The Herbicide Controversy

By Patricia J. Estes

Robert P. Matthews, Washington Forest Protection Association Deputy Director, presented a speech on the topic of "The Herbicide Controversy" at the Washington State Forestry Conference that should be reprinted in total. However, space limits force Relative Wind to condense the message delivered by Matthews at that November 1979 convention. Matthews is also chairman of the Washington State Pest Management Alliance, an informal group of associations concerned over the management of pests, including unwanted vegetation. Matthews opened by noting that no simple answer to the building herbicide controversy exists. He pointed out most effectively that the issue is not even herbicides or chemicals. It is the public fear of being poisoned and that fear must be eased if the controversy is to be solved. The public is not going to respond to economic reasons for use of pesticides when the fear is that of being poisoned. Herbicides provide benefits to each individual in the United States but the anti-herbicide movement wants to control exposure of public to chemicals. The possibility of absolute safety guaranteed is just not practical, he continued.

Looking at the intensity of the attention focused by the anti-spraying forest factor, Matthews suggested that the marijuana connection is one reason why this controversy does not crest and fade. This speaker suggested that the impetus for this continuing controversy comes from the billion dollar untaxed industry growing pot in the U.S. today. If marijuana were legalized, he wonders if the anti-herbicide movement might not diminish. Other factors fanning the anti-herbicide controversy include: lake pollution, Agent Orange, used in Vietnam and the tendency of some organizations to join any battle that is "anti in nature."

Those in the pesticide industry, Matthews said, must be committed to refuting the anti-pesticide movement by science and not emotion. Recognizing this will cost some money. Secondly health fears must be dispelled and efforts trying to justify the use of herbicides purely on economics ended. The public could care less. Simple risk benefit analogies which can be recognized and understood by the public must be publicized.

Third, credibility with agencies such as EPA must be maintained.

Fourthly, those in the industry must speak up as users Continued on Next Page
From Your President
By Bill Beeks, NDAA President

Since beginning to write this column I feel like a bearer of bad news. Part of it is because I am receiving more information from executives and from friends at Vavra, other persons and from news articles and possibly because I have been looking for things of importance to write about. As you are aware, the “Friends of the Earth” petitions are being dealt with. Now Montana is having its problems with 2,4-D sprayed along roadsides and the possibility of an injunction to stop the use of 2,4-D in Montana. It is your president’s personal opinion that other causes could be investigated as a cause of the miscarriages, still births and other problems being blamed onto the phenoxy herbicides. Marijuana is also a causal factor and there may be others, but the problem is to be able to run tests at the time of the incidents to get at the real root of the problem. Part of the answer is to clean up our operations and keep our spray on the target areas.

The air taxi people have had their hands full too. Airport security at the small airports, if carried through, would be unviable for them, the FBO’s on these airports and for the small town airport management. Another area affecting air taxi is increased passenger liability that will further reduce the number of air taxi operators and leave many small towns without any reasonably priced air taxi service. Now Congress is trying to change our aviation gasoline tax to a percentage tax at a rate of 10% of the selling price. This will mean an increase, at present prices, from 100% to 200% in the fuel taxes paid by “noncommercial aviation fuel purchasers”. This means everybody from air taxi, aircraft of 6000 pounds or less, sprayers and on down to the private pilots. This is in the form of H.R. 3745, so write to your Congressmen or women, explaining that the Trust Fund is growing at a rapid rate and the present taxes, why increase this growth rate.

The good news is that environmentalists are reportedly losing ground because of their credibility and the costs associated with their demands.

From Page One
in defense of pesticides when they are unjustly attacked. We must work to make the media aware there is another side to this issue, he said.

Fifth insist on thorough investigation and reporting of anecdotal scare stories.

Face the fact that these stories turn out to be based on real facts and research that it may mean putting a chemical back on the shelf because of the hazard.

Next support and participate in herbicide research by qualified people. Work to supply herbicide use information.

Seventh, be willing to consider alternatives. Don’t have a closed mind.

Work toward professionalism within your own industry. Police your own members.

Finally, realize that the herbicide issue will never be won at the ballot box. The fear and hysteria which have soared on this issue for the past three years have already made their mark on public opinion. No proof of chemical safety will ever satisfy the critics.

