

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199603404**

**Cessna Aircraft Company
Skylane**

22 October 1996

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199603404 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 45km NNE Helen Springs
State: NT **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Tuesday 22 October 1996
Time: 0730 hours **Time Zone** CST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Cessna Aircraft Company
Aircraft Model: 182Q
Aircraft Registration: VH-FMM **Serial Number:** 18265407
Type of Operation: Commercial Aerial Mustering
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Bore 5 Helen Springs NT
Departure Time: 0715 CST
Destination: Bore 5 Helen Springs NT

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	510.0	1300

Approved for Release: Friday, October 25, 1996

The pilot was mustering cattle. He carried two observers in the aircraft. The weather was warm, windy, gusty and moderately turbulent. Hoping to turn the lead cattle towards a bore, he commenced a descent from about 140 ft above the ground while turning downwind. His intention was to level off at about 30 ft abeam the cattle. He planned to maintain an indicated airspeed of 75 to 80 kts with 20 degrees of flap. However, he was unable to arrest the rate of descent through 30 ft. He found himself too low to bank the aircraft successfully away from the cattle for fear of hitting a wing on the ground. With a left quartering tailwind, the aircraft drifted towards the herd. The pilot tried yawing the aircraft and pulling up to avoid the cattle but the left main landing gear wheel struck a heifer across its back.

Despite tearing off the left main wheel, bending the landing gear leg aft, and killing the heifer, the aircraft remained airborne and eventually gained altitude. The pilot then smelt fuel which was leaking from a fuel line, broken by the dislodged left landing gear leg. He declared an inflight emergency to flight service and to Helen Springs homestead. Homestead personnel quickly ran a grader over the airstrip to smooth it out and hopefully make it safer for the emergency landing. The pilot managed to land the aircraft without further damage.

The pilot probably encountered low windshear.