



# AIR AG NEWS

AIRCRAFT IN AGRICULTURE

Volume 15 • Number 4 • November 1999

## ENDO CHECK SUCCESS

Upwards of eighty aircraft have now been checked and found to comply with the mandatory and advisory requirements of the new endosulfan label for 1999, thanks to a program run by AAAA.

Sponsorship by CRDC and AgrEvo enabled the program to cover operators throughout the cotton fields, with additional checking being undertaken by SprayCheck and C-PAS as part of their ongoing work once the coordinated program was completed.

Aircraft flew in to check days at Emerald, Dalby, Moree, Wee Waa and Warren, and AAAA thanks those operators who 'lent' their bases for the day.

What the program clearly showed is that many operators are either

already at, or rapidly moving towards, best practice with shorter, lower booms and large droplet placement practices that help to reduce drift – something that is critical if we are to retain access to chemicals such as endosulfan.

The aircraft checked were also flown over a multi-test array to provide information to operators on what sort of pattern their aircraft are putting out. Again, results were very encouraging with operators clearly taking pride in having a good pattern – something that doesn't hurt productivity either.

The whole issue of productivity is set to become even more important as LDP technology, which generally means narrower swaths, higher volumes and more cycles, is used more. This has already meant more

aircraft required for the same hectareage, an eventual need for more pilots, and almost inevitably a price increase. All this in the face of unfair (and in NSW completely unlicensed) competition from ground rigs.

If ever there was a need for the fabled 'level playing field' this is it – it is certainly what AAAA is pursuing on your behalf.

The endo check program was not only a chance for aircraft to be ticked off, but it presented a great opportunity for pilots and operators to get together to discuss the endosulfan issue as well as other areas of common interest.

AAAA is now working on ways to make such a check program a more permanent feature of our activities, and obviously not just for cotton.

AAAA extends its congratulations to cotton operators who provided such great support to the program, thanks to SprayCheck and C-PAS for their professionalism and genuine concern in helping operators, and our great appreciation to our sponsors CRDC and AgrEvo for making the program possible.



## CHLORPYRIFOS REVIEW

The National Registration Authority (NRA) has conducted a comprehensive review of chlorpyrifos and has issued a draft document entitled 'Proposed Regulatory Approach for Chlorpyrifos'. The AAAA office has a copy of this document and has already distributed it to members with e-mail.

The NRA Board will consider the draft approach in December 1999,

and it will be released for public comment over a two month period in January – February 2000.

Many of the proposed regulatory changes appear to relate to pest control and around-the-home use, although there are significant changes proposed for our industry.

Of interest are proposed label changes that require a minimum downwind buffer of 100m from

sensitive areas for non-cotton use and 300m for aerial treatment of cotton; the use of a spray drift management strategy such as is outlined in the SpraySafe 'Pilots and Operators Manual'; and a requirement that application not occur if heavy rains or storms are forecast within two days.

For more information, contact the AAAA office, or the NRA direct on 02 6272 5158 (switch).

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the new look *Air Ag News*. We have attempted to make the newsletter easier to read, and more responsive to your needs – more input from client industries, regulators and others so you can get it from the horse's mouth, as well as a range of new 'columns' that will enable you to have your say.

At the same time, we have tried to build on the great work of Peter Weatherstone to keep the newsletter relevant to you.

Contributions are welcome (actually depended on), especially to the 'Bugger' column – aimed at helping us learn with a laugh. Anything you think your fellow pilots and operators might find useful is appreciated.

It's your industry, and this is your newsletter – get into it.

Phil

## SURF REPORT

Seen a good site?? Let us know.  
[www.abc.net.au/rural/news](http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news)  
[www.basi.gov.au](http://www.basi.gov.au)  
[www.casa.gov.au](http://www.casa.gov.au)  
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[www.agrevo.com.au](http://www.agrevo.com.au)  
[www.barnstormers.com](http://www.barnstormers.com)

## COTTON SELF-REGULATION

The cotton industry, through the Australian Cotton Industry Council of which AAAA is a member, has been pursuing self-regulation since the endosulfan problems of last year.

AAAA's position has been that we are unable to express a yes/no opinion on the self-regulation documents tabled at the recent ACIC meeting without hearing what the grass-roots growers feel about such an industry program.

## FAREWELL TO PETER AND MARION

I can't let this issue of AAN go by without mention of Peter Weatherstone's (and Marion's) retirement on the 22nd of October from the position of Executive Officer.

I have no doubt that Peter's wise counsel over many years has ensured that this industry has avoided many of the pitfalls that have confronted AAAA and its members.

Importantly, Peter is leaving the Association in excellent financial health, with a clear and positive direction for the future, with a strong and united membership and with a standing with stakeholders that is the envy of many other industry associations.

## SPRAYSAFE ENQUIRIES/AAAA'S NEW OFFICE

The new office will be 'officially' opened later in the year, following a major refurbishment of the building, but it is already in full operation.

Peter Weatherstone has retired from AAAA as Executive Officer after 14 years of service, but Peter will continue to manage the Spraysafe examination process until March 2000.

All Spraysafe enquiries should be directed to the new office, where they will be referred to Peter for follow up.

Peter and Marion's support in the recent handover period has been instrumental in me getting up to speed so quickly on so many issues and I thank them for their help.

There is no doubt I would not have the luxury of embarking on new programs without Peter and Marion's hard work to get us to this point and their vision for what this industry can achieve.

Peter and Marion will be sorely missed, and I hope I can continue the very high standard of great service to the industry that they have set.

Phil Hurst

The new office is actually on the site of the original Canberra aerodrome at Dickson, but the office is now in the middle of one of Canberra's main shopping/restaurant areas. Importantly it is only 10 minutes away from our key regulators (CASA, BASI, NRA) and Parliament House.

If you are in the area, make sure to drop in and help keep us up to date with what is happening in the real world.

ACIC, at a Board teleconference on 11 October, passed the following resolution unanimously:

'That whilst maintaining our commitment to self-regulation, ACIC agrees to withdraw the code and application on self regulation, for further consultation with member bodies and growers.'

As a result the cotton self-regulation process is currently 'paused', while Cotton Australia goes back to its members.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE RICE INDUSTRY

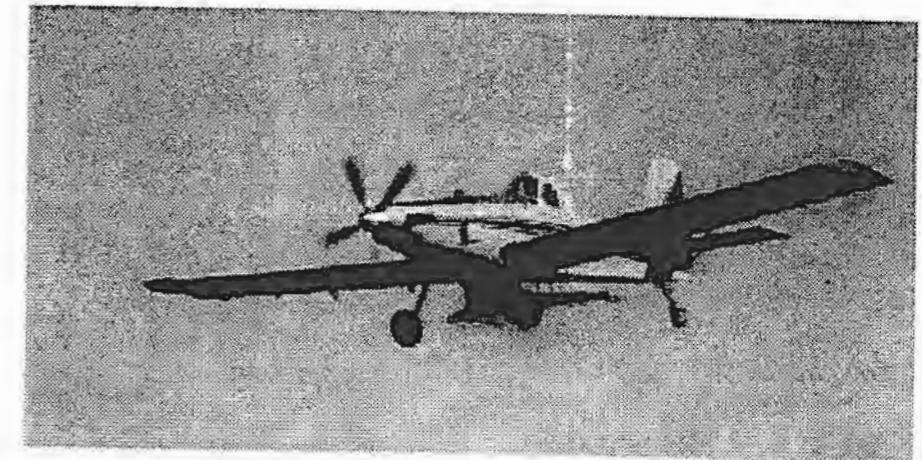
The rice industry on the Murrumbidgee and Murray river systems has reached a peak of 1.4 million tonnes paddy from 150,000 ha and is now subject to water limitations. In order to remain viable, continuing yield increases, greater water efficiency and better quality grain is needed.

The rice industry quality assurance program commences on-farm and moves through the drying, storage, processing and marketing chain. This program is driven by government legislation and the supermarket chains and consumers demand for safe, quality food.

Quality assurance can have two parts, **food quality** and **food safety**. Food quality is addressed in the industry premium payments arising from the paddy appraisal scheme. The rice industry has therefore targeted food safety at the farm level.

