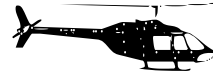


Flight Lines



THIRD EDITION

NOVEMBER 2006

JACKSONVILLE

The Florida Mosquito Control Pilots Association held our second Safety and Training Seminar in Jacksonville on the 26th of October, and expanded our ranks to include two pilots from Chatham County Mosquito Control: Scott Yackel and Mark Hansen. Welcome aboard, Chatham, our northernmost county....

Apart from me and Mike Muench we also had the Jacksonville folks: Mike Vigus, Peter Leone and Ron Salmon; Luis Sanchez, Wayne Webb and Joe Carney drove down from Citrus; and Chris Laidlaw-Bell, Kent LeBailly and Ralph Hall flew up from Collier in their Skyvan. Not a bad turnout. Jacksonville's operations folks kindly provided coffee and donuts, and more coffee, and even gave everybody a goody bag of PR items to take home. Thanks very much for the hospitality!

I want to get this newsletter out before the fall FMCA Seminar to give everybody a chance to make their feelings known to the Legislative Committee on the continued support for legislation to get Mosquito Control pilots classified as "Special Risk" for retirement under the Florida Retirement System, so if there are any misspellings or grammar mistakes, cut me some slack.

We talked about a lot of good subjects, and I'll try to recap the discussions in the rest of the newsletter for those who weren't able to attend.

Pam

Special Risk Legislation at Risk

Last year the FMCA Legislative Committee was able to get Senator Burt Saunders (R-Naples), and Representative Mike Davis (R-Naples) to sponsor SB 1822 and HB 897, respectively, in order to include Mosquito Control Pilots in the "Special Risk" category for retirement under the Florida Retirement System (FRS). Both bills made it (slowly) through a number of committees and councils, only to die a slow death as the clock ticked down on the legislative session.

The consensus of opinion seems to be that 1) There is a strong aversion in both houses, particularly the Senate, to letting anyone else into the "special risk" club, and 2) There aren't enough people affected (i.e. mosquito control pilots) in order to make it worth their time to consider. The very fact that there aren't enough of us to have a financial impact is actually our undoing!

The FMCA Legislative Committee appears to be reluctant to pursue this further, after having championed it for quite a number of years. If we're to get them to even consider another attempt, we will have to assure them of a strong show of support from the pilots. The only way this legislation will come to pass is if we make a whole heck of a lot of noise, through a letter writing campaign, personal visits to congressmen, whatever we can think of to make our voices heard.

One change that was proposed at the meeting was that we should expand the category to include "air crew members;" those non-rated crewmembers who regularly fly with us during our restricted category missions. After all, one of the two crewmembers killed in the recent Polk County accident was not a rated pilot.

(special risk, cont.)

The upcoming elections no doubt also had a lot to do with the bills not getting consideration, as legislators were anxious to pass legislation that might affect their re-election. Hopefully after the mid-term elections things will settle down and those of us with little political influence will have a chance.

The first step, if we want to continue to pursue this, is for each and every one of us to contact our Legislative Committee and urge them to continue to push for this legislation, and pledge our loud and boisterous support. They are:

Doug Carlson: dcarlson1@hotmail.com

Dennis Moore: dmoore@pascomosquito.org

Tell them we will write letters, we will have our friends and relatives write letters, and do whatever it takes to help push this legislation through. They can't do it alone after all, and they won't try again unless we ask them.

Next, let's start putting together a video that will give legislators an idea of what we do, while emphasizing the importance of aerial assets to mosquito control in Florida. And we need to put across the point that we can't get life insurance for what we do – well, we can, thanks to Mark Latham and the Manatee folks, and that's something we'll discuss at the Fly-in... In the meantime, get busy and send out those e-mails. Today.

FMCA AERIAL SHORT COURSE

LEE COUNTY MCD

JANUARY 16-18, 2007

DACS is bringing their

Precision Flight Simulator!

Contact Pam Jacobson at

Knightp@hillsboroughcounty.org

With Ideas and Subject Matter

For the Pilot Forum

PPPPLLLLLLEEEEEAAAASSSSSEEEEE

Homeland Security And Agricultural Aircraft

How Secure Are We, Really?

