field, but can't go right completely across it and they're turning around. You can see lots of places that people have been stuck and then dragged everything out of the mud.

“There are huge areas that are underwater. There are huge areas that are just too wet.”



A half section of water, from PR247 south of Fannystelle, looking south



Bridge over LaSalle River, NW of Starbuck, at significant spring flood levels, may hit 97 levels

Burnett said the situation is bound to have a significant impact on grain production because Saskatchewan is such a big agricultural area — the province has 41 per cent of Canada’s arable land.

Overall, total wheat production is forecast at 18.9 million tonnes, including 3.16 million tonnes of durum. Barley production is forecast at 7.64 tonnes.

Burnett said farmers can’t just wait for things to dry out to get more seed in the ground. The problem is that once it stops raining and dries out — and that will take quite some time — it will be too late for crops to mature before a frost in the fall.

“That’s the situation in Western Canada. I wish it was better,” said Burnett.

“Certainly, this is going to be one of the most challenging years in Western Canada for farmers producing crops and the economic impact’s probably going to last not only this year, but next year as well.”

— By Jennifer Graham in Regina



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AT-802 Air Tractor Makes Second Dispersal Application Over Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in Louisiana

HOUMA, LA — May 18, 2010 was the day an Air Tractor dual cockpit AT-802 made history by applying an oil dispersant over the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that originated from a damaged BP offshore oil rig. Never before in the North American oil recovery industry has a single engine aircraft conducted this procedure. After more than 16 years of demonstrating and working with oil recovery companies, a consortium of AT-802 operators have finally been able to implement a “proof of concept” where a single engine agricultural aircraft can be a critical tool in the armament needed during an oil spill crisis.



Queen Bee Air Specialties of Rigby, Idaho provided the dual cockpit AT-802 Air Tractor for the initial applications. QBAS provided the four pilots needed, Steve Willey, Aldo Leonardi, Bruce Spaulding and Chip Kemper. It also provided the A&P licensed mechanic, Jay Jackson and ground support personnel, Jeff Haack



The AT-802 operations group during a pre-flight briefing at Houma-Terrebonne Airport.

Until now, with safety as a priority, oil recovery and oil companies have required multi-engine and dual pilots for their aerial oil dispersal operations. The Deepwater Horizon incident is different from other spills. Its sheer size and unknowns have required BP to take every step possible to stop the source, remove the oil from the water with skimmers, burn fresh oil off the water near the spill site, contain it with booms and spray it with dispersants; enter the AT-802.

With Deepwater Horizon, BP has a tiered approach for attacking the oil, starting at the well head. Conditions that are ideal for skimming and burning are not the same as conditions that are ideal for dispersing the oil and vice versa. No single method is 100% effective.

The oil dispersal product is a surfactant that has been used successfully for over 40 years. It is manufactured by Nalco Chemical Company. When applied over surface oil, it penetrates the oil and breaks the surface tension that separates the oil from a floating mass into microscopic particles that are suspended vertically in the water column, effectively diluting it to an acceptable ppm that will be less likely to affect the environment, providing a net environmental benefit. Because of the Deepwater Horizon incident, Nalco has increased the manufacturing rate of its dispersal product, Corexit. As much as 56,000 gallons have been applied in a day on the spill.

The AT-802 can play a critical role by dispersing the oil before it breaches land and the inshore environment. Because of its speed and maneuverability, it can respond effectively to its spotter plane commands as it treats ribbon lengths or small sections of surface oil. The aircraft can work as close as three miles offshore and as far out as ten miles in a minimum of 10-meter deep water during this proof of concept.

The Deepwater Horizon spill is an unfortunate event, but has presented a unique opportunity to provide the consortium of AT-802 operators a chance to demonstrate the effectiveness of the AT-802. The primary reason ag-aircraft have not been able to work oil spill dispersal applications in the past has been its single engine configuration. If this opportunity for the AT-802 proves to be positive, new doors for industry expansion could be opening in the future. Single engine ops are the norm in ag-flying. Aircraft owners, pilots and mechanics understand it is critical to keep the widest possible safety margin. The reality for ag-pilots is spraying at 75 feet over water with both a life vest and a life raft is considerably safer than 10 feet over a crop with power lines and trees to circumnavigate.

Spraying over water presents hazards of its own. The AT-802 is equipped with an artificial horizon, two-way communications, transponder and laser radar altimeter. The pilots must be IFR rated, as well as meet pilot minimums requirements stated in the contract and operations manual. The pilots must be able to deal with loss of horizon, which is not uncommon over water. Other weather phenomenon, like fog and offshore thunderstorms, can challenge the pilots. Operations for aerial oil dispersal are usually conducted from controlled airfields that require extensive radio communication.

Incident command systems are in place to facilitate the organized response and application of the dispersal product. Movements by the AT-802 and the spotter plane are coordinated through the Command Center, which currently has approximately 1,000 people working in it. Paperwork takes nearly as long as the application. Air Boss meetings are required daily with pre and post-flight pilot briefings. Speed is not as significant of a factor as with ag-ops. Safety is paramount, to the degree it slows down the system, but gets the job done safely. Although the oil may be drifting toward shore, the rate doesn't compare to armyworms devouring a crop. Time is critical, but following protocol and being safe are more so.