### Physical contaminants

Growers must minimise or eliminate the foreign matter hazards from paddy deliveries. The undesirable contaminants include glass, plastic, metal, gravel, soil, sticks, foreign seeds, fertiliser, animal matter and mouldy grain. *The Pure Foods Act* has zero tolerance on foreign matter.



Most growers act responsibly and do the right thing in the realisation that they are shareholders in their own industry. But some 5% can spoil the result for everyone with their disregard for the necessary hygiene. This year, growers must sign a declaration certifying that they have conducted pre-harvest maintenance checks, cleaned the equipment of all foreign materials and have observed the guidelines provided. This declaration is provided with the first load of paddy.

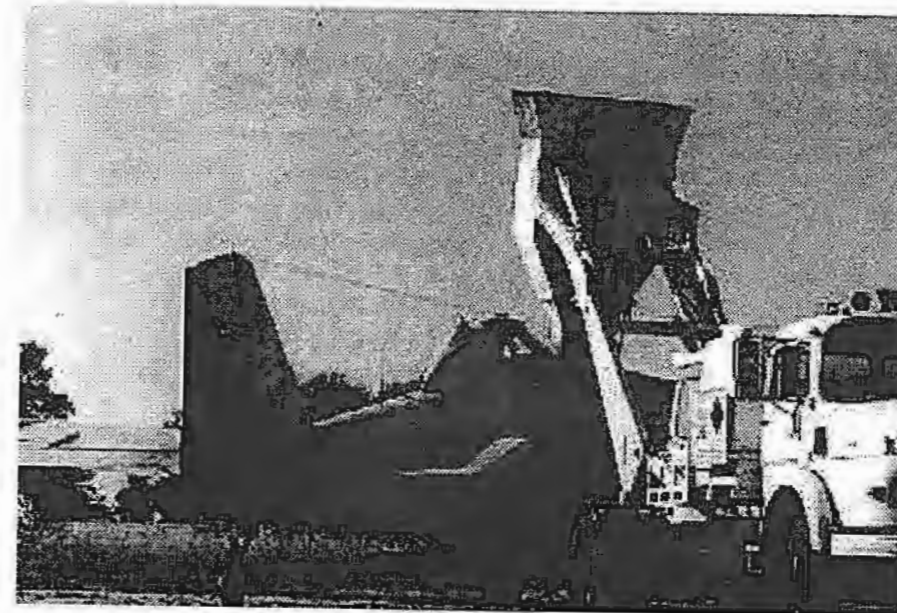
### Chemical contaminants

Food safety can also involve pesticide residues in the harvested paddy and finished product. Fortunately, temperate climate and good quarantine measures have limited the number of pests that attack the crop in Southern NSW. In

addition, most of the pesticides applied to rice are made early in the crop life. Despite this low risk, the Maximum Residue Level's of pesticide in rice are still of concern to both domestic and export markets. Any evidence of excessive pesticide residues threatens export market access or could be used as leverage to depress the price. This year, growers are required to complete a spray diary in the *Ricecheck* crop record and provide a declaration at harvest that confirms only rice registered products were used in accordance with the label directions. These pesticide concerns do involve aerial operators but their quality assurance requirements will complement those imposed by the rice industry. **The Aerial Application Work Order Form** is an excellent initiative and deserves rice industry endorsement in *Ricecheck* next year.

The support and unity from NSW Agriculture, agribusiness suppliers, the aerial applicators and the Ricegrowers Cooperative will ensure all stakeholders achieve the necessary level of quality assurance.

By Roger Clough,  
Rice Growers Cooperative



## STRATEGIC PLAN – WHAT'S NEXT?

After unanimously voting for the implementation of the strategic plan at the last Convention you are probably wondering if it has sunk without trace – the answer is definitely not!

A draft implementation plan has been drawn up and was approved by the Board at its November 18 Brisbane meeting.

A key part of that plan is the development of five strands of activity that at this stage looks more like a wish list, but all of which is achievable with a unified and motivated industry:

1. **Communication** – programs to improve communication with members, regulators, client industries, the general (regional) community and others.
2. **Service** – development of a number of services for members that may include better access to legal, insurance, safety, aircraft pattern testing, and political lobbying programs.
3. **An environmental protection accreditation program** – building on the success of

Spraysafe, a program that will provide confidence to regulators and clients that accredited members meet a range of environmental protection benchmarks.

4. **Flying Safety** – building on the success of the BAeFTA safety awareness courses and our relationship with the AAUP by developing other safety promotion programs.
5. **Association management** – additional funding mechanisms, new management systems, greater use of technology

The key focus in the short term will be on the development of a program for environmental protection – this picks up on the key element of Best Management Practice out of the strategic plan but makes it truly relevant to the issues confronting us every day.

The Board has let a consultancy to Ms Lyndal Hugo of Australian Environmental Management Systems to develop a discussion paper on an environmental protection program.

Our industry already does the lion's share of an environmental protection program, but does not get credit for it. LDP application, shorter booms, pattern testing, buffer zones, record keeping, spray and drift management plans are all work that amounts to environmental protection – but you get no additional recognition for undertaking things that essentially reduce productivity.

A key part of any final environmental protection program will be to advertise its existence in well-read regional newspapers so that we begin the process of establishing ourselves as the preferred method of chemical application.

In environmental terms, ground rigs are surrendering any 'inherent' advantage they may have by being slow and close to the ground through their lack of education and poor practice – this is our opportunity to grab back some of our productivity losses and give ourselves a more certain future.

Look for the discussion paper in the near future.

## AG PILOT SAFETY AWARENESS COURSES

The first ag pilot safety awareness course was conducted on the 18th of May 1998, and since then 11 courses have been run with 175 pilots completing the course.

The course is designed to provide the best possible safety awareness training for intending and practising ag pilots and has the full support of the AAAA.

The three main areas covered by the course are:

- Safety Awareness;
- Human Error and Accidents; and
- Situational Awareness.

Initial funding to develop the course was provided by the Australian Aviation Underwriting Pool (AAUP) to British Aerospace Flight Training Academy (BAeFTA) in conjunction with several leading ag operators, CASA and AAAA. The course presenters are Terry Foster and Mal Wordrop from BAeFTA and Alister Polkinghorne of CASA's Safety Promotion Branch.

It is a two day live-in course, costing \$800 per person including accommodation and meals. Participants have to meet their own course fees. AAUP clients will be rebated the course fee (limited to

\$800 per aircraft insured) for the following two renewals after course completion.

It is intended that an advanced course will be developed for chief pilots once all pilots have completed this safety awareness course. This advanced course will deal with more technical aspects of safe aerial agricultural operations.

If you are interested in attending one of the upcoming courses, contact Pam Dorman at AAUP at Essendon Airport on 03 9379 6677 or fax 03 9379 2550.

## FROM UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Welcome readers to my first president's report for the AAN and contrary to my initial prognosis (under the desk quivering in a foetal position), I am actually 'having fun' as Horrie Searie would say.

I think anyone who saw the CRDC roadshow on the Endo label would agree that Phil Hurst has hit the ground running and I look forward to my term of office with enthusiasm with Phil at the helm. We are indeed fortunate to have had the good governance of Peter Weatherstone and also Marion's support which has now guaranteed a seamless transition through financial security to the position we are now in today. It is obvious that this has enabled us to attract a capable and professional Executive Officer, with the capacity to take the AAAA to the next stage of our needed development. I feel very conscious during the 'handover period' that any change that our new EO promotes is a subtle criticism of the old ways but this is not the case – professional people each have their own way of doing things and their own vision for the future and what best works for them.

Talking about professionalism, the safety awareness program inspired by Julian Fraser and the AAUP has processed over half the ag pilots

working in Australia and discussions are taking place to formulate the follow up requirements. Part of this may be aimed at increasing the Chief Pilots' professionalism. It is an enigma that the very type of pilot that inspired this industry, one with 'flair' and a hero factor of 8/10 has now become a liability in the mature and corporate scene today. Ties will be next!!

