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Blue Skies Newsletter

Pelican News

The Bishop of Peterborough pays a visit to Blue Skies HQ

The Rt Revd Donald Allister, the Bishop of Peterborough, paid a visit to the Blue Skies Head Office in Pitsford in March. The office falls under the Diocese of Peterborough so the Bishop was keen to find out more about what we do, our culture and the impact we have within the countries we operate. The local rector, the Revd Stephen Trott, is already familiar with Blue Skies having attended past Queens Award functions and was in fact the illustrator of the very first pelican logo adopted by Blue Skies!



Pictured: George Hutton, Julie Furnival, Anthony Pile, Rt. Revd Donald Allister, Sarah Bircham and Revd Stephen Trott.

Blue Skies speaks at UK ethical conference



Group Technical Manager Stephan Morris, and Foundation Manager, Alistair Djimatey, recently participated in a panel debate on measuring agricultural sustainability at the Sedex Conference in London's Barbican Centre.

Sedex (the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) describes itself as a not for profit membership organisation dedicated to driving improvements in responsible and ethical business practices in global supply chains. Its members include retailers, brands and suppliers.

Stephan and Alistair offered conference delegates an insight in to the reality faced by suppliers working on the ground and talked about how this reality is not always compatible with 'western' values and beliefs



Juice factory gets ready for ISO 22000



It is only three months since we opened the juice factory in Ghana. Currently the factory is preparing for a very busy period and the project is gaining a new momentum. Like with every new development there is a lot of excitement and even more hard work. In order to prepare

for entering the market in Nigeria we approached the problem in a 'Blue Skies' style. Working together around the world to strive for success, as this is what makes us special, this is what enables us to be in the lead as a business and make individuals, like me, feel a part of a bigger picture and our jobs unique. That is why on 8th and 9th March led by our Group Technical Manager, Stephan, Juice Factory Technical Manager Francis and Mawuli and Quality Assurance Officer Nathaniel and myself, we assessed what is needed to achieve it. Going through ISO 22000, BRC Food Safety Issue 7, and Ghanaian and Nigerian Food Legislation requirements we have identified all actions required, allocated the jobs and agreed on time scales. Ruth, Stephan and Fatahu managed to agree on some organizational changes in order to allocate desired additional people to follow up on the work load. The factory tour unfortunately was cut short, due to time limitations so I am yet to see inside the juice factory.



By Marta Gozdzik, Blue Skies UK Technical Manager. P.S. I ❤️ Ghana (mysterious & beautiful). By Group Technical Manager, Stephan Morris

Blue Skies Egypt opens new training centre



Blue Skies Egypt has recently inaugurated the new Training Centre. It was designed and built internally by BSE Engineering Manager, Khaled Awad. It consists of two large rooms and was built above the

cafeteria building. There was a demand for a training facility for our staff as well as our farmers, and we usually relied on external services. During the last month Osama Hassanein, our Production Manager, has conducted a series of training sessions under the main theme of "LEAN Manufacturing". The first subject was Basics of Lean, and was given to many groups of the factory staff from all departments, in a series of daily sessions to each group. The second was "5 S – How to Apply Them to Our Factory. Also, First Aid Training was conducted by The Egyptian Red Crescent Society for a group of our staff. Osama is now studying for his LEAN Black Belt certificate and is applying its fundamentals to the factory.

Report by Mohamed Abdul-Razik, GM, Blue Skies Egypt

Another great audit in Egypt



Congratulations to Blue Skies Egypt on another exceptional unannounced audit result. This time it was GlobalGAP.

Ghana passes Security audit



Well done to Blue Skies Ghana who successfully passed their security audit.

Celebrating International Women's Day



Pictured above: Rose Azumah and Gloria Asare celebrating International Women's Day while on mango safari in West Africa.

Blue Skies Heroes

Meet Lucy Kuffour



Lucy Kuffour of Blue Skies Ghana was born on the 16th of June 1958 and hails from Sekondi, in the Western Region. Lucy relocated to Nsawam to stay with her brother in 1978 after completing school, where she started supporting her Aunt in trading for a few years before she got a job with the Nsawam Cannery in 1978. She worked here for 18 years but had to leave when the company collapsed in 1996. She continued selling provisions for a couple of years before she got to know about Blue Skies with a friend; and so she applied for a job and became a Factory operative in 1998.

Lucy was then quickly promoted to assistant team leader after a year then to team leader in 2003. She has proven herself to be a very dependable person. She has been very grateful since she joined the company for the difference it has made in her life and has been one of the voices of the staff. She continues to advise the youth to ensure they understand and appreciate what the company is doing and the impact it can have in their lives if they contribute in a positive way to the objectives of the business.

Maa Lucy, as we affectionately call her, is a pillar for many and continues to be a mother figure to most of us.

We celebrate her this month as she prepares with pride, to retire in the next couple of years when she will be 60.

