

Helicopter Spray Operations Over Solanco May Warrant Aircraft

By ERNEST J. NEILL

Dr. C. M. Voss, entomologist at Gettysburg, Pa., today advised Lancaster Farming that interest in helicopter crop spraying in southern Lancaster County has created a desire to provide a permanent local helicopter spraying service to growers of Lancaster County.

Operating like an Army task force, the helicopter moved into Solanco last week to meet an invasion of pea aphids on the Gibbs Food, Inc., farms near Quarryville and at the experimental farm near Little Texas.

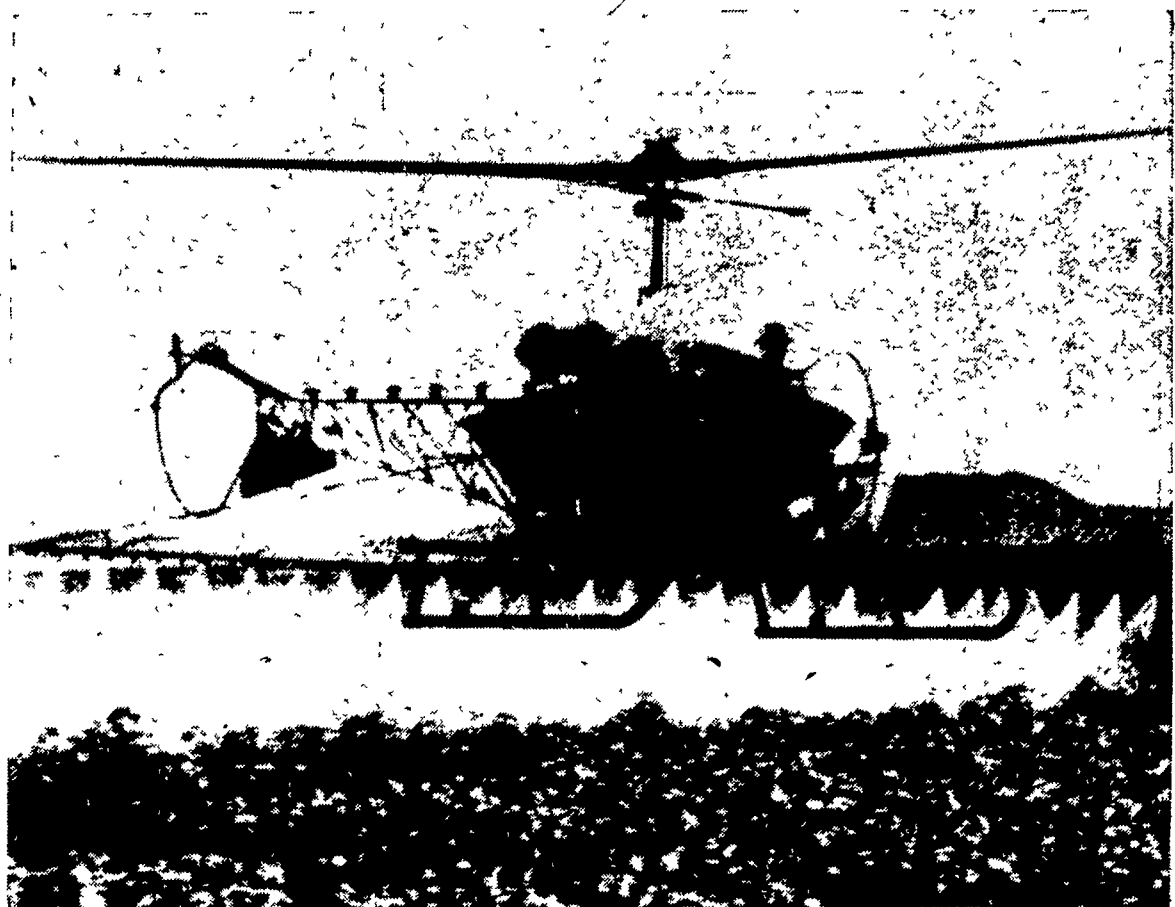
Casualties, when estimated, proved almost a 90 per cent kill.