But I think the pilot who leaves three wheel tracks to ten feet from the end of the strip, chemical splashing out of the hopper, in a one and half million dollar aircraft is the dinosaur these days and the methodical pilot who arrives on time, gets the job done effectively and without incident is the professional. An extra load planned at the beginning of a job and split equally can be the difference between every takeoff being a teeth clencher and going home at the end of the day and patting the dog instead of kicking her.

There would not be too many people in the cotton industry that would not be sick to death of the Endo label and its consequences and it is true that the NRA are now looking at several other products in terms of label review. There is a good news factor here. For once the responsibility of the grower and

consultant has been included and I see this as an opportunity for us to be able to share the load in a more equitable fashion. My company has had three drift cases against it and every time it has occurred it has been because the grower assured me or the pilot that he had contacted the neighbours and there were 'no susceptible crops!' He should now have responsibility for the statement. However, we now need to lobby the NRA for a practical document that can take us into the twenty first century. I see as essential in this the licensing of ground rig operators, and practical 360 degree neighbour notification requirements.

Enough, this is only my first report and the next one I hope will be far too short because I am out flying. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent a great industry that can and will rise to the regulators' challenge. For those of you still waiting to start your season good luck and good management.

Finally I would like to wish Peter and Marion my sincerest best wishes in their 'retirement' and say thank you for a job well done.

Cheers for now. Dean von Einem.

## MICE BAITING

Over the last 2 months 320 tonnes of zinc phosphide coated grain have been applied in NSW with a lesser quantity in Queensland. With the exception of a little used for perimeter baiting by ground application, all has been by aircraft.

One tonne of zinc phosphide coated grain covers one thousand hectares at the rate of 8 grains per square metre. Bait spread by aircraft in this way within the crop is far less harmful to birds and native animals than perimeter application.

Aircraft operators in the Central West of NSW have enjoyed the bulk of the work. The price is not fixed by the Department of Agriculture and it has averaged around \$8 per hectare. Those involved in handling zinc phosphide have to undertake a short training course conducted by the Department.

It is predicted that a locust plague will follow the mice in both Queensland and NSW. Again the preferred means of control will be aerial application.

When some 'environmental' organisations call for a banning of aerial spraying of crops, such as cotton and bananas, they conveniently ignore the fact that agricultural aircraft are the most effective means of controlling mice and locust plagues and the prevention of life threatening diseases carried by mosquitoes.

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## TWO BOBS WORTH – PETER WEATHERSTONE

In clearing out the files (destroying the evidence) prior to vacating the Bowral office on October 22, I was reminded of some of the highlights and low-lights of 14 years in the life of the AAAA and its now retired Executive Officer. I can't recall into which category the job interview fell, but I can remember that it took place in a room at the Downtowner Motel in Lygon Street Carlton. I sat on the edge of one bed and the interviewers sat on the other.

As Jim Darbyshire remarked during his memorable speech at Yalumba back in June, one of the questions they asked was: 'Do you drink?'. We all looked at each other and finally burst out laughing. I must have given the right answer, being subsequently offered the job. When we were discussing such mundane matters as pay and fringe benefits, I asked 'would a motor vehicle be provided?', and the answer came back. 'that won't be necessary because the members will drive you around'. And many of them did too.

My first major task was to get Operation Spray Safe up and running. I have spoken and written so much about Spray Safe over the years that I will spare readers the pain of having to receive another dose of it here and now. Suffice to say that the ambitious self-regulatory program was before its time. It predated Agsafe by many years. This says much for the foresight of the AAAA Directors, particularly the late Ray Mackay who was the driving force behind it.

Thinking of Ray, he and I spent many memorable times together. Negotiations (probably a misnomer) with the AFAP both within and outside the the Industrial Commission were noteworthy. Back in the late 1980s the pilots had their own Industrial Tribunal. Coal miners were the only other union to

have a similar body. The Judge used to wear an AFAP tie at hearings which was a bit off-putting, but I believe we held our own in most of the arguments. Ray's walking stick helped at times; not to gain sympathy, but to point at the union delegates on more than one occasion.

We appealed the decision of the Industrial Tribunal before the Full Bench in the superannuation case on a technicality, but lost. However, we didn't lose them all. Those involved in the Wimmera Mail Times defamation action, particularly Aussie and Judy Miller, will remember that victory and the awarding of damages against the newspaper. As a follow through we lodged a complaint with the Australia Press Council but the Chairman, Professor Flint, ruled that the defamation award should have been satisfying enough. It is hard to win in that venue, as the judges are the media representatives.

I became quite well known at the Press Council for our complaints against what we considered to be unfair and biased journalism. The Australian newspaper headline 'Spray Plane Results in Death of Hydro Linesman' brought a complaint from the AAAA and News Ltd's response was massive. We withdrew gracefully having made our point to the Press Council – we were short of funds for lawyers at the time.

Still thinking of Ray, as he was an unforgettable character, we ventured into the bowels of Parliament House on a few occasions to talk with various parliamentary committees. One I recall well was a meeting with the Women's Rural Consultative Committee, who were issuing critical comments about aerial spraying. Ray tried some male chauvinism, which didn't go down too well at all. What I did (and still do) find

surprising about Parliamentary Committees is the number of MPs and Senators who know an ag pilot and can recall some incident involving same.

We were deeply involved with politics at the time of the Senate Inquiry into Ag and Vet Chemicals in 1990 and subsequently when questions were asked in the House about the recommendations. The uniform legislation still hasn't come to pass and may never do so whilst we have a state and federal system.

One of the highlights of the last 14 years has been working with the many AAAA Presidents and Directors. I have previously remarked that the turnover of AAAA elected officers perhaps led to a certain amount of instability and lack of continuity.

In the early days we seemed to have difficulty in finding a President each year, but as word was passed on that it wasn't such a difficult job, more members were inclined to volunteer.

I have been privileged to have worked for the following Presidents:

Frank Shaw	1985-86
Ray Mackay	1986-88 (5th term)
David Reid	1998-90
Dennis Elliot	1990-91
Horrie Searle	1991-92
Fred Nolan	1992-93
Ralph Smith	1993-95
Godfrey Gardiner	1995-97
Dan Kennedy	1997-99
Dean von Einem	1999 – present

Two Directors deserve special mention – Fred Nolan who has held office continuously since 1985, and Bob Harris since 1987.

The ongoing love/hate relationship that the industry and the AAAA has with CAA/CASA I have found fascinating, if somewhat frustrating.

*Continued page 8*

Continued from page 7

The fascinating part is that the industry once looked on the CAA as big brother or 'he who must be obeyed'. We would call on them cap in hand and the frustrating part was that we would get the run around by experts. We are still making the same requests of the aviation regulators and still getting nowhere.

As someone relatively new to aviation I found the volume of rules and regulations astounding. I realised why pilots have such big briefcases. At one stage there were 12,000 public servants working in the CAA to administer 8,500 aircraft. Dick Smith tried to do something about this on two occasions and was beaten by the system. It is obvious that a business mind is not needed to run aviation as the safety regulations could only be compiled by well-trained bureaucrats.

In the early 1980s the AAAA thought they had the CAA convinced that agricultural aviation should have a separate category in the regulations. Coming into the year 2000 that dream is further away than ever. We do have some so-called experts in our own ranks to blame for this situation.

The cotton industry, as it represents such a large proportion of total ag aircraft business income, has assumed far greater importance in recent years. I won't speculate as to what proportion of total industry and

hence AAAA income is attributable to cotton, as some people might get the wrong idea. It is perhaps not exaggerating to state that what happens with aircraft in cotton over the next 2-3 seasons may well determine the future of many operators and pilots.

When we think back over the history of cotton and ag aircraft in Australia it has been residues in beef that have caused huge setbacks to our reputation and viability. Firstly organo-chlorines in the late 70s and early 80s, then chlorflurazuron in the early 1990s and more recently endosulfan. Between each crisis the industry climbed the ladder of public acceptance only to fall back again. Another residue crisis may bring us back to ground level. The crazy part about it all is that the aircraft and the pilots have not been responsible for most of the problems.

