

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198602316**

Airtractor AT 301

20 February 1986

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 198602316 **Occurrence Type:** Accident

Location: "Whitewoods", 65 km East Walgett NSW

Date: 20 February 1986 **Time:** 1935 aprx

Highest Injury Level: Serious

Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	1	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0

Aircraft Details: Airtractor AT 301

Registration: VH-FRC

Serial Number:

Operation Type: Aerial Work (Agricultural Spraying)

Damage Level: Substantial

Departure Point: "Whitewoods" NSW

Departure Time: 1935 aprx

Destination: "Whitewoods" NSW

Approved for Release: October 3rd 1986

Circumstances:

The pilot was making night spraying runs over a cotton crop. During the third run at about 50 feet above ground level, the engine suddenly lost all power. The pilot attempted a landing at slow speed in a flooded cotton field. Almost immediately after touchdown, the aircraft nosed over and sank into the soft muddy surface. The pilot was able to extricate himself from the partly water-filled cockpit. The subsequent examination of the engine revealed massive internal damage. It was likely that one connecting rod had failed, and this led to similar failures in three other cylinders. The reason for the initial failure was not determined. The pilot had selected the most suitable area available for the forced landing. When the aircraft overturned, the fibreglass roof of the cockpit failed, and cut into the top of the pilot's helmet. Had the pilot not been wearing this protection, it was likely he would have suffered head injuries and probably drowned.