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Air Safety Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety

Date: July 12, 2024
Subject: CEN24FA260 - N795LA Pilot Interview
Contact: Kenneth Cook - ArkLa Flyers

This is summary of the interview conducted with the pilot of N795LA, Air Tractor AT-802, operated by Arkla Flyers in Bonita, Louisiana. The first half of this memorandum is a copy of the written statement provided by the pilot and the second half is a summary of a in person interview conducted on July 12, 2024:

I Ken Cook took off about 1:30pm and went east for about 1.5 miles when I noticed an Air Tractor to my left that was going southwest and was going to collide with me. I immediately pulled back hard on the stick to avoid a wreck, however my tailwheel hit the other plane and he immediately crashed and burned.

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A in-person interview was held with Mr. Cook on July 12, 2024, at the ArkLa Flyer's Bonita, Louisiana base of operations. Mr. Cook stated that he had been applying fertilizer throughout the day since about 0800 local and had completed 13 loads prior to the accident flight.

On the accident flight, he stated that he departed the airstrip to the east to complete a job about 12 miles from the base. While passing over a section of woods he noticed another Air Tractor heading southwest aimed at his cockpit. He quickly

pulled back hard on the stick to attempt a climb and almost missed the other airplane. He heard and felt a loud boom and shudder and thought that the tailwheel had hit and broke the other airplane's vertical stabilizer. He stated that he completed a turn back toward the site and saw a ground fire with airplane debris scattered among. He decided that due to damage to the tailwheel that he needed to complete his current job prior to landing. He stated that the airplane felt and handled fine, so he continued the 12 miles to the application field, completed the job, and return back to base.

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