I cannot sign off without reference to spray drift. Many readers will remember Jim Watt, who now lives in retirement at Ulladulla on the NSW south coast. He used to talk at AAAA conferences about the two schools of thought on overcoming the off-target drift problem. As Jim described it there was the 'gravitational/large droplet school' promoted by the Americans, Akesson and Yates, and adopted by the US EPA. There was the 'air movement/small droplet' school

promoted by the British - almost like driving on the right or left hand side of the road. To add to the air movement equation there was the 'wind vs. no wind' theory. In recent years in Australia the air movement/small droplet school which was adopted is coming under increasing criticism. To add to the two schools of thought we have aircraft becoming larger and faster. This throws in another basic factor of physics. I will not speculate on which school will win the day in Australia, if either.

Suffice to say that the agricultural aircraft industry's ability to control off-target spray drift will determine its future.

It has been a great experience and a privilege for me to work with the AAAA. I hope to be involved in the industry for a little time yet in a non-executive capacity, so we must keep in touch.

I can be contacted by fax on 02 4861 6868 or e-mail on peterw@hinet.net.au and I will now learn to type so that I can reply to my messages.

With best wishes to all Air Ag News readers.

Many thanks to Warwick Clampett of NSW Agriculture for his continued interest in our industry and his efforts in coordinating the Rice Seminar.

## RICE AIR IMPROVEMENT GROUP

The 1999 Aerial Rice Seminar was held in Coleambally on the 12th of August and was supported by a great roll-up of operators, pilots, chemical reps and rice industry speakers.

There is no doubt that the issue of quality assurance will continue to drive change in the industry (see

story on p.3) and that aerial applicators are well placed to assist growers.

The critical issue this year of reduced water allocations is having a marked effect, especially on the Murray system, although many farmers are still speculating on rain to finish crops.



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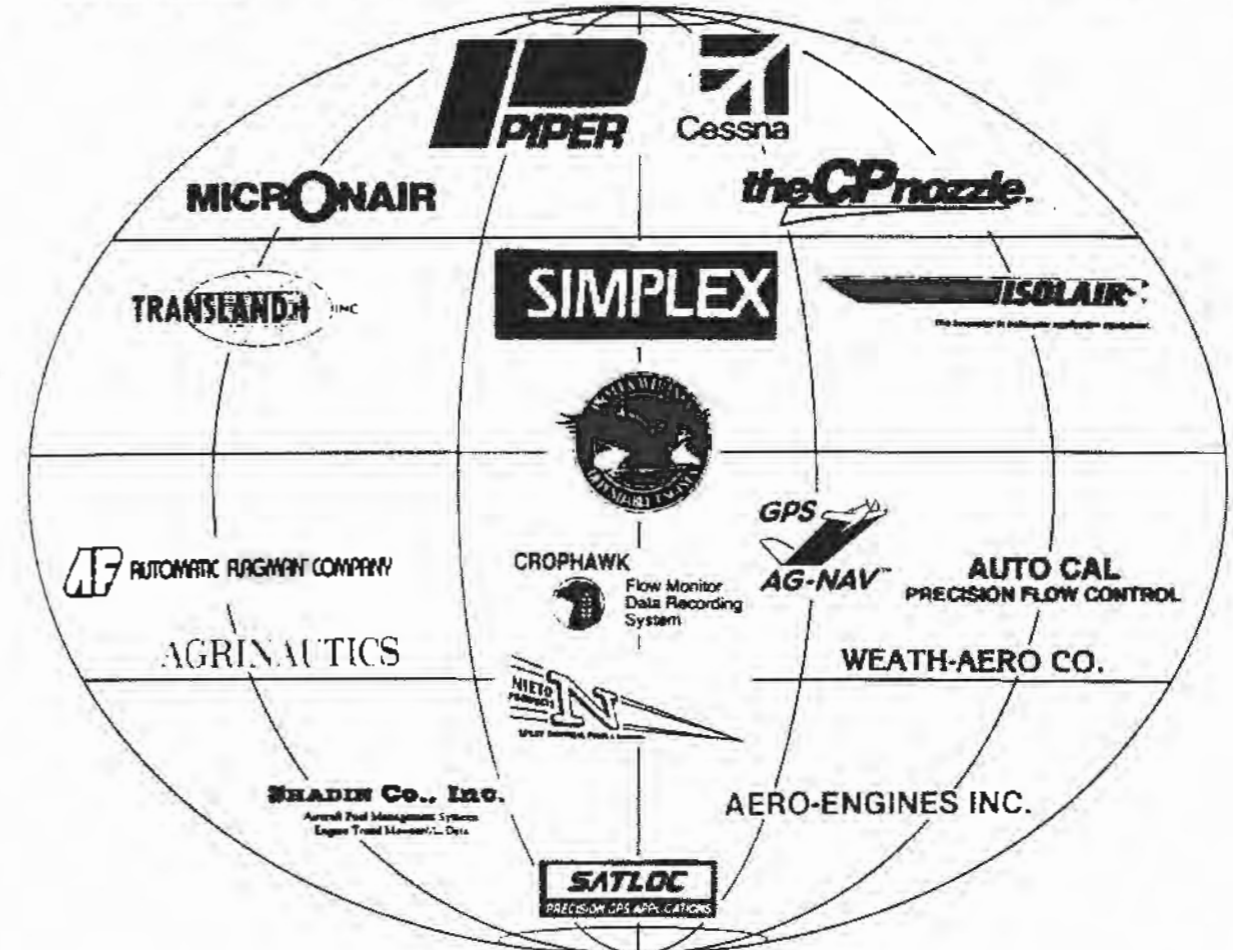


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## NEW GA200C FOR QUEENSLAND COTTON

The arrival of a new Gippsland GA200C ag aircraft for Gwydir Air (Queensland) will be the first non-turbine aeroplane ordered by the company since 1984, according to General Manager and Chief Pilot Fred Nolan.

'We're proud to support the local Australian product, and I'm sure that it will be the ideal aircraft for the Darling Downs cotton region', Fred said.

Following the acquisition of Des Adams Aerial Spraying in 1998, Gwydir Air began searching for a replacement aircraft for the radial powered AT301's that were traditionally operated. The 200C will form part of a new family of aircraft to be operated into the next century.

Gwydir manager Horrie Searle said that the smaller job sizes generated on the Southern Darling Downs suggested that a mix of large and

small capacity aircraft is needed.

'With its 1000lt hopper, it will support the larger 1500 and 2000 lt Turbo Thrush's nicely'.

'The GA200C offers our seasonally intensive operation a balance between managing fleet overheads with a capacity to work while

boosting dispatch reliability and customer service aspects', Horrie said.

Registered VH-FJN, the new GA200C (msn 9937) will be based at Millmerran and is Satloc DGPS equipped.



Left side  
George Morgan and Peter Furlong (centre and right) hand over GA200C VH-FJN to Gwydir Air's Fred Nolan at Gippsland Aeronautics facility at Latrobe Valley Aerodrome.

## BUGGER!

*A column that relies on you ...*



*You recycled what??*

An employee smashing crates so that the wood could be recycled accidentally destroyed three new 737 rudders at Boeing's factory. Boeing officials were not sure how the unmarked crates were put on carts identifying them for disposal. The rudders cost an estimated \$500,000.



*Who put that prop guard on my aircraft when I wasn't looking??*



*Overheard at a recent gathering - 'Real men don't drift'*





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## SURVEY OF NECK AND BACK PAIN IN AGRICULTURAL PILOTS

### SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

Age:

Height:

Weight:

### SECTION 2: FLYING EXPERIENCE

Total Flying Hours:

Total Ag. Hours

Aircraft Type Currently Flown:

Hours on Current Type:

Majority of hours flown on which aircraft type?

### SECTION 3: NECK INJURY

Have you ever had a non-flying related neck injury? YES:  NO:

If YES, what type of injury was it?

Do you ever have neck pain while flying? YES:  NO:

If YES, how frequently?

How often would you get neck pain in flight?

Does it happen with every flight?

YES:  NO:

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 = worst), how would you rate the severity of the pain?

Has it ever interfered with a flight?

YES:  NO:

If so, how? (eg. was the flight terminated?)

Has the pain ever caused you to seek medical help?

What treatment did you receive? (eg. X-rays, medication, etc)

Have you ever been unfit to fly because of a neck injury?

YES:  NO:

If YES, for how long?

What types of flying are most likely to cause you neck pain?