Presence of the whirly-bird aroused no end of interest among other farmers, both those growing peas for Gibbs, and those producing crops on their own. Gibbs was the first to contract for use of the helicopter in Lancaster County, and the one in use came from Helicopters for Agriculture, New England Helicopter Service, Inc., State

Airport, Warwick, Rhode Island. Should demand warrant investment in a helicopter, it would be based at Gettysburg, where Dr. Voss headquarters. Control of insects and plant diseases could be handled on a moment's notice, so to speak. It must be considered, however, that the investment would be in the neighborhood of \$40,000 or more.

Through Veryl (Dutch) Barr, manager of the experimental farm at Little Texas, who supervised the spraying program here, more was learned of the aerial spraying service. The company which did work in Lancaster County has applied five helicopters and two Super Cub cruisers to agricultural aviation, for spraying, dusting and seeding. In addition, the firm does commercial flying and photography. Pilots during the Lancaster County stay were Richard Case, former Marine pilot, from Connecticut, and

Lancaster Farming by Helicopter



Helicopters for agriculture came into reality locally last week with the spraying operations in the southern end of Lancaster County where a 90 per cent kill of pea aphids was reported on Gibbs Foods, Inc.,

experimental farms near Little Texas. This photo shows how close the helicopter can operate to crops, forcing chemicals between the plants, to the underside of leaves to the ground.

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Dr. Voss. Assisting in refueling and reloading operations was Gale Melms of Colorado.

Advantages of the helicopter are many in agriculture. Winged aircraft face danger of stalling, speeds must be maintained at a high level to prevent stalling; fast pull-ups are necessary for trees, telephone and high tension lines, and hills. As a result some portions could be missed in a field being sprayed, and — as all pilots well know — crop dusting at one time held a high casualty rate.

Hills and woods of Lancaster County make the helicopter especially desirable.

Loading of spray and dusts can be done on the grower's property, as the landing area requirements of the helicopter

are small. This gives the grower complete supervision of the program, custom-tailored to his requirements. Growers can point out from the helicopter field boundaries and spots of infestation before spraying — or by marking the fields with a newspaper page or piece of cloth — thereby eliminating mistakes or misunderstandings.

Flies at 35 Miles Per Hour

Since the helicopter can fly at much lower speeds (operations in southern Lancaster County were at an approximate 35 miles per hour) more chemical is forced into and under the foliage, and danger of drift is lessened. The downwash of the rotor gives better penetration of spray or dust and under-surface coverage, as well as smooth, even spread of chemical across the swath. Helicopters are able to get into tight corners and obstructed areas. Spot treatment of heavily infested areas and slower flight to increase the deposit can be easily accomplished.

Helicopters can safely handle rough and hilly terrain and can spray with winds in excess of ten miles per hour with good insect control. Perfect visibility and rapid control response help the pilot do an efficient job and swath control with short turns can be very accurate.

There are many ways the helicopter can be of use in Lancaster County, such as was shown by the emergency call made by Gibbs Proven applications have been made on canning crops for pea aphids, bean beetles, corn worms and beetles, tomato and potato blight and insects. In fruit crops, the helicopter has checked codling moth, mites, scab and other diseases in apples, and has applied stop-drop hormone. Brown rot and insects in peaches have been curbed. Legume and forage crop insects, tobacco blue mold and insects have been stopped. Helicopters have been used in mosquito and fly control. Canker worm and gypsy moth in shade trees have been eliminated and weed control on field crops has been proved successful. For commercial applications, brush control on hillsides and power-line right-of-ways has been successfully accomplished by the helicopter.

200 Acres Sprayed Here

According to "Dutch" Barr, 200 acres were sprayed, both on the Gibbs experimental farm and on the farms of contract growers. Possibilities of its applica-

tion in tobacco and tomato infestations and ailments are also reality.

To show its flexibility, while at the Gibbs Farm, a call was received from the Delaware Peninsula, where an invasion of armyworms called for a new field of attack. Spending two nights here, the helicopter, its truck and automobile crew, moved on to Hanover where another crop emergency had arisen.

