

DELAY GRAHAM WARWICK / WASHINGTON DC

Learjet 45 grounding enters week number four

The grounding of Learjet 45 business jets has entered its fourth week after Bombardier delayed delivery of a data package to the US Federal Aviation Administration for recertification of the horizontal-stabiliser actuator assembly (*Flight International* 26 August-1 September).

The company says it delayed

delivery of the data package because some test results "were not satisfactory", indicating there were issues with materials used in the screwjack actuator that controls the pitch of the horizontal stabiliser, and is supplied by MPC Products of Skokie, Illinois. Bombardier says it plans to submit the recertification data package "as soon as possible,

but we are not taking shortcuts".

The delay means Bombardier is now covering half the cost to operators of chartering alternative aircraft while their Learjet 45s remain grounded, up from 25% in the first week following the 13 August airworthiness directive (AD) that grounded the fleet.

Under the alternative lift

scheme, operators can book up to 10h charter a week up to a maximum rate of \$2,800/h through Bombardier's Skyjet charter brokerage subsidiary in North America and the Bombardier Flexjet block-charter programmes in Europe and Asia. Around 220 Learjet 45s were in service worldwide when the AD was issued.

ENGINES KATE SANSFIELD / LONDON

Williams FJ33 to power D-Jet

Diamond Aircraft has selected Williams International's FJ33 turbofan to power its D-Jet very light personal jet, while selection of an avionics supplier is expected within weeks.

The Austrian manufacturer says the first 1,450lb-thrust (6.5kN) engine is scheduled for delivery in February. The FJ33 has also been selected by Adam Aircraft and Safire Aircraft to power their respective A700 and Safire Jet twins and is scheduled for certification at the end of this year.

The five-seat, all-composite D-Jet is now in its final design stage and construction of the first prototype is expected to begin later this month. "The first of three flight-test aircraft will make its debut at the Berlin air show next May," says Diamond Aircraft managing director Michael Feinig. "We are on target for first flight by November next year, with European Joint Aviation Regulation 23 certification planned for December 2005 and deliveries in 2006."

The D-Jet is Diamond's first foray into the jet market, and Feinig is confident the company will have secured around 500 orders by certification. With little marketing effort, "we have already received over 100 orders", he says, and much of the interest is coming from operators of single-engine turboprops and piston twins.

Production is set at 100 aircraft for 2006, ramping up to 200 aircraft a year thereafter. "We are building a 10,900m² [117,330ft²] facility at our Weiner Neustadt base to house D-Jet and DA-42 Twinstar diesel-twin production of 400 aircraft combined. This should be completed in November," Feinig adds.

The D-Jet is projected to have a cruise speed of 315kt (580km/h) at its maximum altitude of 25,000ft (7,625m). The aircraft's maximum take off weight is 1,999kg (4,400lb). Feinig says this is to avoid Eurocontrol's en route navigation charges which are levied on all aircraft above 2,000kg.

Diamond is "very close" to selecting an avionics supplier for the D-Jet's glass cockpit, with Honeywell's Apex, Garmin's G1000 and Avidyne's Integra the contenders.

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