Can you estimate the level of G force which may produce neck pain?

How do you position your head when manoeuvring the aircraft?

### SECTION 4: BACK PAIN

Have you ever had a non-flying related back injury?

YES:  NO:

If YES, what type of injury was it?

Do you ever have back pain while flying?

YES:  NO:

Do you get back pain at any other time?

YES:  NO:

How frequently do you suffer back pain?

How often would you get back pain in flight?

Where in your back is the pain?

UPPER  LOWER

Does it happen with every flight?

YES:  NO:

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 = worst), how would you rate the severity of the back pain?

Has it ever interfered with a flight?

YES:  NO:

If so, how? (eg. was the flight terminated?)

Has the pain ever caused you to seek medical help?

Has the back pain ever caused you to seek medical help?

What treatment did you receive? (eg. X-rays, medication, etc)

Have you ever been unfit to fly because of back pain?

YES:

NO:

If YES, for how long?

What types of flying are most likely to cause you back pain?

**SECTION 5: OTHER FACTORS (Please answer for the aircraft in which you have flown the most hours)**

Do you think vibration is a problem in your aircraft type?

YES:

NO:

Do you think the seat is uncomfortable?

YES:

NO:

Do you think your sitting position is a problem in your aircraft type?

YES:

NO:

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

**Please send your survey responses to the AAAA office:**

**Fax: 02 6262 8257**

**Mail: AAAA  
PO Box 647  
Dickson  
ACT 2602**

**AIR AG WELCOMES PESTICIDE REPORT, BUT . . .**

The AAAA has welcomed many of the findings of the NSW Standing Committee on State Development report into the use of pesticides, but has identified an ongoing shortcoming with NSW pesticide regulation.

Many of the recommendations of the report are a common sense approach to the issue, particularly in making all those using chemical responsible for their actions.

'Shared responsibility' for the use of pesticides is a key element in ensuring all players – growers, consultants and applicators – make the right decisions to deliver safe and effective results.

Likewise, the recommendation to address encroachment of urban developments into areas abutting prime agricultural land is an essential first step to removing potential areas of friction.

However, it is disappointing that the report did not recommend the licensing of ground rig operators in NSW, something which leaves a yawning gap in ensuring responsible chemical use. Approximately 70 per cent of chemicals are put out by ground rig.

While the aerial application industry is rigorously regulated by federal, state and local governments, including licensing at a number of levels, ground rig operators are not

licenced in NSW, undergo no compulsory education, are not required to be insured for crop damage as aerial operators are, and are able to quickly shift their operations to avoid monitoring by the EPA.

Not only is this a very unlevel playing field in a competition sense, but it is also a poor result for the environment.

AAAA's concern is that the aerial application industry's hard work on developing an environmental protection program to supplement our Operation Spraysafe accreditation program may be undone by the lack of licencing and education of ground rig operators.

**NEW PILOTS AWARD**

On 30 August 1999 the Aerial Agricultural Aviation Pilot's Award 1983 was varied pursuant to Item 51 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Workplace Relations Amendment Act 1996.

So what! You might say – *what does it mean?*

This followed hearings in the Industrial Commission in Melbourne over a period of six months with Peter Mackay and Peter Weatherstone representing the AAAA and Terry O'Connell the AFAP. There was no other party involved. It was brought about by changes to the Act known as Award Simplification Principles and applies to all Federal Awards. All aviation awards have been amended.

Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity of altering any of the contentious clauses in the old award but we did succeed in having some new ideas emanating from the AFAP omitted.

The new award differs from the previous in the following respects:

- 1 It contains enterprise flexibility provisions.
- 2 Anti discrimination clauses are included.
- 3 Reference to parental leave is extensive.

These are the so-called 'Simplification Principles', but all that really means is these clauses are included in all Federal Awards.

The Commissioner did not alter the rates of pay, even though this was up for review. Each aviation award should bear some relation to another in terms of rates of pay. He accepted that it was not possible to relate an ag pilot's pay to an airline structure of aircraft type, captain, first officer category. The only real drawback with the commission system is in respect of workers compensation but that is another story.

Other wage related conditions remained essentially the same with the exception of accident pay. The death benefit has been increased

from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Note that in the GA Pilots Award the amount is \$180,000. The Commission again accepted that it was not possible to obtain similar death cover for the same premium payment.

The list of respondents to the Award attached to the AIRC Order is out of date and will be changed. It is not the responsibility of AAAA to do so, but if your name does not appear, do not take it as meaning that you are not bound by the award.

It is recommended that all employers of ag pilots, whether they work to the award or otherwise, obtain a copy of the new award and familiarise themselves with each and every clause.

The AAAA has an arrangement with the Australia Industry Group (Ai), formerly the Metal Trades Association (MTIA), who provide an award update service without the cost of membership. Members who do not participate are advised to apply to the AAAA office for details. The cost is approximately \$50 per award per annum.

## BASI ACCIDENT SUMMARY TABLE -1/4/99 TO 30/9/99

DATE	A/C	REG	LOCATION	WORK	ACCIDENT	A/C DAMAGE	INJURY
26/4/99	AT-402	LRK	Macclesfield SA	Spreading	Wire strike	Destroyed	Minor
14/5/99	C188B/A1	TTU	Griffith NSW	Ferrying	Loss of control landing	Substantial	None
20/5/99	PA-25-235	IGM	Gordonvale QLD	Spraying	Loss of control landing	Substantial	None
21/5/99	GA-200	BMJ	Innisfail QLD	Spraying	Wire strike	Substantial	Minor
8/6/99	C188C	MYR	Ayr QLD	Spraying	Wire strike	Substantial	None
26/6/99	C188B/A1	UWJ	Quairading WA	Spraying	Struck a tree	Substantial	None
5/7/99	DHC-2MK1	WOZ	Walcha NSW	On ground	Loader struck by prop	Minor	Serious
28/7/99	S2R-T34	JJD	Emerald QLD	Spraying	Wire strike	Substantial	None
20/8/99	PA-36-285	BQD	Tumby Bay SA	Spraying	Wire strike	Minor	Serious to bystander

Information extracted from BASI (ATSB) Brief Reports Dated 7/10/99

### NEW ENDO LABEL

As anyone involved in the tortuous development of the new endo label can tell, it has not been easy keeping up with changes and balancing running a business with grower education, input to spray and drift management plans, aircraft configuration, record keeping and seemingly endless meetings.

Of course they are all essential parts of being in the business of aerial application, but maybe if we could spend a little less time at meetings!

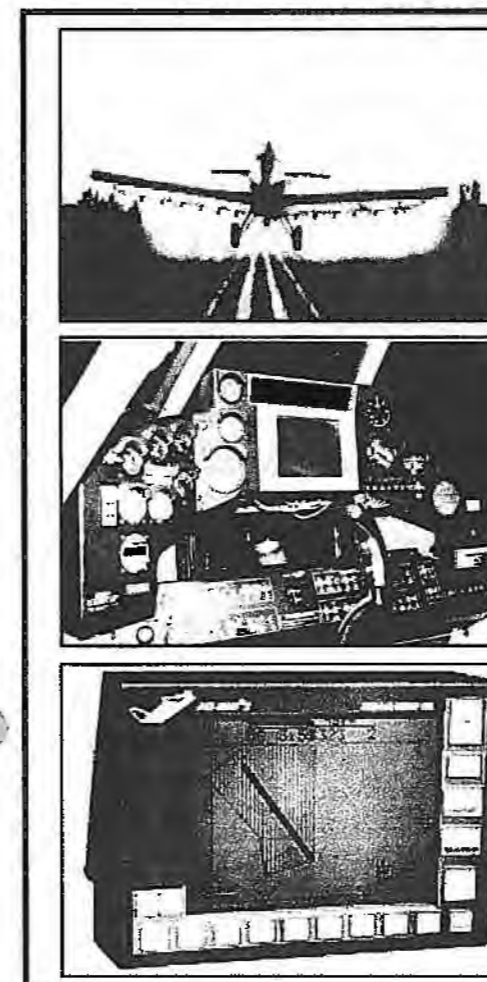
There are however, a number of positive things to come out of the new label. A critical development is 'shared responsibility' - bringing more responsibility to the grower and to the consultant, rather than just lumping all problems onto the aerial applicator, whether we have control over them or not.