Luis Sanchez gave a presentation on security considerations for agricultural aircraft, emphasizing that no amount of locks, cameras and alarms can keep out the person no one considers during their risk assessment process: The pilots. Due to our need to operate after business hours and have access to aircraft, equipment and chemicals, we often fly "under the radar" and come and go as we please. We and our families are soft targets for terrorists who wouldn't hesitate to torture a small child if that's what it took to coerce cooperation from his father in pursuit of his deadly goals. There are many biological and chemical weapons easily formulated (instructions are on the internet!) which could be released in dry form, liquid or aerosol (ULV). Our equipment is already set up for such types of dispersion, and many of us fly in highly controlled airspace where a small "ag" plane wouldn't have access.

So what is the solution? Each one of us needs to consider what kinds of targets we have in our areas of operation (sports stadiums, fairgrounds, schools, parades, political rallies and events) and determine how a terrorist might try to attack these places. Forewarned is forearmed. Had the passengers on the planes that hit the world trade center known then what we know now, they would have fought back, as the "shoe-bomber" found out just a few months later. If we are thinking about it and keeping our eyes open, we might notice something amiss and be able to act before it is too late.

There are no hard and fast answers, but we all need to formulate a plan; develop a code by which we can alert the authorities if something is wrong. We hate to make it any more difficult or complicated to do our jobs, but we have to give some serious thought to security. Every organization is different, and will have to deal with this threat in their own way. This is one situation where standardization is a bad thing. If the terrorists decide to attack five different

organizations, they will have to decipher five different security protocols.

In summary, we all agreed there's a serious gap in security, and we need to seal it before the TSA spots it and shuts us down, or worse yet, the terrorists figure it out.

Obstacle Marking and Avoidance

What started out to be a presentation on the need to strengthen regulations regarding the lighting and marking of towers and other obstacles turned into a sobering review of accident statistics of agricultural aircraft. Over the last ten years there have been 980 accidents involving agricultural aircraft, resulting in 122 fatalities. Of those, 147, or 15 percent, involved aircraft striking a tower, power lines, guy wires, or something of the sort.

While we like to think that we operate in a different world than ag pilots, with better maintenance, better equipment, better training, etc., the truth is that we fly in a similar environment, with similar risks and hazards.

In a surprising number of accident reports, the pilot reported that he knew the wires were there, and had even flown over or under them several times before striking them.

Another eerie trend we noticed in reviewing the accident reports, was that most of the pilots had high levels of experience. We're talking ten, fifteen, twenty THOUSAND hours.

Why are so many high-time pilots hitting power lines? Distraction (programming their GPS), visibility (gray wires against overcast sky, sun glare on the windscreen), and overwhelmingly, complacency.

How can we avoid these kinds of accidents?

1) Good Crew Resource Management. Most of us have at least a non-rated crewmember with us when we fly our night missions – for good reason. There's a lot going on in the cockpit, programming the GPS, setting up our spray runs, turning the equipment on and off,

monitoring the gauges, while maintaining course, altitude and airspeed. And at 200 – 300 feet AGL, *somebody* better be looking outside. The problems start when we both get distracted by something in the cockpit; an instrument reading, navigation, changing a radio frequency. We need to make sure we always announce when we change our focus from outside to in, and inside to out, and make sure someone is focused outside at all times.

2) Develop good mental discipline and safety habits. Sometimes it's tempting to skip our aerial recon and start right into spraying an area that we sprayed just yesterday or last week. Do it anyway; towers and wires can go up literally overnight; and a number of accident reports described poles that were hidden by vegetation, with wires running between them.

3) Safety Seminars like this one give us a chance to talk about safety considerations, and remind us that we *are* mortal, after all.

4) Conducting a pre-mission reconnaissance, if possible, during the daylight before a night flight helps us identify potential hazards. For us in Hillsborough County, one of those hazards is bee sites: We're still fighting a 20-year-old lawsuit over a bee kill.

5) Check NOTAMS. The lights on the tower that the VDCI airplane struck in Polk County in 2004 were NOTAMed as being inop.

6) Improve visibility of Obstacles. This is a difficult thing to do, as the FAA primarily



Accidents happen – 98 times a year!

concerns itself with “navigable airspace,” and 200 – 300 feet AGL isn’t considered such unless it’s in close proximity to an airport. The FCC regulates a number of towers, but it’s often difficult to find out who owns what tower and how it is regulated. Often you can’t tell the light is burned out until you fly up on it at night.

Lee County Mosquito Control District has been running some trials using reflective tape in a distinctive pattern that makes towers easier to distinguish. They have gotten their Board of County Commissioners to pass an ordinance requiring all new construction to have this tape. Hopefully they will give us an update on their progress at the Fly-In in January.

