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# mail

SPREADING THE NEWS

FEBRUARY  
2008



Graeme Martin

## From the desk

The past six months have not been easy for Super Air. Much to our distress, we have suffered a tragic loss as a result of the fatal air accident that took the life of pilot Andrew Wilde.

We place an enormous emphasis on safety, and we have worked hard with the industry and our customers to minimise the risks faced by our pilots. Despite the fact that top-dressing will always have an element of danger, it is our goal to ensure that all our staff go home to their loved ones at the end of each working day. Andrew's accident will further increase our resolve to improve safety within the top-dressing industry.

As with any fatal air accident, the Civil Aviation Authority has started an investigation into the cause, and Super Air is co-operating fully with this. We also have our own internal investigation in place.

Hopefully the year ahead will bring happier times. There will still be challenges, of course. One of the areas that we will focus on in 2008 is product quality, particularly with reference to lime. We know that lime millers are working on improving product quality for aerial application, and we are in full support of their efforts. Lime is particularly popular amongst farmers on hilly country, yet it is also one of the more challenging products to spread from a plane. Efforts by the lime industry to develop an affordable product that is easy to spread are much appreciated.

We will also continue to focus on working with farmers to improve or maintain airstrips. We have had a good response to this initiative in the past, and we thank those farmers who have assisted us in this area to date.

International price pressures have impacted many sectors of New Zealand industry, and top-dressing is no exception. We continue to face significant increases in the cost of fuel. Our maintenance and operating costs are also rising, with some bases applying landing fees at a rate of \$20 per landing.

We will be working hard this autumn to service all of our clients, especially those who missed out in the spring rush – in part the result of the anticipated rise in the price of fertiliser. We wish you well for the autumn season and look forward to working with you.



Andrew Wilde

## Obituary

It is with deep sadness that we report the death of Super Air pilot Andrew Wilde. Andrew lost his life as the result of an accident on 10 November 2007, whilst top-dressing.

Andrew began his flying career early, learning to fly and gaining his commercial pilot's license whilst at Rathkeale College in Wairarapa. He wanted to be an agricultural pilot, and stints driving trucks and working towards a builder's qualification only strengthened his desire to fly.

On the advice of Alan Nicholl from Robalan Air in the Hawke's Bay, Andrew approached Super Air for training. He joined the company in 2002, doing the hard yards as a loader driver for two years.

From that point on, his dream was realised. He was trained as an ag pilot by Gary Langman in Rotorua, and in 2004 he started working as a top-dressing pilot for Super Air in the Whakatane region, home to his family ever since.

Those in the industry who knew him say that Andrew had all the hallmarks of a top-dressing pilot – he loved his work, loved the environment and the farmer clientele, and was very hard working.

Andrew will be remembered by many for his appetite for work – he was very organised and covered a wide geographical area, extending down to Gisborne. Some might say that he worked hard to ensure he had time to pursue his other passion – fishing with his sons and his mates.

Well-respected and well-liked by customers and colleagues, Andrew will be sorely missed. He leaves behind his wife, Sarah, and their three sons, Ben, Hamish and Hayden. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at the time of this sudden and tragic loss.

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## Calendar

Have you got an important date that you want other farmers to know about? A lamb fair, bull sale, deer sale, for instance? If so, let us know and we will include it in our next newsletter. This will be issued in September 2008 and is distributed to all farmers in the North Island. Email your event dates to [reception@superair.co.nz](mailto:reception@superair.co.nz)



# Who we are and where we are

**✈️** Murray Hargreaves top-dresses farms around the lower section of Northland. Murray understands some of the challenges facing farmers, as he has a 52-ha farm himself.

**✈️** Lester Mason has been top-dressing in the Far North for over 20 years. Prior to that he flew ag planes in the King Country.

**✈️** The farms around Dargaville are top-dressed by Super Air pilot Murray Rowe, who has been with the company since 2002.

**📶** Our head office is based on the outskirts of Hamilton, near the airport. This is where our administrative staff work, and it is also where calls to our 0800 number (0800 787 372) are received.

**🔧** Our workshop is located next to our head office. This is where our planes come to be serviced, and it's where we build our specialist fertiliser loading trucks, and planes for overseas customers.

**✈️** Hamilton-based pilot Glenn Haora started flying at the age of 16, and spent two seasons aerial spraying in Queensland before returning to New Zealand.

**✈️** Raglan-based pilot Kevin Young not only top-dresses farms in his district but also acts as the company's test pilot. When not flying, he puts his engineering background to good use, helping out in the hangar.

**📞** Keith Wilkie is the Super Air representative in the Taranaki and King Country districts. He can be contacted on 027 472 2196.

**✈️** Te Kuiti-based Fraser Wilson has experienced several sides of the ag aviation industry, having been a loader driver and a rep before he became a pilot.

**✈️** Joe Cave has spent a lot of his life on the move, having lived in New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia. Since 2000, though, he has been based at Te Kuiti, top-dressing the steep King Country hills.

**✈️** John McFadgen has been an ag pilot since 1994 and operates in the New Plymouth district. The son of a dairy farmer, he is also a qualified fitter and welder.

**📞** Craig Bodle is the Super Air representative in the Wairarapa district. He can be contacted on 027 277 4136.

**📞** Robert Thurston is the Super Air area manager for the Wairarapa district. He has vast industry experience, and trained as a pilot back in 1962. Robert can be contacted on 027 444 2721.

**📞** Lyall Underwood is the Super Air representative for the northern sector of the country. Lyall has worked as a shepherd and a livestock buyer. He can be contacted on 027 472 2187.

**✈️** One of Super Air's longest-serving pilots, Graeme Giffney has been an ag pilot since 1979. He moved to Thames in 2006, having previously serviced the Taupo district.

**✈️** Pukekohe is the base for pilot Shaun Burton. Shaun is a veteran of the top-dressing industry, having started out as a loader driver in 1972.

**📞** Rod Sloane is the Super Air representative for the eastern side of the North Island. He has worked in the stock and station industry for most of his life and can be contacted on 027 477 5073.

**✈️** Without doubt the longest-serving of Super Air's pilots, Derek Williams today operates part-time for the company, flying in the greater Tauranga district. Derek learned to fly in 1954.

**✈️** After five years in Australia, Philip Lay has returned to work for Super Air in Whakatane. Before crossing the ditch, he was the company's Thames district pilot.

**✈️** Having been born and bred in Rotorua, Lindsey Cameron now flies the skies above farms around the district.

**✈️** When he's not hurtling down the local mountains on skis or a bike, pilot Dion Currie can be found top-dressing farms around Taupo.

**✈️** When things get busy at Super Air, pilot Ray Long jumps in his plane to help out wherever he is most needed. The rest of the time he works in the hangar at Hamilton.

**✈️** Andy Dick's childhood dream was to become an ag pilot, and he achieved that in 2006, while working for Wairarapa Air Services (1979) Ltd.

**✈️** Mark Gerritsen joined Super Air in 2007 and was trained by Pukekohe-based Shaun Burton. After a stint helping out at Dargaville, Mark transferred to Masterton, where he is based today.

**✈️** Hamilton Ruback is a very familiar face in the Wairarapa district, having worked as a pilot for Air Services for many years.