But the new endo label is not without its shortcomings, many of which are a result of the incredibly compacted amount of time allowed for development of the label so that it would be in place for this season. These include the use of a table to specify particular nozzles to be used, rather than simply providing a specification (say expressed as VMD) which operators would have to match up to various configurations which suit their business. Some of the other parameters, such as the height of the drop boom seem particularly arbitrary, which is probably why they are only listed as 'advisory' rather than 'mandatory'. Helicopter specifications are still under development.

Some of the other requirements, such as not spraying if significant rainfall is predicted within the next 48 hours, will make this season very difficult.

But at the end of the process is a label that is breaking new ground. Very specific neighbour notification requirements are now in place, and importantly are the responsibility of the grower. Add to this the need for significant record keeping for the grower, development of a spray and drift management plan and adherence to Cotton Australia's BMP manual, and the environment for spraying endosulfan is very new and very different from other chemicals.

There remains little doubt however, that now the NRA has secured the endo label requirements, that at least some aspects will flow through to other chemicals. Even so, the next chemical under NRA review, chlorpyrifos, does not have anywhere near the same strictures as endo on the draft label changes.



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### INSIDE STORY . . . FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

After nearly four months in the job I have been deeply impressed by your hard work to not only make a dollar, but to do it in a way that meets the requirements of so many regulators, clients, industries and the community.

This is an industry that has come an enormous distance in a short period of time and with little or no support from other quarters - this is an achievement that this industry must be very proud of. However, the challenges facing us now - protecting the environment, reduced productivity, escalating costs - are just as daunting as the distance we have already covered.

A key challenge that goes to the heart of our sustainability as an industry is how we are going to react

to the ongoing need to protect the environment.

We face a choice - either to grasp the challenge of environmental protection, including as it does both cost and opportunity, and garner for ourselves security as a sustainable industry, or stick our head in the sand by not confronting and managing issues such as spray drift.

The AAAA strategic plan is an excellent starting point and current activities to develop an environmental protection accreditation program to give Spraysafe real 'teeth' are a great start. But the real challenge for all in our industry is to change our behaviour to be the smartest and most professional operators/ pilots/ground staff/supporters that we can be.

The bottom line is we have a very successful and competent industry that is well positioned to take control of its own future - the only question mark is over how we respond to the current challenges.

Whether we are in cotton, rice, cereals, pulses, bananas or super, or for that matter any other sector, the central issues remain the same - responsibility, quality assurance, best practice ...

And as we were told at the national convention, even excellence is not enough.

Cheers

Phil



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For further information contact Grant Stewart  
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Toll Free 1-800-2-AGNAV  
Ph: 08 9434 9144 Fax: 08 9434 1681

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## RAAF LOW JET ROUTES

The RAAF and AAAA have been discussing ways that we can help each other out with information about what Low Jet Routes (LJRs) are active and when.

The RAAF at Amberley have asked that we advise them of when and where we are operating when that

coincides with an LJR and have mailed-out to some 60 operators a poster, a fax pro-forma and a toll free fax number to assist. The AAAA office has a copy of the pro-forma if you want one.

The toll free fax number is:  
1800 802 125.

AAAA in turn asked the RAAF to consider establishing a broadcast fax list for operators that have an LJR in their area, so that the RAAF can also advise us of when they go active.

We are looking forward to their assistance.

## THE GADGET SPOT

*If you have heard of a new gadget that might make life easier for us all, send it in.*



Electrostatic charging to reduce drift and improve efficacy has been around as a theory for years, but an article in the latest NAAA magazine from the US shows one company, Spectrum Electrostatic Spayers, has taken it to the next stage with a commercially available system.



At a presentation organised by Avcare, George Zabkiewicz from Forest Research in NZ demonstrated their Spraysafe Manager software that helps calculate buffer zones and other environmental parameters, aircraft productivity, efficacy, and calibrations. Having established that our Spraysafe program has been around longer (and that NZ didn't make the footy finals), it was clear

that the program has great potential, but that currently it is only relevant to forestry applications.

AAAA will continue to investigate the program for its possible adaptation to Australian conditions — please let AAAA know if such a program would be of interest to you.



## ASSOCIATION LOBBYING

Your association spends a lot of time lobbying on your behalf — here are some of the issues from the last few months:

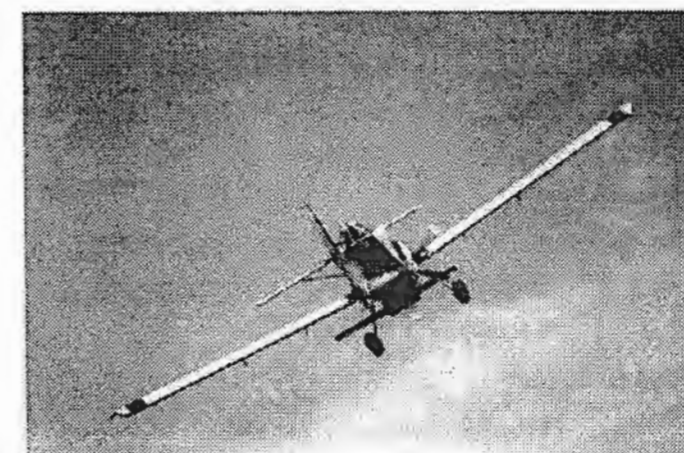
- ACDC Board, Qld — recognition of Spraysafe
- ACDC Act Review, Qld — consistent approach to ground rigs
- Pesticide Act Review, NSW — licencing of ground rigs
- NSW Parliamentary Committee Report on Pesticide Use — lobbying for licencing of ground rigs
- Pilots Award — representation at the Commission
- Qld EPA — Support for a best practice manual; satellite strips and the Contaminated Sites Act
- NSW EPA — audit of industry
- ACIC — cotton self-regulation
- CRDC — endosulfan road show; aircraft testing program
- Victorian Department of Natural Resources — liaison over their approach to enforcement.
- CASA — Part 137 as ag work only
- BASI — support for an industry safety program
- NRA — endosulfan label; chemical reviews; consultation process
- NSW State Conference — various speakers and logistics
- Workplace Health and Safety, Qld — audit of industry
- Workcover, NSW — fire proof fork lifts
- Agsafe — fire proof fork lifts
- Beef Industry — residue testing program
- Industrial Commission — Pilots Award

If you would like any information on these, please contact the AAAA Office.

## ARE THERE ANY BUDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS OUT THERE?

Send your photos into AAAA, and we'll publish a 'best of' in future issues of Air Ag News

AAAA  
PO Box 647, Dickson ACT 2602  
Email [phil@aerialag.com.au](mailto:phil@aerialag.com.au)



## NSW PESTICIDES BILL

The NSW Pesticides Bill was introduced into the NSW Parliament on the 28th of October by Minister for the Environment Bob Debus. It has to pass both houses of the NSW Parliament before becoming law.

The Bill proposes to substantially increase the maximum penalties for proven offences:

- *willful or negligent use of a pesticide*
  - \$120,000 for an individual
  - \$250,000 for a corporation
  - prosecution must show 'beyond reasonable doubt' that misuse was willful and negligent
- *strict liability offences*
  - \$60,000 for an individual
  - \$120,000 for a corporation
  - prosecution must prove the offence took place
  - defence of due diligence applies

Penalty infringement notices (on the spot fines) have also been introduced (up to \$1,500).

The slightly better news is that ground rig operators (including farmers) will have to have compulsory education, and farmers will have to keep compulsory records. This will be implemented through regulations.

In addition, land-holders and consultants may be liable where there is a failure to provide to an applicator essential information that only the land-holder or consultant could know and an offence is committed. Land-holders may also be held liable if they mislead the applicator or if they pressure or coerce an applicator to do a job in poor conditions.

The Bill has already been passed through the NSW Lower House and

is likely to be passed by the upper House in the near future.

The Bill has the support of the Opposition as well as the Government.

The Bill is on the Parliament website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au). Also on the website is Hansard which will have the Minister's second reading speech and the rest of debate which happened on the 11th of November.

