



FARNBOROUGH AIR SHOW TESTS WANING AIRCRAFT MARKETS

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The world's biggest air show is due to start in England on Monday amid pressure on the industry's leaders to juggle growing concerns over jetliner demand and record production plans.

The Mecca of international aviation this week is at the airport of the small town of Farnborough, southwest of London. Since 1948, an international air show is held here every two years, in 2018 it will be its 70th anniversary. It has developed into one of the most important aviation showcases in the world, alternating with the Paris Air Show every other year at Le Bourget.

At the last Farnborough Air Show in 2014, deals worth \$200 billion (180.9 billion euros) were sealed, of which \$152 billion were in aircraft orders alone. The focus in Farnborough is clearly on passenger airliners, even when this time, the American Lockheed Martin F-35B Joint Strike Fighter, the vertical take-off version, will see its debut in England.

A total of 99 aircraft will be on display throughout the week, from Airbus' electrical aircraft E-Fan, seating two, up to the giant A380, fitting in over 500 passengers. The air show is open for the public on the coming weekend and reserved for trade visitors earlier in the week.

News from the behemoths

The US manufacturer Boeing takes centre stage this year, celebrating its 100th anniversary, since the son of a German immigrant had his company "Pacific Aero Products Co" registered in Seattle in 1916. Besides its jubilee pavilion, Boeing will present its first jet coming out in the second century of its history.

The Boeing 737 MAX-8, whose fourth test aircraft will be flown in England, is another re-incarnation of the venerable Boeing 737, which originally premiered with German airline Lufthansa in 1968. The newest model boasts the innovative geared turbo-fan engines and many features of the technologically advanced Boeing 787. In July 2017, the first one is planned to be delivered to Southwest Airlines, ahead of schedule.

Airbus also brings its newest offspring to England - as well a modernized version of its bestselling A320, which is now equipped with the newest-generation engine as well, being offered as A320neo (standing for "new engine option").



Airbus has recently suffered of massive problems with the PW1100G engines, leading to dozen non-delivered and engine-less A320neos being parked in Toulouse

Lufthansa operates the type as launch customer since January, but the delivery schedule is off course. "We built gliders", admitted Tom Williams, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Airbus.

But both manufacturers are also displaying their well-established models on demo flights: Airbus the A350 and the A380, Boeing the 787-9, also the Boeing 747-8F freighter in the static display. Very big aircraft, the 747-8 as well as the A380, have been hard sells in the last few years, however.

Attractions and niche products

Innovative smaller aircraft, to the contrary, have been doing very well on the market. Brazilian manufacturer Embraer is slated to show its recently modified bestseller E190-E2. It only flew on May 23 for the first time, with all new wings and engines, and is supposed to cover the long way from Brazil to England as part of the test program.

The real crowd-puller will come from Canada, however: In contrast to Airbus, Boeing and Embraer; Bombardier, after seven years of development, has brought out the first all-new passenger airliner since decades.

The C Series for 125 to 145 passengers is labelled as the most modern jet in the skies, halving the perceived noise as well as CO2 emissions, and at the same time burning just two litres of fuel per 100 km per passenger, less than a compact car.



Bombardier's C series gets rave reviews from passengers with wide-body comfort and huge windows, being a full 50 percent larger than those on the A320

Very fittingly, the C Series celebrates its commercial premiere this week: On Friday, the first flight with paying passengers will take place from Zurich to Paris, operated by launch customer Swiss, part of Lufthansa Group. On the opening day of the Farnborough Air Show, the first production aircraft will make a quick appearance in England from Zurich, with C Series chief pilot Peter Koch at the controls.

"Our aircraft will clearly be the star of Farnborough, if not the C Series, what else?", Koch said enthusiastically with regard to the planned appearance.

09 JULY 2016

SOURCE: DW

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