



Pelican News


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 Blue Skies Newsletter

Blue Skies Ghana awards its School Farm of the Year



The Blue Skies Foundation has announced the winners of its inaugural School Farm of the Year Competition at an Awards Ceremony held at the Blue Skies factory on the 3rd December, the day before Farmer's Day in Ghana. The ceremony was attended by over four hundred students and teachers along with farmers, staff and management of Blue Skies, representatives of the Foundation Board and special guests including Founder and Chairman of Blue Skies, Anthony Pile, Hon. Kojo Adu Asare and the Honourable Elvis Afriyie-Ankrah, Minister of State.



The Blue Skies School Farm of the Year competition was launched as a pilot project in March this year to raise the profile of agriculture and encourage more young people to consider farming as a career. The initiative was introduced to help reverse the country's decline in agriculture as part of Blue Skies strategy to secure long-term fruit supply and sustain the company's 'value adding' operations in Ghana,

which currently employ over three thousand people.

Blue Skies Founder and Chairman, Anthony Pile, said in his address to the participants "we are still alive and we are very pleased to be alive, but if we don't have any farmers, and we don't have any fruit then we don't have any business, and we won't be able to employ the three thousand people that we are employing today... so please everybody, get behind agriculture, get behind the youngsters, and let's go!"

Twelve schools competed in the 2015 School Farm of the Year competition. First prize in the Senior Category was awarded to Manya Krobo SHS (pictured top). First prize in the Junior Category was awarded to Anoff Basic School.

The Results

Below are the results of the Blue Skies 2015 School Farm of the Year competition. Well done to all the schools that participated.

Senior Category

- First Prize - Manya Krobo SHS
- 1st runner-up - Yilo Krobo SHS
- 2nd runner-up - Osudoku SHS

Junior Category

- First Prize - Anoff Basic School
- 1st runner-up - Domponiase Basic
- 2nd runner-up - Kofi Sah Basic School

Special Awards

- Most Innovative School - Osudoku Senior High School
- Leadership and Commitment Award - Christian High School
- Best Female Student Farmer - Miss Judith Ama Ninson, Manya Krobo SHS
- Best Male Student Farmer - Mr Frank Agbese, Anoff Basic School
- School Farm Teacher of the Year - Mr Ayithey Rueben Quarshie, Anoff Basic



Above: Anoff Basic School, winners JHS School Farm of the Year



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Former President Rawlings pays a visit to Blue Skies



Pictured: Ghana's former President Jerry John Rawlings came to visit our factory in Ghana on the 2nd of December to meet with staff.

Blue Skies Heroes **Meet Frank Agbese**



Frank Agbese from Anoff Basic School was recently awarded Best male student at the Blue Skies 2015 School Farm of the year Awards in Ghana

Frank Agbeshie is the ninth child of a family of ten and is the only one currently attending school. He lives with his parents in Anoff, a farming community in the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana.

The 15 year old Junior High School (JHS) student says that the School Farm of the Year competition initiated by Blue Skies and partners has given him recognition and a belief in agriculture for the future. He aspires to one day be awarded Ghana's National Best Farmer.

Frank took the school competition very seriously and was supported by his school which was awarded School Farm of the Year at the JHS level. He hopes to start his own farm very soon and says the School Farm Initiative has helped him and others to change their minds about agriculture and has boosted the status of the school which is now held in high esteem. He went on to say that if it was not for the School Farm Competition he would have dropped out of his studies altogether. He now has the confidence and self-belief to pursue his dream.

By Alistair Djimatey

Another top result for UK



This month Blue Skies UK had their first BRC audit at their new site and their first version 7 audit which contains significant changes from version 6. These challenges and more were easily overcome by Marta and her team to achieve yet another perfect BRC audit result of zero non-conformances. This is now the fourth audit in succession of Blue Skies UK with this outcome. Under the version 7 scoring system this is an AA result.