You can go directly to the Bill (90 pages) and explanatory memorandum at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gi/bill1999/b99-069-p02.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gi/bill1999/b99-069-p02.pdf).

Other State governments are watching with interest, with almost all other States currently reviewing their pesticide 'control of use' legislation.

## AAAA SAFETY PROGRAM

Work is continuing on developing a safety program for AAAA members as part of the strategic plan.

The program is currently being progressed in five areas:

### Statistics

In an industry as small as ours, it is very difficult to develop an incident/accident reporting system that is confidential and still delivers meaningful information.

When we do get information, it needs to be analysed to ensure we are targeting the right behaviour and critical flight phases which in itself is a big job requiring special expertise. It appears there is little interest in our sector from BASI (now ATSB), so it is going to be up to us and our support industries to improve the situation.

AAAA would welcome any suggestions from members on how we can develop such a system that has broad acceptance. Initial ideas include an annual pilot safety survey,

and a simplified, deidentified ag specific incident/accident form.

### Systems

The BASI 'Indicate' system is working well for many operators, and while smaller operators may think the system is too involved for them, the principles remain valid and are well worth a close look.

AAAA is hoping to develop other system-based safety programs that will help us to change, or to reinforce good behaviour. The US has the PAASS program, which is based on you earning 'points' towards accreditation for attending a number of safety 'events', but it may be some time before we are in a position to mount such a program, given the US have thousands of aircraft and we don't.

AAAA may instead be able to develop a series of education materials that help remind us of safety and help keep our awareness levels high.

### Training

The success of the BAeFTA course sponsored by the AAUP has clearly shown that ongoing education must be part of any safety program. AAAA is currently working with these two organisations to develop this course further.

### Communication

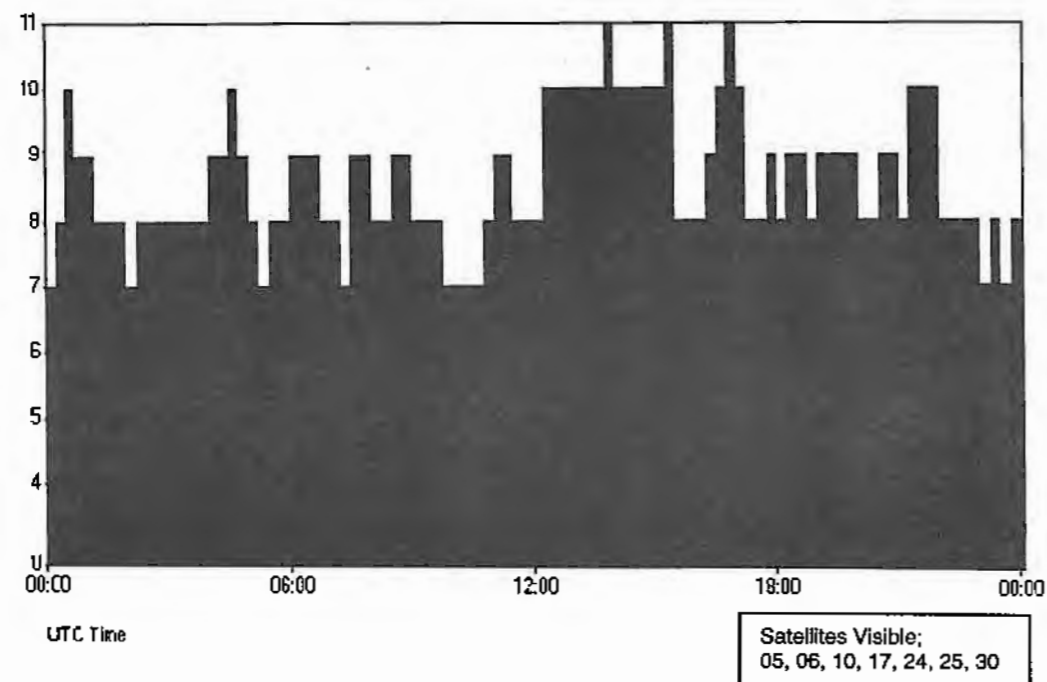
Improved communication of pilots' experiences within the industry must be an important element of our safety program.

AAAA hopes to run a 'I learnt from that' style column in future newsletters and would welcome your contributions, whether it be about wires, fatigue, loading, or any other safety related issue.

### Funding

In an industry as small as ours communication should be a strength and Air Ag News is a great vehicle for you to help others think about safety. Prospective supporters are now being approached to sponsor elements of the program.

## Typical GPS Satellite Visibility Forecast December 1999, Moree (NSW) Sky



Note: Satellite visibility can be affected by mask elevation and changes made to the GPS constellation by the US Department of Defence. The above graph is only a guide to the daily satellite visibility

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## WANTED

### Exhibitors for the 2000 Convention

The AAAA National Convention for 2000 will be held at Conrad Jupiters on the Gold Coast from 4 - 7 June 2000.

AAAA will be mounting the usual high quality trade show to help members meet companies with business in ag aviation and to exchange ideas on products and services.

Compete for the AAAA award for the best display at the convention, as well as conducting operators and pilots to do business with you.

To guarantee your exhibition space, please contact the AAAA National Office now on 02 6262 8256 or on email: [phil@aerialag.com.au](mailto:phil@aerialag.com.au)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOURS

Interested in seeing how they do it in South America? What about learning from operators' experience in the US??

We need your feedback before we go any further in putting together a tour of either of these places, so send a fax or e-mail to the AAAA office if you want more information, and tell us where you would like to go – especially if you know of particular places or events happening next year.

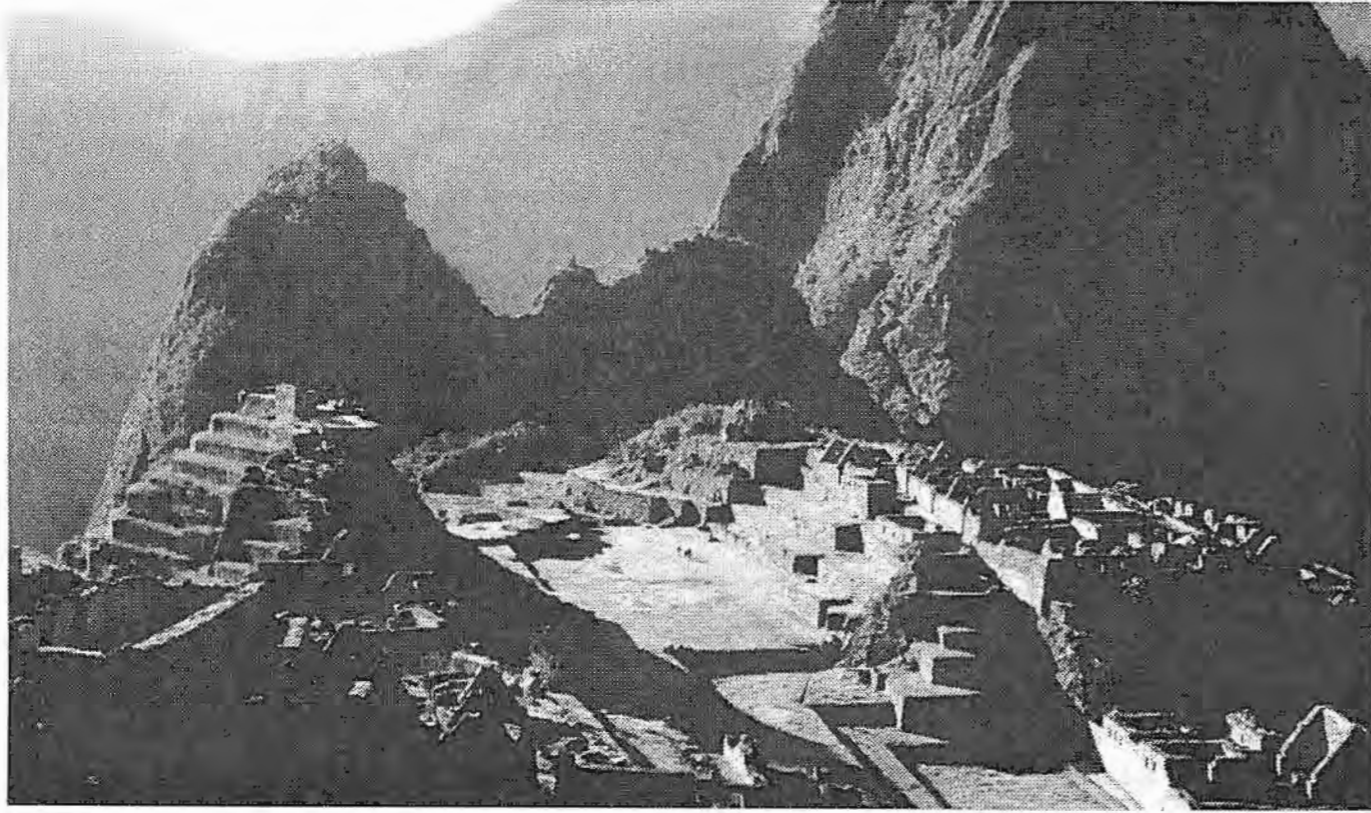
The options are:

- Study Tour of South America
- Study Tour of the US

AAAA has had preliminary discussions with Sun City Travel, a leading Brisbane travel agency that specialises in these sorts of tours and has done a number of cotton and other agricultural based tours.

