



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Good Hope, Alabama	Accident Number:	ERA23LA215
Date & Time:	April 24, 2023, 09:00 Local	Registration:	N623LA
Aircraft:	AIR TRACTOR INC AT-402A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Runway excursion	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot of the agricultural airplane was landing on a private runway that was about 24 feet wide and surrounded by wheat crop. The pilot described that, during the landing, the airplane was closer to the edge of the runway than he thought, and the airplane's right spray boom caught on the wheat after touchdown. The airplane subsequently veered off the runway and into the wheat field, resulting in substantial damage to the airplane's empennage and left wing. The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures of the airplane that would have precluded normal operation and that he should have checked the runway conditions before landing and considered the possible impact of the growing wheat on his operation from the runway.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's decision to land on a runway where there was insufficient clearance from obstructions (wheat crop) to operate safely.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Runway/landing area condition - Awareness of condition
Environmental issues	(general) - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Runway excursion (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	28,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 1, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 19, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 2000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 800 hours (Total, this make and model), 1950 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 90 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AIR TRACTOR INC	Registration:	N623LA
Model/Series:	AT-402A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2000	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	402A-1127
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 22, 2022 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	8000 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	PT6A-11AG
Registered Owner:	NEAL AIRCRAFT INC	Rated Power:	550 Horsepower
Operator:	Pitts Aerial Services	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KCMD,963 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	08:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 12000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	60°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.21 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Cullman, AL (PVT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Good Hope, AL	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:40 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	NONE PVT	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	801 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	36	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2500 ft / 24 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	34.090953,-86.851378(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Freeze, Christopher

Additional Participating Persons: Clay Perkins; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL

Original Publish Date: June 29, 2023

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class 4](#)

Note: The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=107307>

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).