



Wings Aerial Applicators is a family-owned and operated company that conducts low level aerial application operations out of Braden Airpark (N43) between March-October annually. Our company has been conducting these operations in this area for almost ten years. Our company has been in operation for nearly thirty years and covers a broad area in multiple states, mainly on the East Coast.

Aerial application is a means of dispensing a product onto a target area. This can be seed, fertilizer, or a pesticide, and can be dispensed with both liquid and dry applications. Aerial application is the most unobtrusive form of application, does not compact the soil, damage the crop, erode the soil, and does not contaminate non-infected areas of crops. Aerial application is important regardless of whether a crop is grown organically or conventionally, and is the quickest, most-efficient method of application.

The aircraft utilized are fixed-wing and mainly yellow in color. The aircraft are heavily loaded during takeoff, and may take longer to climb to altitude than other aircraft seen operating out of Braden Airpark. These aircraft are also larger than many of the aircraft that fly out of Braden Airpark on a regular basis, which may make them appear to be lower than they are. Our pilots are well-trained professionals and safety is always our first priority.

These operations primarily take place over agricultural fields, but can also take place over forests or swamps. The path the pilot takes to fly each field varies based on terrain, homes, animals, and obstacles such as power lines, trees, and towers. Each pilot flies the field in the safest manner possible in the given conditions, with the least hindrance to those living nearby. Our pilots undergo an annual medical screening process, annual safety training, annual flight training, and annual pesticide training.

There are several different types of applications that may take place throughout the course of a typical growing season. From March through August, the main applications are fungicide and fertilizer on corn, beans, and wheat. Foliar fungicides are valuable tools for management of some important diseases of corn. This timed fungicide application on corn protects the plant against disease and disease pressure, increases the health and longevity of the plant, and boosts plant yield. There are a variety of products that may be applied, but they will mainly all fall under this category. When certain insect levels are above the economic threshold, an insecticide may be applied as well. This is all done with careful consideration, planning, and cooperation between local farmers and our business.

In September and October, the main applications are cover crop seeding. The aircraft will fly a bit higher during these operations, approximately 70-100 feet above the crop, sometimes higher if necessary for safety. Cover crop seeding has valuable benefits, and different seed types can be planted depending on the goal of the farmer. Planting cover crops replenishes soil nutrients, helps reduce erosion in the winter months, assists in reducing soil compaction, among many other benefits. Aerial application of cover crops allows for a longer germination time, as these seeds are planted over standing crops. This provides maximum benefits for the growers as well as the plants. Aerial application of cover crop does not damage any existing crops or compact the soil, and is the most efficient form of application.

Our team at Wings Aerial works with local police and county dispatch offices prior to applications that take place in the area.

Please do not be concerned about seeing low-flying yellow aircraft in the area. We are simply here to do our job safely and then continue on. You may be tempted to stop and photograph or video the pilots doing their job, but this actually affects our ability to do our job safely and effectively. The best thing to do is keep going about your day as usual, just as we are!

The Wings Aerial team hopes this provides some context into what we do in the area. We love getting to work with local farmers and contribute to the local economy and community. We appreciate your support and patience as we go about our work.