**For Immediate Release**

Contact Name:

Phone:

Email:

**Drone Operators: Please Keep My Local Aviation Business, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Safe**

 **(Name of aviation business here)**

YOUR CITY, STATE — April XX, 2017 — Agricultural aviators, like those at [BUSINESS NAME], apply crop protection products to nearly 20 percent of all cropland nationwide to protect consumers’ food, fiber (plant-based materials, like cotton, for clothing), and biofuels from pests and diseases. This brings down the cost of Americans’ food, clothes and gasoline and ensures most Americans have an abundance of healthy foods conveniently available to them.

The agricultural aviation industry also uses aircraft to fight fires nationwide, protect public health by spraying for mosquitoes and protect the environment by killing invasive species and weeds that could dam rivers and streams.

Much of this work is done by flying just 10 feet above the ground, and all of it is done at 500 feet or below.

With a 400-foot legal ceiling on drone flights, agricultural aviators share airspace with drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

[NAME], owner and pilot of [BUSINESS NAME] said, “Safety is our primary concern with drones. This is a new hazard for pilots like me who work in low-level airspace, and we want to avoid an unwanted encounter with a UAV at all costs.”

While agricultural aircraft are clearly visible with a 60-foot wingspan and loud engine, UAVs can’t be seen while flying over a field at 140+ mph. That’s why all UAV users should follow the law and steer clear of manned aircraft.

When certain birds hit an ag aircraft, they can break through an aircraft’s windshield and down an aircraft. Bird strikes can be lethal. A UAV made of more than feathers, hollow bones and sinew has the potential to be even more deadly.

To ensure that UAV operators don’t accidentally jeopardize the safety of manned aircraft, they should land their UAV immediately if they see an ag aircraft nearby.

But UAV operators can do even more to fly safely by making sure they are familiar with the operator’s manual and well-trained. Then, on the day they’ll be flying, they can contact local agricultural aviation operations by consulting [tiny.cc/findaerialapplicator](http://www.tiny.cc/findaerialapplicator) so they’ll be aware of the presence of manned aircraft and steer clear of that area. The database contained in that link is not completely comprehensive, but does contain contact information for a good number of aerial applicators nationwide. Just a few minutes of a UAV operator’s time could prevent an accident.

UAV operators can also equip their drones with visible strobe lights so they can be seen by other pilots (manned and unmanned) who are flying nearby. They can also equip them with electronic tracking devices, such as ADS-B, that pilots of manned aircraft equipped with similar technology can use to track the UAV. They should also purchase UAV liability insurance in case there’s an accident.

“Whether a UAV operator has been flying model aircraft for 30 years or just pulled a new DJI Phantom out of a box, they can keep pilots like me safe so we can continue to help your local farmers put food on your table,” [LAST NAME OF AG AVIATION OWNER] said.

[THE FOLLOWING COMPANY INFORMATION IS OPTIONAL.]

*[COMPANY NAME] has been in business in [NAME OF LOCATION] since \_\_\_. They treat [# OF ACRES] of local agricultural crops each year helping local farmers produce a safe, affordable and abundant supply of food and fiber both locally, nationally, and globally.*

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