



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Adam Gerhardt
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (ERA)
National Transportation Safety Board

Date: 9/17/2016

Person Contacted: Blake Back (Pilot's Ground Assistant)

NTSB Accident Number: ERA16FA316

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the ground assistant who was with the pilot (Jason Watson) on the morning of the accident.

Summary:

- Mr. Back reported that the pilot (Jason Watson) operates from the Berrien County Airport (4J2), Nashville, Georgia.
- Mr. Back reported that on the day of the accident, the pilot planned to complete three separate flights for aerial application spraying. The pilot was spraying "Knack" insecticide, with water, on cotton fields. For the past two weeks, the pilot had been primarily spraying cotton fields.
- Mr. Back reported that about 15 gallons of fuel was added to the single fuel tank in the airplane, which resulted in a "top off" for the first flight.
- He reported that the airplane departed for the "first run of the day" at 7:15AM local time. This first flight was about 1 hour and 15 minutes in duration.
- When the pilot returned to the airport after the first flight, he told Mr. Back that "everything seems good."
- Mr. Back reported that before the pilot departed for the second flight, the pilot fueled the airplane with 17 gallons of fuel, which resulted in a "top off." Mr. Back reported that he loaded the Knack chemical/ water application.
- He reported that the second flight departed at 8:55AM local time.
- He reported that the tank used for refueling is based at Berrien County Airport. The tank is about 450 gallons and it is the pilot's personal fuel tank. It is a trailer type fuel tank that is green in color.
- Mr. Back reported that on Tuesday 9/13/2016, he and the pilot refueled the fuel tank with 120 gallons of 100 low lead from Henry Tift Myers Airport (TMA) in Tifton, Georgia.



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- He reported that 40 to 50 gallons remained in the fuel tank prior to this refuel. Mr. Back was unaware of where the pilot got the "large load" of fuel previously.



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NTSB Accident Number: ERA16FA316

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the ground assistant who was with the pilot (Jason Watson) on the morning of the accident.

Summary:

- Mr. Back reported that the pilot completed three aerial application flights the day before the accident on Thursday 9/15/2016. He completed "three loads" and used about 45 gallons of fuel from the pilot's personal trailer-based fuel tank.
- He reported that the trailer-based fuel tank was labeled as a "Super C" tank, which was made in Doerun, GA.
- Mr. Back reported that he does not know when the fuel tank filter was replaced, or even if it had been replaced.
- He reported that normally during preflight if they had not pumped fuel for a few days or more, they would run a gallon or two of fuel through the fuel line because of discoloration (brownish). After pumping a few gallons, the fuel would return to a "normal blue" 100 low lead color, and then fuel would be added to airplane's fuel tank.
- He reported that to his knowledge, there was never anything but 100 low lead in the pilot's trailer fuel tank.
- He reported that the fuel pump hose was about 30 ft in total length. On 9/12/2016, an additional 20 ft fuel hose was added to the existing 10 ft fuel line. He added that it was not "aviation grade." A fuel pump nozzle that electronically displayed the volume of fuel pumped was also added.
- Mr. Back reported that this fuel tank was made for the pilot on 8/25/2015. The pilot picked up the tank within two or three weeks and began using it for his aerial application operation.



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- He reported that the pilot intended on spraying a 13-acre cotton field, which was near the accident site. The pilot also intended on spraying another larger field nearby, which was over 100 acres.
- Mr. Back reported that the pilot liked to spray the “larger fields first, to lighten his load,” before spraying smaller fields.
- Mr. Back believed that the 13-acre field the pilot planned to spray was about 8 to 9 minutes of flight time from the departure airport.
- He reported that all of the spraying was on cotton fields. The pilot was spraying for white flies.
- Mr. Back reported that he loaded 150 to 160 gallons of chemical products (Knack) in the airplane before the accident flight.
- Mr. Back reported that he observed the pilot sump a cup to a cup and a half of fuel from the accident airplane before the first flight of the day.
- Mr. Back reported that the pilot added a quart of oil on Tuesday 9/13/2016.
- Mr. Back reported that he watched the pilot put on his lap belt and shoulder harness before departing on the accident flight. He also reported that the pilot was wearing his flight helmet.