Therefore, we must build a broad base of public support for the continued availability of herbicides, according to Matthews.

This topic is of interest to those in NDAA who are aerial sprayers and to all of us who know the importance of meeting the food and fiber needs of a hungry world.

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Thanks EPA

We Really Needed That (Or Did We???)

In February EPA announced a new program. EPA entitles it the "Seek and Find" hazardous waste hotline.

The new program does not include North Dakota but it does include Minnesota, unless we just did not receive the N.D. announcement.

A toll free hazardous waste hotline has been created to encourage citizens to report known or suspected sites where hazardous waste material has been improperly disposed or stored.

The headlines and stories of many rather shocking and disturbing results from problems associated with chemical waste dumps probably spurred this program. And it may be needed if the chemical industry, and that includes aerial sprayers, can't and won't police itself.

So be aware that EPA has begun a program where the public is encouraged to report such observations as dead vegetation, barren spots along a road; dumping of 55 gallon steel drums originally used for shipping of chemicals, etc.

More importantly dispose of hazardous wastes in your own operation properly. Be concerned about the public welfare today and in the future. If we police ourselves, then maybe, just maybe we can forestall any expansion of EPA programs such as this one...because maybe they won't be needed.

RELATIVE WIND

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From Your Secretary

By Jack Daniels, NDAA Secretary

Dear Fellow Operators

We are all in hot water now. The ag boys have the "Friends of the Earth."

The air taxi operators have the NTSB beating on the F.A.A. because we have such a poor safety record.

The up shot of the problems, with the flying, for the ATCO certificate holders is the onslaught of recurrent training.

All of us who have been certificated under new FAR 135 are rapidly moving toward the first go 'round with recurrent training according to our tentatively approved Flight Training Manuals.

For me that poses somewhat of a problem. How about some of you other operators? The biggest area of concern, it seems to me, is understanding what is really required and getting those requirements completed.

Toward this end, some of you who are operating more than one pilot and one airplane will be getting a letter soon asking you to come to Bismarck sometime in April to sit in on a meeting with people from Fargo in a shirt sleeve session designed to help us understand what is really happening.

The slide by approach to FAR 135 training is no longer acceptable. Some kind of a program, available to our area ATCO certificate holders must be developed or we will see some supervision of certificates.

We have moved into the Real World of professional transportation providers and are going to have to get to be professionally trained and perform to professional standards.

More on the meeting as time will allow and a firm date can be set.

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March-April 1980

RELATIVE WIND
What Goes Up Must Come Down
But Some Ways Are Better...

By Patricia J. Estes
For whatever the reason...gravity, fuel supply...arrival at destination...the following is certainly true in aviation: what goes up must come down.

However, safety seminars conducted at various locations this winter, show rather dramatically that some planes come down with tragic results. While the goal is a safe landing at the designated destination, that goal is not always met. Why not and other questions were addressed at these seminars which are part of an overall volunteer pilot safety program.

Speakers at the Fargo seminar, held at NDSU, included: local GADO officials, an accident prevention specialist from Minneapolis and Bob Bissonette, Minnesota Commissioner of Aeronautics.

The seminar was punctuated by slide presentation of mostly small planes that crashed, a dramatic show of landings to be avoided.

In 1979 in North Dakota there were 46 reported accidents with 17 major ones resulting in injuries or structural damage to the planes. There were three weather related fatalities and two serious injuries.

In looking at the cause and effects of accidents, the pilots in attendance were told that planes in general were well designed, safe, and forgiving plus the pilot was healthy. Every accident started out with those conditions.

Factor number one in accidents is that aircraft are not indestructible. Factor number two is the pilot and his attitude.

Continued on Next Page

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Pilots from additional seminar study accidents or are frequenting accidents. The pilots repeat the same type of accidents year after year. The only new factor probably is which pilot is behind the wheel. On looking at accident types, the goal should be to learn from the experiences of others without committing that same goof on our own. Learn from the cause and realize in doing that no judgment is intended of the pilot in the accident understudy.