John Currie, the auditor from NSF has only ever given three perfect results in 18 years of auditing, all to Blue Skies, and he is the third different auditor not to find fault with the Blue Skies UK quality system.

I am certain that I am not alone in having huge admiration for Marta and what she has achieved. On this occasion the technical team of Baiba, Monika and Mateusz contributed enormously, and Marta has her lieutenants Linda and Marcin as a huge source of strength. The support of Vijay the general manager and the production team headed by Ovi and Lukasz was invaluable.

Report by Stephan Morris.

Brazil's new Christmas tree



Thank you to Stephan Morris and Adalgisa Villar for sending in pictures of the beautiful Christmas tree at our factory in Brazil.

Safety first in Brazil

Adalgisa Villar reports on a week of health and safety training in Brazil



This month Blue Skies Brazil took part in the 4th SIPAT Occupational Accident Prevention Week.

It was a whole week dedicated to instruct, train and alert all staff in order to reduce the number of internal accidents to zero. We had five days of lectures with ergonomists, physiotherapists, biologists, firefighters, safety engineers and nurses. We divided our team in many groups so production was not affected. Subjects included the environment, food safety, social responsibility, fire prevention, health, sexually transmitted diseases, smoking etc



There were 20 nurses in total who were here for 2 days (Wednesday and Thursday) offering arterial pressure and diabetes tests for all staff. One off them even came dressed as a clown while distributing contraception! One off our fire brigade stewards surprised many people by simulating a collapse in order to see if the staff had learned from their first aid training!



On Friday a special lunch was served and once again we ordered a decorated delicious cake from Terezinha, our sorting leader and gourmet cake maker!

Our safety team managed to arrange all the training free of charge! Every detail was very professional and the week was a huge success.



Foundation approves 12 2016 projects



This month the Foundation team met in Ghana to agree projects to fund in 2016. A total of 12 projects were approved including a project to provide a three classroom block for a primary school, two KVIP's and phase two of our School Farm of the Year competition. Thanks to everyone involved in the process. With so many proposals and a limited budget, some very difficult decisions had to be made.

Staff from UK office support homeless



Staff from the Blue Skies UK office has been collecting items including tinned food, toiletries, blankets and sleeping bags for the Northampton Association for Accommodation of Single Homeless (NAASH) Christmas appeal.

There are around 150 homeless people in the county of Northamptonshire where the Blue Skies head office. NAASH provide 48 beds for young single homeless people in Northampton. Thanks to everyone who has donated and thank you to Julie Furnival for starting this initiative.

Book Drive update



We started our book drive, collecting books for schools in Ghana just over a month ago. Since that point it's evolved into a collection of all types of books, some of which will go to schools and some of which we can use to populate a community library in Ghana. As you can see from the photo our collection is growing fast and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has donated books so far, which includes Pam Maskell, Corinne & Howard Maskell, Mim & Adam West, Will & Charlotte Plummer, Anna & Maddie Leahay-Flint, Louise Warren, Lucinda Young, Ally Fyvie, Rebecca Brightwell, Charney Hillery, Leonard Viner, Joe Revell and Will Cottrell. We are continuing to seek donations of all kinds of books and you can get more information from: www.blueskies.com/books or by emailing open.books@blueskies.com. Report by Cath Maskell

Farewell from Ally

I can't quite believe it but the time has come for me to say my farewells. In the new year I will be moving to a new role in a new company.

Just over 4 years ago, my friend Eve rang and told me she was going travelling and the company she had been working for were looking for a replacement to work in NPD. She told me she thought I'd enjoy it and even be good at it because of my interest in food. I came to be interviewed and Guy, Cath and Lizzie agreed that I might fit in. The rest, I guess, is history.



The prospect of saying goodbye to you all leaves me with a very deep feeling of sadness. However it also means I look back over the 4 wonderful years that I've spent here and remember all of the things we've achieved, all of the challenges we've overcome and all of the fun we've had along the way.

