

A distant plane Monday flew

over the South Texas farmland

crop duster. He paced the caliche

roadway, looking up and shaking

he said, that were used to fell the

damage the Pentagon.

possibilities."

World Trade Center towers and

within 48 hours and just got vot-

ed a \$15 billion aid package," he

said. "And we are still on the

ground because of theoretical

As president of the approxi-

mately 2,000-member National

Agricultural Aviation Associa-

tion, Kornegay insists for mem-

bers across the country that ter-

rorism by crop duster is unlikely

and that farmers are losing valu-

said. "Every hour that goes by,

insects, disease, and pestilence

are eating out nation's crops."

tion Administration ordered all

agricultural aircraft grounded. It

was the second grounding since

the attack and was based on in-

formation that suspected terror-

ists had inquired about the

The order continued Monday.

The FBI said the grounding

The fear is that the dusters

Three Middle Eastern men re-

could be used to poison the food

portedly inquired about crop-

duster planes during visits earli-

er this year to a single-runway

was a precautionary measure as

they continued their investiga-

tion into the attacks.

On Sunday, the Federal Avia-

'We need to fly today,' he

"They were back in the air

It was commercial airliners,

where Pat Kornegay parks his

FAA orders grounding

of agricultural planes

Continued from page 8

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on page 9

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Crop dusters supportive of grounding airport in Belle Glade, Fla.

"The intelligence community came to us and encouraged us to shut down the crop dusters," FAA spokesman Scott Brenner

Crop dusters also were grounded Sept. 16 and for the past week have been barred from flying over metropolitan areas, with some exceptions. The crop dusters were grounded along with all other civilian aircraft after the attacks, with flights resuming Sept. 14.

We need to fly today. Every hour that goes by, insects, disease and pestilence are eating our nation's crops.

> - Pat Kornegay cropduster

Others crop dusters Monday said they supported the grounding but feared its extension.

"It's probably necessary if they're having some reports of some of these terrorists wanting a plane," said Roger Horan, the owner of Hale County Spraying, which is now involved in Boll Weevil eradication in West

"I'd rather see proper planning done and safety come first," Post cotton farmer Lee Norman said. "It's much more important than the farmer and his

John Cannon, of the Rio Grande Valley community of Edcouch, flew crop dusters for 37 years, and never once thought of them as a weapon.

That's changed these past few weeks, and now Cannon winces at the logic. The planes are equipped to disperse tons of fertilizers and pesticides over miles of crops, he said.

And then there's the water. Just two sources supply the 1 million people of the Rio Grande Valley, as well as their fields.

'They could dump a whole 500 gallons into the reservoir in a matter of seconds," he said.

Kornegay said the fears are unfounded. Chemicals go through an exhaustive approval process and are kept in secured warehouses, he said. It would be impossible to contain something like anthrax without contaminating oneself and being unable to fly the plane, he said. He added that the known biological weapons aren't in forms that would mix with fertilizer liquids

He said the crop dusters were sophisticated, highly maneuverable, planes with tailwheels and high torque engines that took eight to 10 years to master, more difficult to fly then a commercial

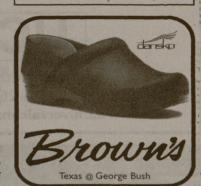
And they're not for rent. 'Are we going to run this

country on maybes or are doing to do what the president asks and go back to work?" he said.

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