One accident discussed at the seminar was due to fuel starvation. In this case a student pilot with only 1/2 full fuel tanks decided to take off when no additional supply was available. He proceeded to practice touch and go landings. Forced to land in a crisis situation, he landed fairly well in a farm yard until he hit a truck, losing a wing. The pilot was not injured seriously.

Fuel supply is going to be critical with a 30% avg shortage reported in this area this year. Pilots must consider this in making plans.

The next accident considered had a pilot, with a commercial license. He had logged no flying time in the previous 90 days. He was enroute to an appointment for a maintenance check on a plane having problems.

After a down wind departure, the engine malfunctioned. The pilot tried to return and impacted near the air strip.

The area was well suited for landing and a field landing without an accident was possible. However, the pilot opted to stick with the decision to return in the exact pattern in which he had departed. He overshot the approach, tried again and stalled and then impacted.

Investigation revealed the plane had exhaust muffler damage which interfered with safe operation. The pilot could have checked that out on his own—prior to take-off.

The third accident occurred in the Missoula, Mo. area. A highway there goes through the mountains at a spot known as Beavers Cut. On a beautiful summer day a private plane was westbound. Power lines from the east cross the highway and then head back east. These lines were obscured by trees. There was nothing to alert the pilot to the fact the lines might cross over.

The pilot was flying at a low level according to observers. It is likely he was looking over the beautiful scenery when he hit the power lines. Both he and his wife were killed. The pilot had failed to observe FAA regulations.

The fourth accident discussed was of the buzzing type. A pilot had won a skeet shoot. He took off and immediately began buzzing other shooters, diving steeply and pulling up. On the third pass the plane ascended.

Continued on Next Page
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after the dive to about 150 feet altitude and then plunged into the river. The pilot and his small son were killed.

Investigation revealed the aircraft had been modified with an interior tank. The young boy was lying on this tank and became a projectile upon impact. Had he been strapped into a seat, survival was a possibility.

Moving to the fifth accident presentation, the audience heard about a pilot taking off from a private farm strip. His intent was to show friends a ¼ clover leaf. On the dive portion, the pitch oscillated, slanting the nose down to a flat descent with impact following. The plane burned on impact and the pilot and passenger were killed. Accidents of the last two are related to careless, reckless flights showing poor pilot judgement, the speaker stated.

Weather played a factor in the next two accidents discussed. In the first one a highly experienced pilot, VFR rated, encountered snow showers. He attempted to fly through the snow showers instead of returning or flying around them. Soon he was in an area where visibility was rated as 0-0.

This resulted in loss of control and a crash due to lack of orientation. Fortunately the pilot and passenger survived. The other weather related accident occurred in North Dakota just before Christmas 1979.

Weather at that time was foggy, with a low ceiling, freezing rain and drizzle. The pilot was possibly a victim of "get thereitis," anxious to reach the destination in time for Christmas.

After waiting out the weather for three days, the pilot and family departed at night, flying below cloud level.

The plane began to build ice. In fact a heavy load of ice accumulated. There was no deicing equipment or lights on the plane. As the plane approached for a landing, the gear was lowered. The plane was stalled and impacted, hitting flat. It slide across the field, through a fence and up a road. The wheels sheared right up through the wings. That was the only reason this accident was not fatal. Had the gear been up there would have been no way to absorb the energy of that impact.

The last accident presented was a landing type accident. The pilot attempted to land in a farm field. The plane caught a power line and the pilot had landed there before. In this case he either forgot about the power line or did not take proper precaution. The plane flipped. The pilot received serious injuries.

A pointer to avoid overshooting, the audience was told, is to select where the plane will land ... not just on the runway but at what point on that runway.

Accidents are 100% preventable through increasing knowledge of the plane, regulations; upgrading skills as a pilot and maintaining a professional attitude.

Next: In the next Relative Wind, the issue of cold weather flying will be addressed.
More Proposed Part 135 Regulations

CAB has proposed a change in passenger insurance and insurance coverage on bodily injury and loss or damage to property. This would affect all air carriers. That manages to lump PART 135 Air Taxi Certificate Holders right along with the big boys.

The deadline for comments is April 15. We make no attempt in this issue of Relative Wind to detail the proposed rule making changes. Both time and space did not allow this.