I cannot thank each and every one of you enough for all that you've done for me over the years – for all that you've taught me (with considerable patience!), for the opportunities you've given me, for your support and guidance, for inviting me into your lives and treating me like one of your own and for providing me with more fun, more happy memories and more cake than most people get in a lifetime.



I shall miss all of you very, very much indeed but I hope for as many of you as possible this is not goodbye, rather au revoir. Please shout if you want my personal contact details and don't yet have them.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish you all every success and happiness in your endeavours, with your loved ones and for all the future achievements that Blue Skies has to come.

In the end, if I can leave you with one thing, remember not to chop chillies and then pick your nose.

Ally is pictured left at a special lunch to celebrate her birthday and to say farewell.

School Farm Competition in pictures



Junior 2nd runner-up - Kofi Sah Basic Sch



Junior 1st runner-up - Domponiase Basic



Junior First Prize - Anoff Basic School



Senior 2nd runner-up - Osudoku SHS



Senior 1st runner-up - Yilo Krobo SHS



Senior First Prize - Many Krobo SHS

Remembering the Rasta-man by David Arnold



In January 1998 after being in Ghana for only two or three days and very much “wet behind the ears” I espied a wall of flame about ¾ of a mile away from the factory. I walked down the drive and crossed the Nsawam Road and into the fields opposite. From there I got a glimpse of my first African burning. Having my camera with me I took a few photos and turned to go back to the factory. Imagine my surprise that as I turned I found that within two feet of me, was a wild looking man with dreadlocks and faded clothes. I had not heard his approach. I was certainly startled by his appearance. I tried to communicate, but with me not having any words of Ewe and him not understanding my English this proved very difficult indeed. I

had met the RASTAMAN as I later would affectionately call him.

The next day I was called out to the Compound by Mr. Asamane who informed me that I had a visitor It was the Rasta-man. He had brought me a gift of a cashew nut still attached to its apple, the first that I had ever seen. With the help of Mr Asamane and John Appea the Rasta-man and I exchanged greetings and thanks. So we became friends We were no longer strangers.

Every morning around sunrise I would see him returning home, walking along the Nsawam road with either a fish or small rodent-like creature on the end of a pointed stick. Whatever he caught I am sure was to be destined for his cooking pot. When I returned some ten years later he was still living in his hut beside the main road and as I shouted a welcome, he immediately responded by shouting “Mr. David”. We had not forgotten each other and I was pleased to see him as I am to see all my Ghanaian brothers and sisters.

On the back of his hut he had at some time carved an image of the Statue of Liberty, which he proudly showed me. In many ways this carving was a reflection of his character, one who was fiercely independent and free.

Sadly I never knew his real name but I will certainly never forget the Rasta-man and I was saddened to hear of his passing.

May his God find a place in his heart for this Ghanaian and may his soul find everlasting peace.

PS - May I take the opportunity to wish all at Blue Skies Ghana a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2016.

By David Arnold (pictured right). Our first General Manager, Blue Skies Ghana.

Welcome to Laura Planas de Moreno



We are happy to announce that Laura Planas de Moreno recently joined the BlueSkies team in The Netherlands. Some of you may have already met with Laura at the conference but officially Laura joined us just 16th November. Laura comes from Albert Heijn and she knows all about the ordering and forecasting systems of Albert Heijn. While we are heading for a major change to become a VMI supplier this will be a very useful addition to the team.

VMI means Vendor Managed Inventory. Instead of Albert Heijn sending orders and keeping stock, we will take these responsibilities on us from week 10, 2016. Apart from this Laura will also support on the commercial side with f.e. planning promotions for existing customer but also helping to establish new customers in Europe.

We welcome Laura and wish her a great time with the Blue Skies family.

A message from Anthony

Jenny and I wish readers and each and every one of the most wonderful people of Blue Skies seasonal greetings and a Happy Christmas



Season's Greetings from us all at Blue Skies