Larvicide Use Survey Results

Mike Muench presented the results of the Larvicide Use Survey, so far:

To date, we have received input from seven counties as to larvicide types and formulations in use for aerial applications. The results are as follows:

Pesticide of choice: bacillus Thuringiensis Israelensis, in liquid or granular formulation. Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Jacksonville, Collier and Citrus Counties listed it as (one of) their primary larvicides, in granular form, and Manatee and Charlotte County are using it in the Aqueous Solution.

In addition to bti, Manatee listed Abate (Temephos) as their other primary larvicide, and Jacksonville listed Golden Bear oil, both inexpensive and convenient to use. Everybody seems to agree that the bti is environmentally friendly, relatively inexpensive and the granules are a bit more effective in the heavier vegetation than liquid formulations.

Secondary larvicides in use appear to be primarily Altosid in pellet, XRG granule, and liquid formulations. All seem to agree that it is useful in smaller areas such as catch basins and retention ponds, where the extended residual benefits outweigh the increased cost of the product. Manatee and Hillsborough are

also using VectoLexCG (baccillus Sphaericus) to get some residual effect against the Culex Nigripalpus, and Manatee has also been using it in the “wettable dry granule” form for about three years.

Mark Latham writes that “liquid formulations are cheaper than granular formulations” and “allow treatment of 3x the acreage per load.” Whether using Vectobac-12AS, Abate-4E or Altosid-5%, Manatee prefers to apply the pesticide mix at .5 gallons per acre, so they can treat 120 acres per load, versus 40 for bti granules. That may be how Charlotte County manages to treat a whopping 30,000 acres annually with just one Huey. The only drawback, according to Mark, is that the liquid formulations “will not effectively penetrate all canopies.”

As for equipment, the breakdown is as follows:

- Hillsborough: 1 Bell 206 helicopter with liquid and dry Isolair systems;
- Manatee: 2 Hughes-500D helicopters with liquid and dry Isolair systems;
- Jacksonville: 3 Schweizer 300 helicopters with in-house systems and 1 Piper Pawnee airplane with a commercially acquired dry ram air vane type spreader;
- Charlotte: 1 UH-1H with an Isolair wet system;
- Citrus: 1 Bell 206 helicopter with an Isolair dry broadcaster;
- Collier: 1 Hughes 500D with Isolair wet and dry systems and an Isolair bucket for pellets;
- Miami-Dade: 1 A-Star 350B2 which they plan to outfit with a dry system (not yet in use.)

Average acres treated came in at 10,057 – Charlotte kinda skewed that one with their 30,000 acres. Manatee averages a healthy 15,700 acres, after that it tapers off down to zero for Miami-Dade, who is putting together a package for the 2007 season.

Primary habitat treated seems to be salt marsh, with that pesky Ochlerotatus Taeniorhynchus being most pestiferous, and the Culex Nigripalpus being most worrisome, from a public health standpoint.

Conclusions? There are a lot of good products out there, and an effective larviciding program takes advantage of the strong points of each, to use it where it will achieve the best effect. We see strong argument for trying out the liquid bti here in Hillsborough County, especially in the flatter areas to the south, during periods when there is a lot of acreage to treat. If we could spray eight loads and cover the same acreage that would normally take twenty, we could effectively double our daily treatment maximum without breaking anybody's back... (Twenty loads is a hundred 40-pound bags, four thousand pounds total per loader; they tend to get kind of tired and cranky about load sixteen).

This was good information, but we'd like to see a bit more participation. If you haven't yet returned a questionnaire -- and if your county wasn't mentioned, guess what, you didn't -- please, please, please do so, and we'll revisit the results at the Fly-in!

Larvicide Use Questionnaire

1. What larvicide (brand name and formulation) do you primarily use?
2. How long have you been using it?
3. Why did you choose this larvicide and formulation?
4. What is your alternate larvicide (brand name and formulation)?
5. How long have you been using it?
6. Why did you choose this larvicide and formulation?
7. When or where do you use your alternate larvicide?
8. What kind of habitat (salt marsh, pastures, ponds, etc.) do you primarily treat?
9. Do you have an alternate procedure for treating pupa? Or do you just let it hatch off?
10. How many acres do you larvicide annually (average)?
11. What aircraft do you use for larviciding (number and type)?
12. What spray systems do you have on these aircraft for larviciding? (Isolair wet-boom, dry broadcaster, homebuilt, etc.)