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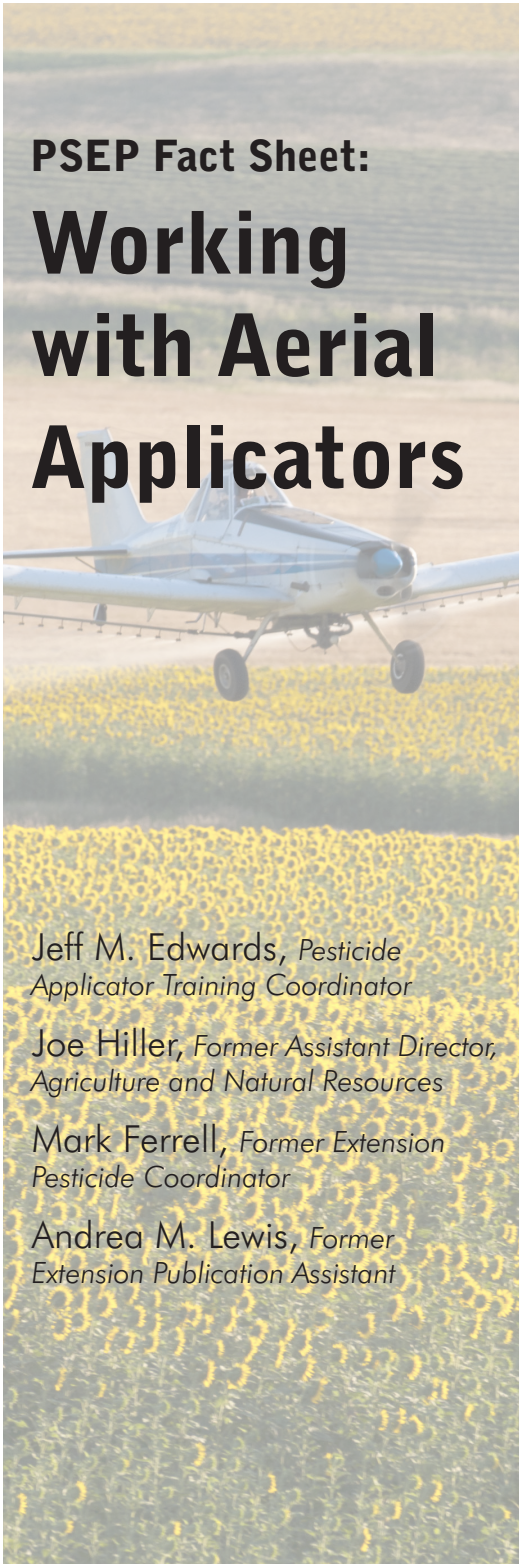

PSEP Fact Sheet:

Working with Aerial Applicators

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Aerial application of seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides play an important role in agriculture. The value of aerial application, however, is often lost on the general public. To many, aerial spraying symbolizes a public health risk and a source of concern, especially in areas where farms and ranches border suburban homes. Consideration of environmental protection and relationships with neighbors can often play an important role in minimizing possible concerns.

Planning

The following are considerations when working with aerial applicators:

Draw a map

Identify the fields to be treated and any crucial areas to avoid. Keep the map simple and easy to read during flight, with boundary landmarks clearly identified. Review the map with the pilot and carefully identify:

- Hazards to flight such as power lines, antennas, or wire fences
- Ponds, creeks, streams, or wetlands
- Sensitive or organically grown crops
- Beehives
- Sinkholes
- Buildings or neighbors close to fields that are being sprayed

Notify neighbors

Let neighbors know that an aerial applicator will be spraying. Give them as much notice as possible, especially if they keep beehives, have fieldworkers near the application site, or grow sensitive or organic crops. Be prepared to tell them what chemical the applicator will be spraying, its characteristics, and why the treatment is important. Check with a pesticide dealer or sales representative for this information. Good public relations can be as simple as a handshake or a phone call. Long before an aerial application is needed, let neighbors know that safety and environmental protection is a priority. Show them field maps and plants. They will be much more comfortable with an aircraft working nearby if they know someone who is knowledgeable is in charge of the operation.

Work closely with the pilot

Professional pilots are experts at interpreting the effects of changing weather conditions on operational plans of each job. Be sure to discuss this with the pilot and establish whose responsibility it is for making decisions on whether or not to spray. When hiring an aerial applicator, be sure to clarify who will rinse and dispose of empty containers, who will post reentry signs where required, where mixing/loading and plane rinse-out will occur, and who has responsibility for errors or misapplication.

References and Resources

Working With Aerial Applicators. Alliance for a Clean Rural Environment, Kansas City, Missouri.

Working With Aerial Applicators. E.J. Buffington and S.K. McDonald. Pesticide Fact Sheet #127. Colorado State University, Cooperative Extension. 2001