Orchard Tech
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Transporting almonds with the bankout on an almond farm

What to expect before you start

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This sheet describes typical work and conditions for transporting almonds with the bankout at harvest. Your actual duties depend on the farm and what you are trained and authorised to do. Reading this sheet does not authorise you to operate a bankout or any other machine, or to 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. Bankout work at harvest may include night shifts.

The work you may do

The machines. At harvest, a pickup collects the almonds from the ground into its trailer. A bankout is a harvest machine that takes the almonds from the pickup trailer and carries them to the elevator site. The elevator is a machine with a moving belt that lifts the almonds.

Operating the bankout is the job, but only when you are authorised. Do it only after your host has trained, assessed and authorised you on that bankout. Get training for each new model. A licence alone does not show you can operate it safely. Your host will train you in its own procedure. The work may include:

- **Pre-start checks:** doing the daily checks you were taught, with the bankout shut down and made safe so it cannot start or move, using your host's procedure. Checks may include the seat belt, brakes, wheels, lights, horn, mirrors, windows, controls and radio. Adjust the seat and mirrors so you can see clearly, and lock the seat in the correct position. Report faults straight away. If a fault could make the bankout unsafe, do not use it. Tag it out as your host shows you and tell your supervisor.
- **Carting:** carrying the almonds from the rows to the elevator site, on the routes your host sets.
- **At the elevator site:** telling the person in charge by radio that you have arrived, as your host trains you. After unloading, move away only when you are told to, and follow the exit route your host sets.
- **End of shift:** cleaning the bankout with it shut down and made safe, then parking it as you were trained.

This sheet covers driving the bankout to and from the pickup and the elevator site. Emptying the pickup trailer into the bankout and unloading the bankout into the elevator are separate tasks. So are operating the pickup or the elevator, clearing blockages, adjustments, maintenance and repairs, blowing down machines with compressed air, jump-starting, electrical work, working at heights and entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels. Each needs its own instructions, training and authorisation.

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Driving the bankout safely

- **A full bankout is heavy** and can be less stable. It may need more room to slow down and stop. Your host will show you the load limit for that bankout. Do not drive with a load above it. Drive at the speeds your host sets. Slow down before turns, blind corners, sandy corners and blind rises (hill tops you cannot see over).
- **Stopping:** some bankouts use the drive system to slow down and stop. Your host will show you how your bankout stops and how to test it at the start of each shift.
- **Uneven ground and roll-overs:** rough ground, loose sand, slopes and banks can make a loaded bankout tip or roll over. Your host will show you places where the bankout is harder to control, and train you to drive it fully loaded. Keep away from steep slopes, banks and water. Always wear your seat belt: the roll-over frame or safety cab protects you only if you wear it. If the roll-over protection is missing, damaged or folded down, do not drive; ask your supervisor. If the bankout starts to tip, stay in your seat and hold on. Do not try to jump out.
- **Public roads:** never drive on or across a public road unless your host has confirmed that the bankout, your licence and the route are approved.
- **Follow the farm traffic plan:** at the pre-start meeting, your host explains the routes for the shift and any changes. Use only those routes, such as main tracks and headlands (the turning areas at the ends of the rows). Do not take short cuts. Obey signs and speed limits, and give way to working machines. If you do not understand the plan, ask for an interpreter or language help.
- **Headlands:** stop before you enter a headland every time. Look both ways for machines, trucks and people. Enter slowly, and only when it is clear.
- **Before you move or reverse:** check that everyone is clear and give the warning your host teaches you, such as the horn. Places the driver cannot see are called blind spots. Look in all directions and use your mirrors. Before you reverse, make sure no one is behind the bankout. If you cannot see that the way is clear, stop and ask for help.
- **Collision warning system:** if your bankout has one, use it as your host shows you. Always look for yourself as well.
- **At the elevator site:** machines and people on foot work close together here. Stop at the holding position your host shows you. Wait there until the person in charge tells you to approach. Go forward slowly, and watch where the elevator operator and other people are at all times. A person caught between the bankout and the elevator can be crushed. If anyone is in front of the bankout, stop. Stay in the bankout cab while you wait and move at the elevator site.
- **Radio:** keep your radio on and working at all times. If the radio fails or a call is not clear, stop in a safe place and sort it out before you go on.
- **Getting on and off:** keep the steps free of mud. Use three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet). Never get on or off a moving machine. Before you get out, stop and follow the safe-stop procedure your host teaches you.
- **No passengers:** do not carry passengers on the bankout. Never carry people on attachments, trailers or bins.

