Orchard Tech
ABN 16 102 266 894
PO Box 755 ROBINVALE VIC 3549
e: hari@orchardtech.com.au m: 0439 32 32 32 o: 03 9332 3232

Stake removal and bird control on an almond farm

What to expect before you start

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This sheet describes typical stake removal and bird control work and conditions. Your actual duties depend on the farm and what you are trained and authorised to do. Reading this sheet does not authorise you to drive a farm vehicle, operate machinery or repair equipment.

Who you work for

Orchard Tech is your employer. Your host farm (your host) directs your daily work. Both are responsible for your health and safety. Raise questions or safety concerns with your supervisor or Orchard Tech: Hari Yellina, 0439 32 32 32, or Soana Fanua, 0400 174 471.

Your working hours

Your confirmed roster sets your days, hours and breaks. Ask your supervisor if you are unsure.

The work you may do

Stake removal. Remove stakes by hand, as your host shows you. Your supervisor will tell you which stakes to remove and where to put them. If a stake is tied to a tree, your host will show you how to remove the tie. Take care not to damage trees, drip lines or pipes. If you see damage or a leak, tell your supervisor and say where it is (block and row).

Bird control. Help your host with hand work to keep birds away, as your supervisor tells you. Your host will show you what to do and where to work.

Hand tools. If the work needs a hand tool, use only the tools your host provides, and only after your host shows you how to use them.

This sheet covers hand work only. Driving, operating machinery, using power tools, handling chemicals and repairs are separate tasks. Any bird-control method that uses equipment or makes a loud noise is also a separate task. These tasks need their own instructions, training and authorisation from your host.

Working near machines

Tractors, Mules and other vehicles may be working in or near your block.

- **Keep separate from machines.** Before you start, ask your host to show you where to work and how workers are kept away from machinery. If a machine comes into your work area, stop work, keep clear and tell your supervisor.
- **Never approach a working machine** until the operator has stopped and clearly signalled you to come closer. Eye contact alone is not enough.
- **Be seen:** wear the high-visibility clothing your host provides, and watch for vehicles coming out of rows and turning at the headlands (the turning areas at the ends of the rows).

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Weather and the outdoors

Most work is outdoors in heat, cold, wind, rain and dust. Watch for holes, pipes, slippery ground and snakes. Work may change or stop in heat, storms or smoke: follow your host's instructions. Use sun protection all year (broad-brim hat, long sleeves, sunglasses, sunscreen), drink water often, take shade breaks and dress for the weather. Tell your supervisor straight away if you or a co-worker feel sick, dizzy or very hot.

- **Do not enter a block that is being sprayed or has a no-entry sign. Do not drink irrigation water:** it may contain fertiliser or chemicals.

Movement and lifting

Expect long walks on uneven ground, a lot of bending, pulling, and repeated lifting and carrying. Stakes can be heavy, long, sharp or splintered. Some stakes may be hard to pull out of the ground. A stake may come out suddenly. Keep your face away from it and keep your balance. Wear the gloves and eye protection your host provides. If a stake will not come out easily, do not force it: ask your supervisor. If a lift feels unsafe, ask for help or use the equipment provided. Report pain or discomfort early.

- **Carrying stakes:** watch both ends of a long stake so you do not hit anyone.
- **Dust:** follow your host's instructions for dust. If dust makes it hard to breathe or to see clearly, stop work, move to a safe place and tell your supervisor.
- **Noise:** follow your host's instructions for noisy areas. Wear the hearing protection your host provides, as instructed.

Moving around the farm safely

Mule or similar farm vehicle

Some farms use a side-by-side vehicle, such as a Kawasaki MULE, to carry workers and materials.

- **Driving is not covered by this sheet.** If driving is part of your confirmed job, get the safe work instructions, training and authorisation for that vehicle first. A licence alone does not show you can drive it safely.
- **Driver and passengers:** wear your seat belt every time, and the helmet and eye protection your host provides (your host will tell you what to wear). Keep doors or nets closed and arms and legs inside. Sit only in a seat with a seat belt. Never ride in the tray or bypass a safety device.

Farm traffic rules

- **Follow the farm traffic plan:** use set routes, obey signs and speed limits, and keep away from steep slopes, banks and water.
- **On foot:** use walking routes and keep clear of moving machinery. Stop in a safe place before using a phone.

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PPE and help on the farm

Your host will provide the personal protective equipment (PPE) for your tasks and show you how to wear, check and look after it. This may include safety boots, high-visibility clothing, gloves, eye or hearing protection, sun protection and a vehicle helmet. Report missing, damaged or poorly fitting PPE before you start. PPE does not replace training, instructions or other safety controls.

At induction, learn who your supervisor is, where water, toilets and first aid are, the emergency plan, how to get help where there is no phone coverage, and the check-in arrangements when you work alone.

- In a life-threatening emergency, call Triple Zero (000), then tell your supervisor. If you see a snake, keep clear and never try to catch or kill it. If a snake bites you, or you think you have been bitten, keep as still as possible and call 000 or ask someone to call.
- Report every injury, near miss or unsafe situation to your supervisor and Orchard Tech as soon as possible, even if it seems small.
- Ask for a demonstration, an explanation or language help whenever you do not understand.

Important note before starting any job

This sheet describes typical stake removal and bird control work. Before you start, your host will give you the job description and safe work instructions for your actual duties, the PPE you need, a farm induction and training for your tasks. Follow those instructions. Do not do any work without the required PPE, training and authorisation. Complete the induction at every new farm, and get the instructions and training for every new task. **If anything is missing, unsafe or unclear, stop and ask your supervisor. You can also contact Orchard Tech.**