November 5, 2024

To the Editors of Time:

The National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) would like to point out an inaccurate statement made by author Jared Lindzon in an October 30, 2024, online post titled *Fully Autonomous Crop Dusting* that was a part of Time's Best Inventions of 2024. In discussing the performance of crewed agricultural aircraft, Jared wrote that "their less-than-targeted application can destroy landscapes."

Modern agricultural aircraft are equipped with high-tech application systems that control spray droplet size (critical for keeping spray on target), measure weather, and accurately guide the aircraft with sub-inch precision. When working near especially sensitive areas such as endangered species habitat, aerial applicators use these and other technologies to ensure such habitat is protected from the pesticides being applied. In fact, the U.S. EPA recently accepted NAAA's proposal to refine how aerial applications are modeled in EPA's endangered species risk assessments because of the proven accuracy of modern agricultural aircraft.

The aerial application industry treats 127 million acres of cropland annually. The enhanced yield provided by aerial applications on corn, soybean, wheat, cotton, and rice prevents the need for converting 27.4 million acres of natural areas into cropland – an area the size of Tennessee. The CO_2 sequestered every year by cover crops seeded from agricultural aircraft is the equivalent of removing over 400,000 cars from the road. Instead of destroying landscapes, agricultural aircraft are in fact helping to feed the world and protect our environment.

NAAA would also like to point out that farmers do not rent crewed agricultural aircraft to treat their crops – they hire commercial agricultural aviators who professionally spray, fertilize, and seed their crops. The statement "choppers are too big" doesn't fit the actual state of the industry. The most common agricultural aircraft in the U.S. is also the largest – the Air Tractor AT-802, which has a 9,249-pound payload capacity and can spray well over 3,000 acres per day.

We respectfully request a correction to your article and offer our services to ensure factual information is printed in Time in the future in regard to the whole aerial application industry.

Most sincerely,

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