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- **When you are on foot:** wear the high-visibility clothing your host provides. Use walking routes and keep clear of moving machinery. Never approach a working machine until the operator has stopped and clearly signalled you to come closer. Eye contact alone is not enough.

Other dangers to watch for

- **Raised tub:** the tub (the bin that holds the almonds) may lift to tip the almonds out. Do not drive with the tub raised: the bankout can roll over. Your host will show you how to check that the tub is fully lowered before you drive. Never go under a raised tub, and keep everyone clear while it is raised or moving. Only maintenance staff may lift the tub for checks and fit the safety arm (the support that stops a raised tub from falling). If a raised tub will not lower, keep clear and tell your supervisor.
- **Power lines:** look up for overhead power lines on your routes, at the elevator site and before the tub is raised. Electricity can jump to a machine that comes close to a line, even if it does not touch it. Ask your host to show you the power lines and how to keep the bankout and its raised tub safely clear. If unsure, stop and ask. If your bankout touches a power line, or electricity jumps to it, stay in the bankout. Call 000 or ask someone to call, and warn others to keep away. Get out only if fire or another life-threatening danger forces you to. Your host will show you how to get out safely in an emergency.
- **Hydraulics:** bankouts may use hydraulics (oil under high pressure) to move parts such as the tub. If a hydraulic hose or fitting leaks or bursts, stop in a safe place, keep clear and tell your supervisor. Never touch a leak or feel for it with your hand: the oil can go through the skin. If you think this has happened, get urgent medical help, even if the injury looks small.
- **Moving parts:** the bankout augers (turning screws that move the almonds), the elevator and its belt can catch clothing, hair or a hand and pull a person in. Keep everyone clear while they move. Do not wear loose clothing, and tie back long hair. Never use a machine with a missing or damaged guard: report it. Never reach into a working machine. Never climb into the tub or onto the elevator hopper (the part that takes the almonds in).
- **Blockages and breakdowns:** if something blocks a machine, or a machine breaks down or is damaged, stop and tell your supervisor. Before anyone goes near, all machinery must be turned off and made safe so it cannot start or move, using your host's procedure. Wait until all moving parts have stopped. Clear a blockage only if you are trained and authorised. Only maintenance staff do repairs.
- **Fire:** follow your host's fire rules. Learn where the fire extinguishers are. If you see smoke or fire, move away, warn others and tell your supervisor straight away. Follow the farm emergency plan and go to the meeting point (muster point).

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.

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Noise, dust, night work and long hours in the seat

You may sit for long periods. Report pain or discomfort early. If you feel too tired or unwell to operate the bankout safely, stop in a safe place and tell your supervisor.

- **Noise:** bankouts and other harvest machines can be loud. Wear the hearing protection your host provides.
- **Dust:** harvest work is dusty. Keep the cab doors and windows shut, and run the cab fan as your host shows you. The fan draws air into the cab through a filter. If dust makes it hard to breathe or to see clearly, stop the bankout in a safe place and tell your supervisor.
- **Seeing clearly and night work:** keep the windows and mirrors clean. Dust, sun on a dusty windscreen, dawn, dusk and darkness make it harder to see people, machines and obstacles. Slow down when it is hard to see. At night, use the lights as your host shows you. If you cannot see that the way is clear, stop in a safe place. Stop in a safe place before you use a phone.

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, long sleeves and long trousers, gloves, eye or hearing protection and sun protection. 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 work transporting almonds with the bankout. 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.**