



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Callaway, NE	Accident Number:	CHI01LA263
Date & Time:	08/02/2001, 1205 CDT	Registration:	N4478Y
Aircraft:	Piper PA-25-235	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The airplane sustained substantial damage during a forced landing to a cornfield after a loss of engine power. The pilot reported he, "... left the airport without fueling the airplane. Made a forced landing in a cornfield. The cornfield was the only available spot." The pilot reported the cornfield was muddy.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Fuel exhaustion due to the pilot's inadequate preflight. Contributing to the accident was the muddy field and the unsuitable terrain encountered during the forced landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

Findings

1. (C) FUEL SYSTEM - EXHAUSTION
 2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - ENCOUNTERED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

4. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MUDDY

Factual Information

On August 2, 2001, at 1205 central daylight time, a Piper PA-25-235, N4478Y, sustained substantial damage during a forced landing in a cornfield near Calloway, Nebraska. The pilot was not injured. The 14 CFR Part 137 aerial spraying flight had departed a private airstrip near Calloway, Nebraska, at 1100 and was spraying chemical when the airplane lost power. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed.

The pilot reported he, "... left the airport without fueling the airplane. Made a forced landing in a cornfield. The cornfield was the only available spot." The pilot reported the cornfield was muddy.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/06/2001
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	02/08/2000
Flight Time:	5400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3400 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4478Y
Model/Series:	PA-25-235	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted	Serial Number:	24-4150
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	04/15/2001, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	35 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4630 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Registered Owner:	Johnie Witthuhn	Rated Power:	235 hp
Operator:	Johnie Witthuhn	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BBW, 2547 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1353 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	60°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.21 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Calloway, NE	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1100 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Jim Silliman **Report Date:** 10/24/2002

Additional Participating Persons: Robert Bottom; FAA; Lincoln, NE

Publish Date:

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).