April 29, 2024

Fly Safe Campaign

PROFESSIONAL AERIAL APPLICATORS' SUPPORT SYSTEM

MAINTAIN ACCIDENT AWARENESS

Don't become a statistic!

NTSB has reported 2 ag accidents so far this year. There have been 2 fatal accidents not yet reported by NTSB.

CONSIDER TURNING ALTITUDES AND FERRYING AT 1,000' TO AVOID MID-AIR COLLISIONS

An NTSB accident report on a 2022 mid-air collision between two AT-802s in Arkansas highlights a critical consideration for avoiding mid-air collisions. The accident occurred when one airplane pulled up to turn at the end of a pass and collided with the second airplane that was ferrying somewhere between 400 and 500 feet AGL. The pilot of the airplane that was turning was killed; the pilot of the ferrying airplane was seriously injured. Neither aircraft was equipped with ADS-B and the pilots were not communicating by radio.

The NTSB investigation revealed that both pilots climbed to 600-850 feet in their turns and the surviving pilot noted that turbine ag airplanes commonly reach 600-700 feet when turning. PAASS has consistently reminded aerial applicators to "ferry above five (hundred) and stay alive" to reduce the chances of a mid-air collision. However, if turbine powered ag airplanes are commonly turning at altitudes greater than 500 feet, does this recommendation adequately protect against collisions between ferrying and turning aircraft? Think about how high you go in your ag turns and how high other ag pilots working in your area go in their turns. You may likely realize that ferrying at 500 feet doesn't provide the safety margin you thought it did. Ferrying closer to 1,000 feet will provide more clearance from aircraft making ag turns. The NTSB report suggested ferrying at 1,000 feet would have likely prevented the 2022 mid-air collision.

To further reduce your chances of being in a mid-air collision consider equipping your ag aircraft with ADS-B In. It will allow you to know where other ADS-B equipped aircraft are at, as well as provide those aircraft with your location. It can be set to provide audible warnings when another aircraft enters a user-set range, meaning it doesn't need to be continuously monitored. Communicating on the radio with other ag pilots working in the area can also reduce the risk of a mid-air collision.

Check Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)

Always check TFR NOTAMs before flying! Make sure you have proof of a preflight TFR briefing from sources such as FSS or https://www.1800wxbrief.com.

Make a "Fly Safe" Resolution Now!