DAUSSAULT SAYS DELAYED 5X JET SCHEDULE SHOULD BE CLEAR IN EARLY 2016

News / Manufacturer

Dassault Aviation said on Monday it expects to announce early next year a new testing and production **schedule** for its **Falcon 5X** business jet, which has been delayed by problems with engines supplied by Snecma.

"When we have a better understanding (from Snecma), which should come soon, we will totally reorganize the schedule," Eric Trappier, chairman and chief executive of Dassault Aviation, said at an industry conference organized by the National Business Aviation Association. "We should be able to do that early next year." Dessault launched the Falcon 5X in 2013 and rolled out a prototype last June. The 16-seat plane, with a range of 5,200 nautical miles, was expected to make its first flight this year, be certified in 2016 and reach customers the following year.

That schedule was recently thrown into doubt after its Silvercrest engines developed problems. Snecma is a unit of Safran SA of France,

Industry experts have suggested the delay could be 18 months to two years. Dassault executives declined on Monday to discuss the potential length of the delay.

Delays are not uncommon in aircraft development. But a lengthy stall in the 5X program would affect suppliers that had counted on ramping up production in 2017.

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It also could deter buyers. "There are just too many other choices out there," said Janine Iannarelli, president of Par Avion Ltd, a business aircraft broker.

She added, however, that "this is a really interesting plane with the widest cabin in its class that actually has some serious range to it. If they can pin down a revised time frame, that will make it that much easier for Dassault and clients to deal with the situation. There are loyal customers who will wait it out."

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