



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Hartington, Nebraska	Accident Number:	CEN23LA357
Date & Time:	August 8, 2023, 13:00 Local	Registration:	N8847L
Aircraft:	Piper PA25	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported that while he maneuvered to apply agricultural product to a field, he did not perceive a higher slope of crops before making an application pass. The airplane’s landing gear became entangled in the crops and the pilot could not power the airplane free. The airplane impacted terrain and came to rest upright. Substantial damage was sustained to the airplane’s left wing and empennage. The pilot reported no mechanical malfunctions contributed to the accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s misperception of the surrounding elevation resulting in a collision with crops and terrain.

Findings

Personnel issues	Perception - Pilot
Environmental issues	(general) - Awareness of condition

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	45, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 30, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	August 5, 2021
Flight Time:	1354 hours (Total, all aircraft), 238 hours (Total, this make and model), 1239 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 393 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 229 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N8847L
Model/Series:	PA25 235	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1971	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	25-5358
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-540-B2C5
Registered Owner:	BECKER FLYING SERVICE INC	Rated Power:	235 Horsepower
Operator:	BECKER FLYING SERVICE INC	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:	KSUX,1092 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	42 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:52 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	110°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	260°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.12 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Hartington, NE	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Hartington, NE	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		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:	42.628493,-97.264823

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Aguilera, Jason
Additional Participating Persons:	Bernard VonRentzel; FAA FSDO; NE
Original Publish Date:	November 9, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192834

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).