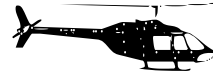


Flight Lines



EIGHTH EDITION

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2008 FMCA Aerial Short Course Highlights

This year's Florida Mosquito Control Association (FMCA) Aerial Short Course at Lee County Mosquito Control in Fort Meyers was very well attended, and attracted aerial applicators from all over the United States including California, Utah, Iowa, New Jersey, Georgia and South Carolina -- just to name a few. International attendees included representatives from Greece, Italy and Canada.

The program kicked off Tuesday afternoon with a three-part presentation on Hillsborough County's King Air project. I started off with an overview of the project and some of the hurdles we have had to overcome; Andy Mendolia from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) presented slides depicting the design process, fabrication and final product, and discussed the key objectives and timeline, and finally Wayne Daniels from Pasco County Mosquito Control District outlined the development of his high-pressure spray system and how he had adapted it for use in the King Air.

Pilot training was conducted during the first "Pilot Break-Out" session, for which the aviators moved to another location while the administrators discussed the finer points of meteorology and its effect on droplet deposition. The pilots received some ground training on Night Vision Goggles (NVGs), as well as a presentation on L-3 Communications, Inc.'s Infra-Red Imaging System (IRIS). Using NVGs, the participants took a short tour of the airfield by golf cart for familiarization, after consuming a tasty

hot supper. One golf cart was equipped with the IRIS camera and video screen, allowing for comparison between the two types of technology. In my opinion, the light amplification system (NVGs) provided superior overall clarity when unhampered by bright lights, but the infra-red device performed better when viewing lighted objects, as it was not subject to the glare or "halo" seen through NVGs. The earlier discussion of the Federal Aviation Administration's impending regulation of NVG usage, the difficulty and expense of modifying aircraft lighting systems for use with NVGs and the requirement for specialized pilot training, currency and regular equipment calibration associated with NVGs combined to make the infra-red technology more and more attractive, especially to fixed-wing operators.



Wednesday morning started off with a series of low fly-by's of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to illustrate the effect of rotor vortices - depicted by helium balloons tethered on the flight line. Most impressive was a couple of very low passes from a United States Air Force C-130 spraying water to demonstrate their bulk larviciding capability.

Later that morning, representatives from the Florida Keys, Manatee County, Pasco County and Chatham County (Georgia) Mosquito Control Districts took turns discussing their use of GIS/GPS technology in connecting surveillance to trapping to flight guidance information for larviciding and adulticiding operations.

During the lunch break Dwight Junkin, owner-operator of Composite FX arrived after a five-hour drive from Trenton, Florida, towing a trailer containing a Mosquito XE single-seat ultra light helicopter. Soon after the helicopter was unloaded onto the flight line it was surrounded by curious onlookers, pilots and non-pilots alike, with cameras and camcorders at the ready. Due to an approaching weather front the winds were increasing steadily, easily 15 – 20 knots with frequent stronger gusts, and the general consensus was that the tiny 400-pound helicopter would not be able to fly in such conditions. Jaws dropped and nay-sayers were silenced however, when pilot Mark Thompson not only brought the little machine to a stable hover, but proceeded to complete a slow 360 - degree hovering turn, pausing to hover with the tail directly into the wind for a full minute, demonstrating the helicopter's remarkable controllability.



One pilot was later overheard to comment "*that shut my mouth!*"

Afterward we relocated the helicopter next to Lee County's giant mosquito sculpture for a "photo op." LCMCD's mosquito was actually larger than the Mosquito XE!

Wednesday afternoon Simplex Manufacturing Inc. discussed their project to equip Lee County's Bell 407 helicopter with a ULV system, and Adapco and Clarke Mosquito Control each gave a presentation on their respective guidance systems; Adapco's Wingman GX and Clarke's newly developed Flightmaster. The day finished off with a tour of the visiting aircraft and spray equipment parked on the flight-line for display.

The second Pilot Breakout Session was held Thursday morning, while the administrators held a symposium on pesticide label language and regulatory issues. Lee County Sheriff/pilot Robert Roper gave an in-depth lecture on in-flight fires and other emergencies, with a sobering factoid that the average amount of time a pilot has to respond to an in-flight fire is about 18 minutes, before aircraft controllability is lost completely. We finished up the morning with a block of instruction on putting together an effective Power Point Presentation (given by me) accompanied by a handout of "cheat sheets" and useful tips.





The final presentation on Thursday morning was a video put together by Lee County Mosquito Control District set to music celebrating their 50 years of history as an organization. Afterwards their maintenance hangar was cleared, cleaned and decorated to hold a celebratory 50th birthday luncheon. Wayne Gale introduced past directors, commissioners and other VIP guests, including Florida Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp, and T. Wayne Miller, the first director of LCMCD, who spoke of the difficulties faced by the early pioneers of mosquito control. He said that shortly after the very first mosquito control district was established in Indian River in 1925, it was promptly served with a lawsuit by a citizens group who proclaimed strongly that mosquitoes were an "act of God" and that any attempt to control them was a waste of their precious tax dollars. A year later when St. Lucie County passed a similar bill to establish a mosquito control district, they titled it the St. Lucie "Sanitation District" in order to avoid a similar lawsuit. Although the bill passed, there was no funding for that organization, and the first commis-



sioners resorted to borrowing \$3,000 via a signature note from a local citizen. They deposited the money in a local bank which went bankrupt a few days later and took their money with it!

As always, the meals were wonderfully prepared by LCMCD's army of inspectors (I think they must have "cooking" listed in their job description.) Mark Latham and Shelly Redovan kept everything running smoothly and on schedule, and Frank Clarke was the gracious host of the annual Anvil dinner that has come to be a long-standing tradition at the Fly-in. I'm pleased to report that everyone behaved reasonably well and we ARE welcome back at that hotel again next year (although one individual was awarded a makeshift trophy the following morning for his demonstrated skill in "deck landings.") All in all it was another great event - thanks to all the great people at LCMCD and the FMCA who worked so hard to make it all happen!

- Pam



Left, a mammoth C-131 spray-plane from Beaufort, South Carolina, competes for ramp space with LCMCD's C-47's.



*To see more pictures from
the Fly-in, go to our website:
www.fmcpa.org*