A typical scenario for an oil spill dispersal application starts with a request from the Command Center for a spotter aircraft to locate and identify threatening oil. After the proper paperwork is filed and the weather meets a minimum of 1,500-foot ceiling and five miles visibility, the King Air spotter aircraft with its two pilots depart for a predetermined grid area. The King Air pilot and copilot must not only be good pilots, but also be able to distinguish algae and other deceivers in the water from surface oil. With the AT-802 operation, by the time the oil arrives in the aircraft's area of responsibility, there is a risk of it being "weathered", or exposed to the elements too long. As it becomes weathered, the oil's response to the dispersal product is reduced and will become ineffective.

After locating the oil, the spotter aircraft returns to base and a strategy is developed to aerially disperse the oil with the AT-802. The first application on May 18 was only 200 gallons, about 40 acres worth.



(L) Dynamic Aviation's King Air is piloted by Vince Kane and Jessica Jackson. The company is under contract with Lane Aviation of Rosenberg, Texas. A consortium of five AT-802 owners are doing business as Lane Aviation for the purposes of the oil dispersal contract.



(R) Taken from the cockpit of the King Air spotter aircraft, the AT-802 heads out into the Gulf of Mexico for the first single engine dispersal operation in North America. The 10-nm limit has been extended to 15 miles. A second applications with 650 gallons of dispersant was applied May 21

The spotter aircraft and the AT-802 will depart using the coordinates for the application with the spotter aircraft flying above and behind the AT-802 calling out directional commands as the aircraft enter the application area. The application may be straight progressions of an A-B line on the GPS, or patches of applications, turning the spray on and off as necessary. Any aquatic life, turtles, dolphins, etc., cannot be sprayed or drifted on. Marine mammals have a 3 nm no spray zone. Boats and oil rig platforms have a two-mile buffer zone. A P3 aircraft is overhead, monitoring the process live to the Command Center. Often, there may be at one time several dozen aircraft in the air, spraying and transporting personnel and supplies.

Time will reveal if the AT-802 will become a permanent fixture for aerial oil spill recovery operations. Many eyes are focused on how well this aircraft will perform. There is no room for error. What happens over the Gulf of Mexico waters in the next few days or weeks, or however long it takes to disperse the oil, will determine the future of ag-aircraft working oil spills. The industry is fortunate the AT-802 operators, the King Air spotter pilots, the support personnel and equipment are topnotch.

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Written by Bill Lavender



First AT502B Retrofit Seatbelt Airbag Installed in Canada

News Release: May 20, 2010

By: Cheryl Denesowych, Yorkton Aircraft Service Ltd.



Yorkton Aircraft Service Ltd. is very excited to congratulate Brian & Mark Kinniburgh of Fox Coulee Aviation in Drumheller Alberta on the installation of their AmSafe® Seat-Belt Airbag in their 1999 Air Tractor 502B.

Fox Coulee is the first Ag-Aviation company in Canada to install the Air Tractor retro-fit kit. Seat-belt airbags are now standard equipment in new Air Tractors. The STC for retro-fits on older model AT401, 402, 502 and 602 aircraft was finalized in late 2009. Brian Kinniburgh commented, “We are excited to have this new safety enhancement in our aircraft. We strive to be a progressive company and pilot safety is our number one priority.”

The install was done on May 6th at Fox Coulee’s facility in Drumheller. Yorkton Aircraft supplied the install team of Neal Poersch and Tom Kindjerski. Richard Heitzman, Technical Sales Manager for AmSafe®, flew in from San Antonio Texas to oversee this install. The kit was installed by the 2-man YAS team in about 4 hours.

While in Drumheller, Richard conducted an AmSafe training session. “We watched some of the videos on the testing of these kits,” says Brian. “After witnessing the crash test dummies post impact condition I was definitely convinced that this restraint is a worthwhile investment. These bags should be in every Ag- Aviation cockpit.”

“I’m pleased Air Tractor has made AmSafe® seat-belt airbags standard equipment in all new aircraft. And now

being able to install them in older models is a big safety advancement for our industry,” states Brian.

This particular installation has an interesting story. Brian’s son Mark, who flies an Ag Truck in their operation, actually purchased the Seat-Belt Air Bag Kit for his father at the CAAA Auction in February. “I knew Air Tractor was supplying a kit at the auction and I had made my mind up that I was buying it for dad,” explains Mark. Now Brian says he wishes there was a kit approved for installation in Ag Trucks. “For sure we would install one!” Richard of AmSafe was part of this conversation and he has taken the word back to his company that these seat-belt air bags are needed and wanted for other models of Ag planes.

Brian smiles and says, “I have 3 cats at home and they have 9 lives each. I only have one. Installing this equipment just makes sense. For anyone in Canada that is interested in these bags Yorkton Aircraft Service is an Authorized AmSafe® distributor and they know their stuff.”

To learn more about this technology contact Yorkton Aircraft. To look at a video demonstration on this equipment visit their website at www.yorktonaircraft.com.



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We have converted our AT401B's to Walter Turbine engines and therefore have for sale the following parts: Propellers- 2 and 3 blade Hydromatic, exhaust parts, Firewall forward parts, and some instruments. Please contact Ken Kane at 204-867-3147 or e-mail at kenkane@xplornet.com.

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OTHER

If anyone has any information, stories or photos of the history of aerial application in Saskatchewan please contact the SAAA (1-877-767-7222) or send in any information via email (administration@saaa.ca), fax (306-545-2031) or mail (P.O. Box 24021, Regina, SK

Got Pics!



The CAAA is seeking photos of members and their aircrafts for use in future publications and the CAIR Safety Seminar DVD. Kindly forward your pictures to:
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(original photos will be scanned & returned to you!)

Thank You!



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