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Beware of Drones

As the nation enters the upcoming growing season, the National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) is asking all unmanned aircraft (UA) operators to be mindful of low-altitude manned agricultural aircraft operations. Agricultural aviators treat 127 million acres of cropland in the United States each year and perform a variety of services that help farmers increase productivity and protect their crops.

Drones are not allowed above 400 feet without a waiver from the FAA, and manned agricultural aircraft fly as low as 10 feet off the ground when making an application, meaning they share this low-altitude airspace with drones.

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



While aerial applications are already underway in many parts of the country, operations nationwide will peak during the summer months. In a survey NAAA conducted near the end of the 2022 agricultural aviation season, 22 percent of manned aerial application operators—more than 1 in 5—reported that either they or a pilot flying for them encountered a drone while operating an ag aircraft last year.

Small UAs can be virtually invisible—and potentially lethal—to agricultural aviators, air ambulance helicopters, law enforcement and other low-flying manned aircraft operating in the same airspace. In a [test](#) conducted by the Colorado Agricultural Aviation Association and other stakeholders, including manned and unmanned aircraft organizations, and the state of Colorado, no pilot operating a manned aircraft could continuously visually track a 28-inch-wide drone when flying at regular speeds. While they might be spotted for a second, UAs are not constantly visible to pilots, meaning it is up to the drone operator to avoid a collision.

When birds hit an ag aircraft, they can break through its windshield, causing deadly accidents. A study conducted by the Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE) showed UA collisions with aircraft cause more damage than a bird strike of comparable size would, due partially to unmanned aircraft's dense motors and batteries, as opposed to a bird made mostly of water, feathers, hollow bones and sinew.

story credit: AgAviation.com

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Al and Shanda Allen of Allen Aviation in Aynor, South Carolina are pictured here as the proud owners of their brand-new 710 Turbine Thrush purchased from Mid-Continent. We wish the Allen's a safe and profitable season in their new bird.



Insurable Interest

by Josh Rittenberry

Relief is finally in sight for aviation insurance clients based in Missouri. New interpretations of old state guidelines were essentially aimed to treat aviation insurance the same as auto or homeowners. Those of you who are familiar with aviation insurance know that's impossible. The interpretations became so stringent that several insurance companies closed up shop in the state,

non-renewing or declining to quote any Missouri-based aircraft owners. This has been especially difficult on Ag operators, who have a limited number of markets as compared to general aviation. But general aviation insureds have also faced complications, with fewer or no options for hard-to-place risks.

With the passage of SB101, it is expected that guidelines and interpretations will return to normal, thereby allowing insurance companies to return to writing business in the state.

In politics, changes tend to move at a glacial pace, however, this issue picked up particular steam in the last year with the assistance of groups such as the Missouri Pilots Association and AOPA. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease", as the old saying goes.

In the meantime, the bill is on the governor's desk awaiting his signature, and once signed, the changes will go into effect August 28.

And He's Off!

Congratulations to Lindsay Chandler of Empty Pockets Flying Service on the purchase of his trusty Ag Cat, which becomes the newest member of his already impressive fleet of aircraft. Blue skies and tailwinds!





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**2010 Dream Tundra,
N523MM**

90.0 A/F TT, Aerosport IO375 210 HP, PMA-8000B Switching Panel with 4 Place Intercom and Three Light Markers, Garmin SL-40 Com, Garmin 430 GPS, Garmin GTX-330 Transponder, Garmin 496 GPS (Panel Mounted), Digiflight II Autopilot w/ Altitude Hold, PFD/MFD

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**1938 BOEING STEARMAN
A75 N1
N54284**

6,080.7 A/F TT, 520.4 TSMOH, 450 HP, Garmin SL-40 Com, PS Engineering PM-1200, Oilomatic Preoiler, Airwold Remote Oil Filter Smoker, Speed Ring, 46 Gal Fuel, Redline Brakes, Garmin GDL 82 ADSB-Out

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**1974 CESSNA 150
N3011V**

5,470 A/F TT, 2,100 SMOH, Continental 0200A, Cessna MX300 Nav/Com, Narco AT-50 Transponder w/Encoder, Two-Place Intercom, Spin On Oil Filter, Brackett Air Filter, Auto Gas STC, Nice Pain

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**1966 PIPER PAWNEE
N4484Y**

3,513 A/F TT, 780 TSMOH, 235 HP, Bantam GPS, Intelliflow, SMMker, Spreader, Completely Recovered, Replaced All Cables, Pulleys, Shocks and Windows, Repaired All Metal Parts. Very Clean Western Airplane.

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**2013 THRUSH S2R-H80
N3046N**

3,600 A/F TT, 800 HP, Load Hawg, VGs, Bottom Fuel/Dual Load, Intelliflow with Smart Pump, Leading Edge Lights, Stainless Steel Booms, Hopper Rinse, Bantam, Smoker, Spreader with Kicker Plate, CPs, MVP 50T Glass Panel

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**1978 PIPER PAWNEE
BRAVE
N3787E**

4,559 A/F TT, Lycoming TIO-540, 1851.0 TT Engine, 446 Hrs on New Carbine, Cylinders Top OH, Spreader, Boom & Nozzles, 86 Gal Fuel, Satlock GPS, 3656 Hrs Left on Wing Spars

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**1981 CESSNA A185F
N61955**

7,300 A/F TT, 770 SFRM, Continental IO520, 285 HP, Audio Panel w/ 3 Light Markers, Garmin 430 WAAS, Garmin 255 Com, Garmin GTX 345 w/ ADSM In and Out, Glide Slope, Stormscope, S-TEC-50 Auto Pilot with Altitude Hold, Rosen Sun Visors, VG Kit, Horton STOL Kit, Float Kit, Cessna Turbo Vents for Cabin Cooling, Backup Altimeter, Backup Artificial Horizon

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**1996 AIR TRACTOR
AT-402B
N60998**

7,166 A/F TT, 10253 Engine TT, 680 HP, Load Hawg, Heat & A/C, Comm Radio Hand Held, 1034 Hrs Left Before Wing Spar Due, Light Star SatLoc, Bottom Load Fuel, Boom w/ CP03 Nozzles

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Since 1949, Mid-Continent Aircraft has been the leader in Agricultural Aviation by providing a variety of services that exceed our customers' expectations. We are committed to the advancement of general and agricultural aviation technology.

As we move into each day, we will continue to grow with your business and provide the tools you need to be a success.

Mid-Continent Aircraft Corp. is located in Hayti, Missouri, 80 miles north of Memphis, Tennessee. Although Hayti is not the geographical center of our nation, Mid-Continent is the center for all ag aviation needs. With excellent daily truck freight lines, air freight, Federal Express, and UPS delivery capability, MID-CONTINENT has and will continue to cover the world.

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