However, we urge those concerned with this issue to contact Harold Vavra, director of the N. D. Aeronautics Commission, for information on this proposal.

Vavra can also explain the procedure for sending comments to CAB on this issue prior to the deadline.

You may have read in other communications that the deadline was March 15 for comments on these proposed insurance requirement changes. However, latest news from Washington, D.C. is that the deadline was extended to April 15.

Future issues of Relative Wind will follow progress of this proposal and report on its possible effect to PART 135 Air Taxi Certificate Holders (ATCO).

It is apparent that if this proposal passes as originally reported by Vavra, insurance costs will climb, adding to the overall energy and inflation costs already hitting the aviation industry.

The proposal overlooks the fact that an on-demand air taxi operator deals on a one to one basis with his customer and is not a common air carrier.

Future issues of Relative Wind will continue to follow this proposal through the labyrinth known as Washington, D.C. bureaucracy.

Transponders

The message regarding transponders at a recent North Dakota aviation seminar was brief. Transponders must be well maintained. This means periodic inspections at prescribed intervals in approved shops by trained technicians. If you don’t have a transponder, get one. If you have one, keep it maintained.

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Reduce pesticide, use less water

CROOKSTON—Reduce pesticide consumption anywhere from one-half to two-thirds. Use only one gallon of water per acre instead of the usual 5 to 20 gallons. It sounds almost too good to be true. But FMC Corporation is developing an electrostatic sprayer that was the brainchild of Dr. S.E. Law, University of Georgia agricultural engineer. He explained the revolutionary new sprayer to sugarbeet growers attending the 1980 Sugarbeet Growers Institute here (Mar. 19-20).

And while the electrostatic sprayer has been extensively tested only on cotton in the South, North Dakota State University agronomists see no reason why the sprayer wouldn't work as well on broad-leaved crops grown in the area.

The principle of the sprayer is to apply a negative electrical charge to very fine spray particles. The particles are atomized and blown into the plant canopy by a high pressure air stream. Once the particles are within the canopy and their momentum slows, the electrostatic forces draw the negatively charged droplets to the positive charge in the plant leaves and stems. When the droplets are deposited, the electrical charge immediately disperses and the particles are neutralized. The pesticide covers the plant uniformly in very small drops. Charged particles drift less, putting the pesticide on the plant rather than in the atmosphere.

Join NDAA

Are you a current paid up member of NDAA? If not, why not? NDAA is the state organization representing the aviation industry.

NDAA is ready to lobby for needed state legislation or to speak out on issues that affect the aviation industry. NDAA belongs to the national association and provides a voice in Washington for you. Aviation is facing some critical issues...fuel, increasing regulations, problems caused by spiraling inflation.

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A 12-row sprayer now being produced can perform at 4 miles per hour effectively and cover 15 acres per hour, 150 acres in 10 hours. With two 150 gallon tanks on each side and the recommended rate of only 1 gallon of water per acre, the machine can run all day without stopping for refills.

The power source for the electrostatic charging is a standard 12-volt battery complete with a transistorized circuit box smaller than a pack of cigarettes. Earlier machines of this type were not consistently effective because the cloud of dust or spray lost its charge before it was attracted to the plants. The Law-designed sprayer will monitor the cloud charge and automatically adjust the electrical input as needed to get the proper cloud charge and the maximum amount of pesticide deposited on the plants.

The sprayer has been tested primarily for application of insecticides to cotton but the sprayer also did an excellent job of defoliating several hundred acres of cotton and the application volume was sharply reduced. Performances of herbicides and fungicides which require good coverage would also be expected to be improved by the electrostatic sprayer.

Company officials expect that the sprayer will retail for about $50,000. Depending on the number of applications per year and the acres covered, the rig should pay for itself in two to three years since the operator can reduce to half rates or less of pesticides with the same results as full rates.

The manufacturing company officials haven't found a way to make the electrostatic principle work for aerial spraying. And they say also that they don't expect their machines to wipe out the agricultural aviation industry. Even those growers who use ground rigs still have to call in an airplane about 25 percent of the time when conditions are not suitable to operate a ground rig.

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