

Pilot's lucky escape after clipping power lines

REGINA LOVICHARRY BRUMPTON *Townsville Bulletin* August 21, 2014 7:22AM



Helicopter Crash late this afternoon when a man spraying fields clipped power lines on his last run, crashing the chopper into a sugar cane field near Horseshoe Lagoon, Clare area. Fire crews have made the area safe after a small amount of chemical was taken from the site to be disposed of. Photo: Scott Radford-Chisholm

A HELICOPTER pilot had a miracle escape yesterday afternoon after crashing a helicopter into a field outside Giru and pulling himself from the wreck.

A man described as a veteran, second-generation helicopter pilot was flown to Townsville Hospital with back, neck and chest pains yesterday after downing an \$800,000 cropdusting chopper in a field at Horseshoe Lagoon about 5pm yesterday.

The helicopter's owner said the pilot had clipped a power line at the property, on Poletti Rd, near Giru.

Ayr aerial spraying contractor Roncato Helicopters owner Joshua Roncato said he was "still in shock".

"He's been in the industry for a long time," he said of the pilot who crashed.

"He's from New Zealand and his father was a pilot, so he's definitely done a bit.

"The main concern is that he's all right and walking. Luckily he's alive."

Ergon Energy workers shut off power supply to the property, allowing emergency services access after a live wire was left across the road.

Firefighters donned hazmat suits to assess the chemical spill from the Robinson R66 leaking pesticide spray.

Ayr Queensland Fire and Emergency Services station officer Greg Vincett said the pilot was lucky to walk away from the crash and was waiting on the side of a hill for an ambulance to arrive.

He said the helicopter was making its last run spraying pesticides on a nearby corn field when the crash occurred.

“He clipped the power lines and brought the helicopter down and he overturned into the cane paddock,” he said.

“There was a small amount of chemical which was released into the paddock.

“(Firefighters) cleaned up approximately two shovels worth of chemical and put it in an oval drum to be transported away at a later date.

“It can be dangerous, in copious amounts, that substance.

“With all these incidents it could turn out a lot worse.”

Extracted from: <http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/pilots-lucky-escape-after-clipping-power-lines/story-fnjfzs4b-1227031463073>

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