

quantity of assessable Vidalia onions, estimated at 3.6 million 50-pound bags for the 2001 fiscal period. This would generate approximately \$22,500 above the anticipated expenses, which the Committee determined to be acceptable.

A review of historical information and preliminary information pertaining to the upcoming fiscal period indicates that the grower price for the 2001 fiscal period could range between \$10.00 and \$15.00 per 50-pound bag of Vidalia onions. Therefore, the estimated assessment revenue for the 2001 fiscal period as a percentage of total grower revenue could range between .08 and 1.2 percent.

This action would increase the assessment obligation imposed on handlers. While assessments impose some additional costs on handlers, the costs are minimal and uniform on all handlers. Some of the additional costs may be passed on to producers. However, these costs would be offset by the benefits derived by the operation of the marketing order. In addition, the Committee's meeting was widely publicized throughout the Vidalia onion production area and all interested persons were invited to attend the meeting and participate in Committee deliberations on all issues. Like all Committee meetings, the November 16, 2000, meeting was a public meeting and all entities, both large and small, were able to express views on this issue. Finally, interested persons are invited to submit information on the regulatory and informational impacts of this action on small businesses.

This proposed rule would impose no additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on either small or large Vidalia onion handlers. As with all Federal marketing order programs, reports and forms are periodically reviewed to reduce information requirements and duplication by industry and public sector agencies.

The Department has not identified any relevant Federal rules that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this rule.

A small business guide on complying with fruit, vegetable, and specialty crop marketing agreements and orders may be viewed at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/moab.html>. Any questions about the compliance guide should be sent to Jay Guerber at the previously mentioned address in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

A 30-day comment period is provided to allow interested persons to respond to this proposed rule. Thirty days is deemed appropriate because: (1) The 2001 fiscal period begins on January 1, 2001, and the marketing order requires

that the rate of assessment for each fiscal period apply to all assessable Vidalia onions handled during such fiscal period; (2) the Committee needs to have sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis; and (3) handlers are aware of this action which was recommended by the Committee and is similar to other assessment rate actions issued in past years.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 955

Marketing agreements, Onions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR part 955 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 955—VIDALIA ONIONS GROWN IN GEORGIA

1. The authority citation for 7 CFR parts 955 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674.

2. Section 955.209 is revised to read as follows:

§ 955.209 Assessment rate.

On and after January 1, 2001, an assessment rate of \$0.12 per 50-pound bag or equivalent is established for Vidalia onions.

Dated: January 4, 2001.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 01–717 Filed 1–9–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–NM–297–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B2 and B4 Series Airplanes; and Model A300 B4–601, B4–603, B4–620, B4–605R, B4–622R, and F4–605R (A300–600) Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes to revise an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A300 series airplanes; and all Model A300–600 series airplanes; that currently requires a one-time inspection for cracking of the

gantry lower flanges in the main landing gear (MLG) bay area; and repair, if necessary. That AD was prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by that AD are intended to detect and correct cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the MLG bay area, which could result in decompression of the airplane. This action would remove airplanes from the applicability of the existing AD.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 9, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000–NM–297–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227–1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain “Docket No. 2000–NM–297–AD” in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2110; fax (425) 227–1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained

in this action may be changed in light of the comments received.

Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (e.g., reasons or data) for each request.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 2000-NM-297-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-NM-297-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

On June 17, 1998, the FAA issued AD 98-13-37, amendment 39-10628 (63 FR 34589, June 25, 1998), applicable to certain Airbus Model A300 series airplanes, and all Model A300-600 series airplanes. That AD requires a one-time inspection for cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the main landing gear (MLG) bay area; and repair, if necessary. That action was prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil aviation authority. The requirements of that AD are intended to detect and correct cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the MLG bay area, which could result in decompression of the airplane.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Since the issuance of that AD, the Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, has issued French

airworthiness directive 1997-372-236(B) R1, dated July 12, 2000. The revised French airworthiness directive removes Model A300 F4-622R from the applicability of the original French airworthiness directive since that airplane model is not subject to the same unsafe condition specified previously for other Model A300 and A300-600 series airplanes.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would revise AD 98-13-37 to continue to require the actions specified in that AD. This proposed AD would remove Model A300 F4-622R airplanes from the applicability of the existing AD.

Explanation of Airplane Model Designation

The applicability of AD 98-13-37 includes the following airplane models: A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-605R, B4-622R, F4-605R, and F4-622R. However, since these airplanes are commonly referred to as "Model A300-600 series airplanes," that model designation was specified in the applicability of that AD. Since the issuance of that AD, the FAA has determined that these airplanes should be designated exactly as they appear on the type certificate data sheet. Therefore, the applicability of this proposed AD designates each specific model (excluding Model F4-622R airplanes, which are purposely removed) without referring to the common name of the airplane.

Cost Impact

Since this proposed AD would merely delete airplanes from the applicability of the rule, it would add no additional costs, and would require no additional

work to be performed by affected operators. The current costs associated with this proposed AD are reiterated in their entirety (as follows) for the convenience of affected operators:

The FAA estimates that 67 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 4 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$16,080, or \$240 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by removing amendment 39-10628 (63 FR 34589, June 25, 1998), and by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD), to read as follows:

Airbus Industrie: Docket 2000-NM-297-AD. Revises AD 98-13-37, Amendment 39-10628.

Applicability: Model A300 B2 and B4 series airplanes on which Airbus Modification 3474 has been accomplished; and all Model A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-605R, B4-622R, and F4-605R airplanes; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To detect and correct cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the main landing gear (MLG) bay area, which could result in decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

Restatement of Actions Required by AD 98-13-37

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 16,300 total flight cycles, or within 500 flight cycles after July 30, 1998 (the effective date of AD 98-13-37, amendment 39-10628), whichever occurs later, perform a one-time ultrasonic inspection for cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the MLG bay area, in accordance with Airbus All Operators Telex (AOT) 53-11, dated October 13, 1997.

(1) If any cracking is detected, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the AOT.

(2) If no cracking is detected, no further action is required by this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

Special Flight Permits

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 1997-372-236(B) R1, dated July 12, 2000.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 4, 2001.

Dorenda D. Baker,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 01-660 Filed 1-9-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000-NM-306-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-605R, B4-622R, and F4-605R (A300-600) Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes to revise an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all Airbus Model A300-600 series airplanes, that currently requires repetitive ultrasonic inspections to detect cracks on the forward fittings in the radius of frame 40 adjacent to the tension bolts in the center section of the wings, and various follow-on actions. That AD was prompted by reports of cracking due to fatigue-related stress in the radius of frame 40 adjacent to the tension bolts at the center/outer wing junction. The actions specified by that AD are

intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking on the forward fittings in the radius of frame 40 adjacent to the tension bolts in the center section of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings. This action would remove airplanes from the applicability of the existing AD.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 9, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-NM-306-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227-1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2000-NM-306-AD" in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

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- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to