If we have a reasonable level of interest we will start work on an itinerary for a tour in our off season (around June–August) next year.

Machu Picchu in Peru



## BASI NOW PART OF ATSB

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau came into being on 1 July 1999 to be the focal point of the Federal Government's attention to vital transport safety issues. It is part of the Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services.

The Bureau brings together the expertise, accumulated knowledge and safety resources of four national safety bodies the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation (BASI), the Federal Office of Road Safety (FORS) the Marine Incident

Investigation Unit (MIIU) and the Rail Safety Unit.  
(acknowledgement: ATSB website – [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au))

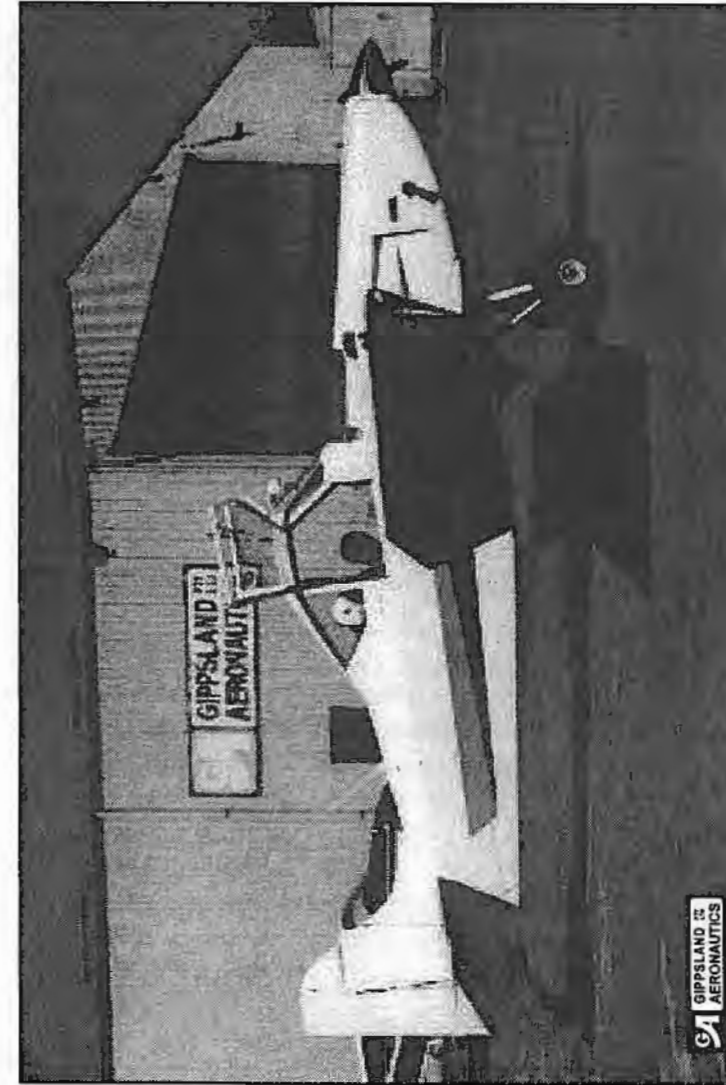
## AAAA CONTACT DETAILS

Please note the new contact details of the AAAA:

PO Box 647  
Dickson ACT 2602  
Telephone 02 6262 8256  
Facsimile 02 6262 8257

Email [phil@aerialag.com.au](mailto:phil@aerialag.com.au)  
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And with the aircraft now in service in New Zealand, USA, South America, China and South Africa, many other pilots and operators agree.

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**Call today and see how a new GA200C can meet your fleet and business requirements.**

## INDUSTRY AUDITS – DON'T FORGET THE PAPERWORK

Two recent audits of our industry by the NSW EPA and Queensland Workplace Health and Safety have shown that in general we are getting it right (such as no environmental harm and safe workplaces) but we are falling down on the paperwork.

More and more we are seeing that you not only have to do the right thing, you have to prove you do the right thing by good record keeping, ensuring licences are current and that you can find the exact piece of paper you need.

While it is hard flying the aircraft, managing staff, chasing business and keeping up with regulations, good record keeping, efficient filing and current licences are cheaper than prosecutions.

### NEW INSURANCE BROKER

Patricia Kenney and Ralph Aikin who are well known to many AAAA members have recently formed their own aviation insurance broking company – **Kenney Aikin Aircraft Insurance Brokers Pty Ltd.**

Members will be familiar with the service provided by Patricia and Ralph over the years and their new contact details may be found in their advertisement, on page 10.

### CLASSIFIEDS

Satloc Airstar GPS fitted with dual FM/Fugro Differential. Price \$20000 ono. Contact Dean von Einem. Phone 07 4982 3793



510 Gallon Turbo Thrush. 1988 S/N 101DC Ex VH-WBQ. Total Time 6200 Hours. Nil Hour O/H Prop and Start/Gen, very clean, no corrosion. Complete except engine. Located NZ. Must sell, photos available. Fax 64 6 2547727



1 AT-502 for sale – choice of three or 1 G10 Thrush. Phone 02 6795 4376

### BACK AND NECK INJURY RESEARCH

Inserted into this newsletter is a survey on back and neck injury developed by Dr Gordon Cable, a consultant in aviation medicine who spoke at the National Convention in June.

At the informal show of hands at the conference this appeared to be a

pretty common problem, and one that research might begin to find some ways of managing or even avoiding.

Please send your responses to the AAAA office.

### QUEENSLAND CONFERENCE

A very successful Queensland AAAA State conference was held at the Novotel Twin Waters Resort at Noosa Heads on the 23rd and 24th of August.

Delegates heard from a wide range of speakers including representatives of the new Qld EPA, Qld Workplace Health and Safety, DPI, and Ian Craig from C-PAS.

Main issues discussed included satellite airstrips, LDP, beef issues, workplace health and safety audits across the entire Qld aerial industry, sharing of AOCs and CASA delays.

The conference was followed by an Ag. Aviation Safety seminar conducted by BAeFTA with the support of the AAUP.

### CONTACT!

*E-mail*  
Who's on e-mail?? This is the best way to exchange information (and the cheapest) and a lot easier and quicker than fax. AAAA is looking at setting up a more frequent news service for members via e-mail or

even a chat service if we have enough interest.

If you're on the net, send me an e-mail so I have your address.

*phil@aerialag.com.au*

### STOP PRESS

NSW Pesticides Bill set to pass through both houses of Parliament – check out the Hansard debate on 11 November in the Assembly and 18/23 November in the Council at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au)



Gwydir Air announces new CP solid stream nozzle – 0/30/90 deflectors.



The National Strategy for the Management of Ag. and Vet Chemicals is back on the agenda with a workshop in Canberra on 6 December. Maybe one day we'll get a consistent approach across Australia...



ACCC rejects ACIC submission for imposition of a levy on endosulfan to cover compensation and other costs from last season. Discussions are continuing.

#### DISCLAIMER

Information in this newsletter should not be taken as official advice. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the AAAA.