By Ruth Adjei, General Manager, Blue Skies Ghana.

Blue Skies takes on new handling agent in France



As of Wednesday this week, Blue Skies have settled our clearing and handling operations in a new company called Excess. After 7 years, Cavalier changed their activity and therefore we needed a new place to work.

We decided to remain loyal to our people by keeping 9 of them: they are all experts in the

area where they work for us, and we value that. We created a new perishable department into an existing company called "Excess" at Paris CDG, simply because starting from scratch was not a viable option. The 35 Excess employees were pleased to welcome those 9 new individuals; the working atmosphere is still very intensive but also friendly. The brand new fridge is 140m², this is 40% bigger than the previous one and is enough to support Blue Skies growth into its new market penetration! *Report by Henri Glaizot*



Pictured: Paulo, Denis, Arnaud, Dyamé & Cornélio.

A new face at Blue Skies HQ



A warm welcome to Sarah Bircham who recently joined the NPD team at Blue Skies Pitsford. Sarah comes from a foodie background having previously worked in NPD for M&S sandwiches and has completed a degree in Food & Marketing Management. In her spare time she enjoys to cook and bake as well as cycling and country walks. She is looking forward to working with the delicious fruit at Blue Skies and developing some fantastic products.

BSH supports art exhibition



Blue Skies recently supported a charity Easter Art exhibition hosted by the Nene Valley Rotary club in aid of a new

Oncology Ultra Sound Scanner for Northampton General Hospital.

Staff raise over £600 for Scouts



A big thank you to Blue Skies staff who have recently purchased a polo shirt, fleece or apron from the UK. A percentage of sales have gone to the Pitsford Scouts Group to support the Outspan School Project near to Kampala in Uganda. In total over £600 has been raised by Blue Skies.

Veg project takes shape in Ghana



At the beginning of the year a vegetable farm was started by Blue Skies at the Dam Site. The purpose of this initiative is to supply the canteen with fresh and hygienic vegetables. This is to promote good healthy eating life style among our staffs by encouraging us to balance our food intake with vegetables.

The Site

An area called 'Dam Site' was selected for this project. Since this project is a pilot, a two acre land has been earmarked for the farm. Aside this, a 70m×50m plot was demarcated to be used for a nursery. Due to the sloping nature of the land, a strategic location has been selected to mount water reservoirs as the main source of water for irrigation.

Seeding at The Nursery

After the nursery was ready, seeding started on the 24th February, 2016. On this day only cabbage was nursed and lettuce, sweet pepper, hot pepper and tomato were nursed on 25th February, 2016. After 5 to 7 days (a week) germination was expected; lettuce was first to sprout followed by green pepper, hot pepper and tomato leaving the cabbage lagging behind. After close to two weeks about 95% of the cabbage failed to germinate, the cause of this is yet to be confirmed. Due to this the two cabbage beds were collapsed and replanted on the 4th March 2016 with new seeds. After 3- 4 days (7th march) seedlings were visible so on the 7th March 2016 4 extra beds were redressed and planted. Cauliflower was later nursed the following day.

Field Preparation

The land was first ploughed and harrowed twice to break clear weeds and break the soil down respectively. After that, ridges were created all over the harrowed land and prepared to receive the seedlings from the nursery.

Irrigation

The main source of water for the farm is a bore hole. This bore hole is connected to two reservoirs which will later be connected to pipes to irrigate the land. Work on the whole irrigation system has already started. But for the mean time crops are being watered manually with watering cans and hose.



An update from Brazil



On Sunday, March 13, more than 5 million people from around 300 cities went to the streets to ask President Dilma Rouseff's impeachment.

With the recession getting deeper and deeper, unemployment at 12% and increasing, people have stopped buying and stores are closing daily. The government is involved in the worst corruption case of all times, where Petrol company PETROBRAS debts have surpassed its market value. Brazil has never been in such bad situation. Lula's dream, (the populist and always present former President) has become a nightmare. On the other hand, Blue Skies Brazil has being solid and developing. Our people continue to be happy, not ignoring what is happening outside, but, our morale is high and everyone here has the same goal; work hard and leave behind the years where we struggled to continue running. We are committed to success! Thanks UK, especially for Anthony, for believing in our capacity and our will!

By Adalgisa Villar, Blue Skies Brazil.

Egypt marks Mother's Day



Blue Skies Egypt celebrated Mother's Day on the 21st March. There are 31 Mothers who work for Blueskies Egypt The oldest one is Sanaa Hussein and she joined Blueskies Egypt at 2007. The newest one is Al Shimaa Sleem and she joined Blue Skies Egypt at 2015. We hope a good and healthy long life for all mothers in the world. *By Osama. Hasanin, Blue Skies Egypt.*

Thanks to Perpetual Ofasi, Blue Skies Ghana for the report and the photos