Costs are estimated to run around \$5 per acre for spraying, depending on existing conditions. As those of southern Lancaster County observed, the helicopter is able to follow contours, to fly at tree-top heights, or make slow, gentle pull-ups at the end of fields.

Dutch Barr first saw the helicopter in operation near Geneva, N. Y., where spraying and dusting of potatoes and cabbage was underway. "There is no damage to field crops, there is no machinery being pulled through to damage crops with wheel tracks," Dutch told Lancaster

(Continued from page 11)

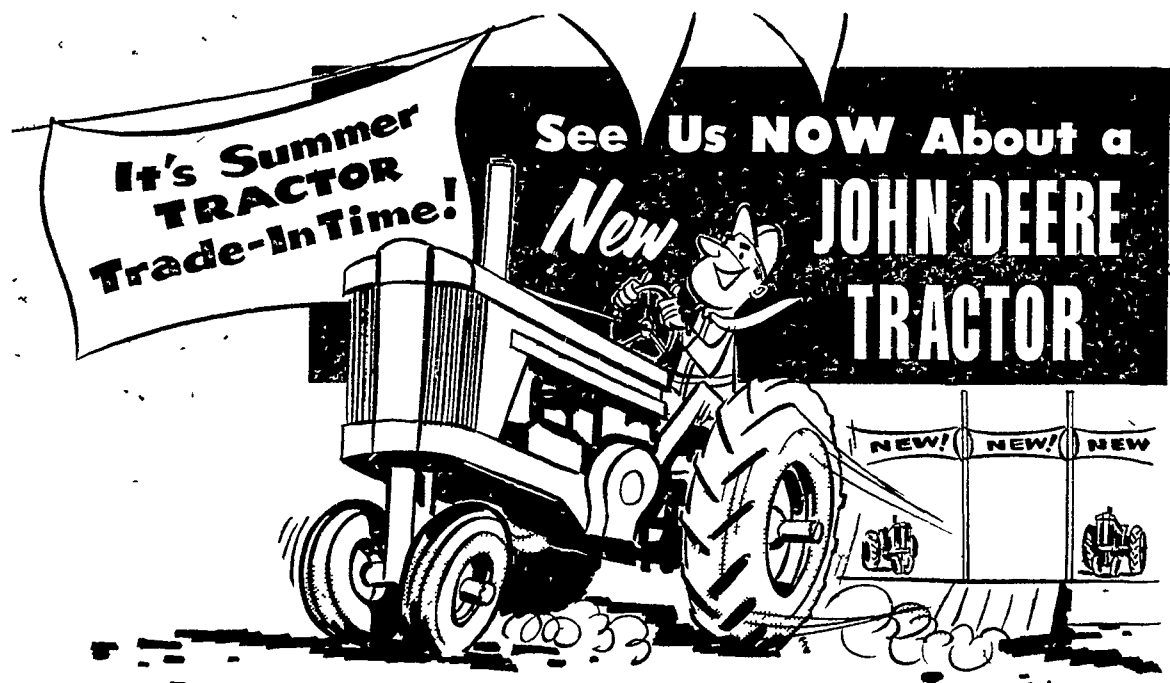
Mahoning Valley Guernseys Join National Group

H. M. Travis of Mahoning Valley Farm in Smicksburg has been elected to membership in the American Guernsey Cattle Club, non-profit agricultural organization serving over 40,000 purebred Guernsey breeders throughout the United States. Mr. Travis started with purebred Guernseys in 1927 and now owns 70 head. Mr. Travis is a member of the Pennsylvania State and Indiana County Guernsey Breeder's Associations.

The American Guernsey Cattle Club records the registration of purebred Guernseys — those whose ancestry can be traced back to the Isle of Guernsey original home of the breed. The AGCC also records the results of official production tests; and through Golden Guernsey, Incorporated, supervises the marketing of Golden Guernsey Milk.

CHRISTIANA SCHOOL CLOSES

Final graduation exercises were held last weekend at the Christiana High School, where students next fall will attend the new Octorara Area School.



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