

MID-CONTINENT AIRCRAFT CORPORATION

PLANEGRAM

Flags, Flagging and Flagmen

This is a story that was pulled out of :

The Swath Publication 1954, WM. D. Austin, Editor and Publisher

Flagging is an unwritten law in some parts of the country, even while dusting. Farmers in these areas feel that a pilot cannot possibly do a good job without the aid of flagmen, at least on one end of the field. And, actually, there are many pilots-very conscientious pilots-who can't fly a field properly without flags, and it's a pretty safe bet to say that none of us can do it every time without them. It sort of hurts our pride to think we have to be guided down a perfectly straight row of cotton. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we can't always judge the inconsistent drift, from one swath to another. SO let's reconcile ourselves to the factors which go to make farmer-satisfaction. If he thinks you can do a better job by being flagged, then be flagged. He's paying for the job - IF he's satisfied.

Proper public relations is something of which most operations are a wee mite short. In my

estimation, about 99% percent of both operators are pilots fail to realize exactly who and what is the most important single factor in this relationship. They both seem to think that as long as the operator stops by for a front-porch chat with the farmer, takes him out for coffee once in awhile, makes the proper control recommendations and gen-

erally sells himself to the farmer, then the situation is well in hand. That's all well and good, and highly essential; but Farmer Jones is much concerned about "which pilot are you going to send to do my job?" than he is about how good a Joe the operator happens to be. You, the pilot, are the one responsible for a job properly (or improperly)

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Deke Walker, a 40 thousand hour Ag Pilot picks up Heritage Ag. L.L.C.'s New 2011 Thrush 510 from Mid-Continent Aircraft this week. This joins the other Thrush's sold.

Mission Statement:

We are a leading professional organization committed to the advancement of general and agricultural aviation technology. Our team provides a vital resource to the aviation community and is dedicated to the highest satisfaction and well-being of those we serve.

done; you're the one the farmer pats on the back, and wants to see over his field next time. If some of the farmers you work for don't ask for you, by name, you better get on the ball!

Of course the pilot usually has very little to do with whether or not flagmen are used on a job. That is the operator's concern. But your attitude in the matter sometimes lends considerable weight to the ultimate outcome, and certainly your wholehearted co-operation contributes something to public relations.

Probably the most exacting job, relative to flagging, is encountered during any seeding operation. Not only must the plane be flown at a prescribed height and in a straight line, but also the flagmen must step - better yet, chain-the predetermined swath width accurately; and he must be ready and set in time for the pilot to use his particular flag while in the final stages of the turn-around. I dare say very few flagmen know the importance of their job; the necessity for accuracy and timing on their part. Whose fault is it? Well, it certainly isn't his. It should be thoroughly explained-preferably in the presence of the

operator or farmer, which ever happens to be his boss-that by the time your plane is at a given point, he should be established at this point. It's hard for a man who doesn't fly to know exactly what things look like from your angle, but it's just as easy for him to get into a habit that fulfills a need as to get into one that doesn't. Be sure your flagmen know what is expected of them, and why.

To those of you who may have had trouble selecting the best color to use, let me mention a few of the things we have found out in this regard; results of considerable experimenting in various areas. White, while it is new and bright, is generally a very good marker. But about one trip to the field renders it a tattle-tale gray-which is about the hardest to see of all colors; and, too, white is practically invisible against, say, water. (We found this was true during rice seeding operations.) In choosing colors other than white, the big problem is to find one which has the least tendency to blend with back ground colors. Green and blue, obviously, are out; red, in most cases, works fairly well from short distances but becomes very dim from greater

distances than about half a mile from greater distances than about half a mile (because of its poor light-reflecting qualities, I'm told). Colors in combination, such as checkerboard or bulls eye, tend to blend together from a distance, or the one which does show up well has been reduced to the point of being too small to see.

Through trial-and-error efforts it has been found that yellow - true yellow - is just about the most desirable color for making flags; it reflects light well enough to be seen from any distance, and dirt doesn't affect it nearly so rapidly. Furthermore, yellow can be distinguished against most any background, except a field of the little yellow weeds commonly found in pastures. In this case, the flagman can always move in-field far enough to enable you to use the field you're dusting as the background.

Orange has too much red in it, chartreuse has too much green, etc. Yellow can be readily seen against any rowing crop, water, any type of soil, and is much better during the sunshine-haze which envelopes some parts of the country.

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