

# Pelican News

Blue Skies Newsletter. March 2010 



## BLUE SKIES KEEP-FIT CLUB GAINS OFFICIAL STATUS

### Blue Skies Ghana KFC registered with the National Sports Council

The Blue Skies Ghana Keep-Fit Club or 'KFC' (not to be confused with the American fried chicken outlet) has become an official member of the Ghana National Sports Council after an inauguration ceremony which took place in March. KFC is also now a registered member of the Greater Accra Keep-Fit Clubs Association and has even been recognised in the Ghanaian press for encouraging Ghanaians to take up exercise to stay fit and healthy.

The Keep Fit Club brings together staff from different departments to engage in various sporting activities. After the inauguration ceremony Blue Skies male and female teams beat all their opponents in volley ball, and in football the men's team beat Geo Pharmacy by 3 goals to nil and the Ghana Police Service by 5 goals to 3.

Blue Skies people are also excelling on an individual level. Movements officer Sussie Hullah was the fastest 60 metres runner during a sports day which was organised by CEPS officials to celebrate Ghana's independence day on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. Well done Sussie and well done Blue Skies Ghana!



Above: The certificate of registration and the volleyball players practicing for their forthcoming matches which they went on to win!

## BRAZIL DOUBLE AUDIT SUCCESS

Another excellent technical audit result for BRC and IFS has been achieved in Brazil with just one non-conformance on something so technical in the HACCP that the auditor was almost embarrassed to give it!

The preparation and participation by the team was excellent and they thoroughly deserved the result. Flavia had commenced preparations at least six months ago for this.

Jose Maria and his team of engineers did particularly well over the last weekend to complete some actions that Flavia and I had requested. Thanks very much to all the team.

Report by Stephan Morris

## NEW PRODUCTS LAUNCHED WITH WAITROSE



On 24th March we had a successful launch of the new 'Food For Now' range into Waitrose stores. The launch was part of a bigger in store push with a whole range of convenience snacking products, including sandwiches, salads and our prepared fruit lines.

Our products included some completely new ideas that we have not tried before such as an apple and grape bag and a passion fruit jelly. Thanks to the hard work of everyone at the Blue Skies sites in getting these products to launch.

Report by Cath Maskell



## BRAZIL PASSES ETHICAL AUDIT



Blue Skies Brazil has successfully passed its Ethical Audit with no non conformances. The Auditor, Alice Littlewood, was very impressed with the progress made in Brazil from her first audit two years ago, particularly the achievements of Adalgisa Villar our HR Manager. The health and safety records were the most diligent and enthusiastic she had ever seen. Alice invited the health and safety representative Lara Lopes to the closing meeting and singled her out for specific praise. One person randomly selected for interview said entirely unprompted that from the chairman to the people inside the factory, everyone was treated the same at Blue Skies. The picture above shows from left to right Alice Littlewood, Joe Revell, Marina Kfourri and Flavia Mometti in high care. The audit was carried out to the Sedex SMETA (Sedex Methodology Ethical Trade Audit) protocol.

*Report by Stephan Morris, Technical Manager.*

## EGYPT'S LESSONS IN FIRST AID



*Some people from Blue Skies Egypt recently attended first aid training provided by the Egyptian Red Crescent. Below is an introduction to first aid by Mohamed Bahgat.*

First aid is the emergency care and treatment of a sick or injured person before professional medical services are obtained. First aid measures are not meant to replace proper medical diagnosis and treatment, but will only consist of providing temporary support until professional medical assistance is available. The purposes of first aid are (1) to save life, (2) prevent further injury, and (3) to minimize or prevent infection. The knowledge of first aid, when properly applied, can mean the difference between temporary or permanent injury, rapid recovery or long-term disability, and the difference between life and death. While administering first aid, the three primary objectives are ABC (A) to maintain an open Airway, (B) maintain Breathing (inset photo shows how to open air way), and (C) to maintain Circulation. During this process you will also control bleeding, and reduce or prevent shock. You must respond rapidly, stay calm, and think before you act. Do not waste time looking for ready-made materials, do the best you can with what is at hand. Request professional medical assistance as soon as possible.



*Report by Mohamed Bahgat, Blue Skies Egypt.*

## UK OFFICE RAISES MONEY FOR BLIND CHILDREN'S FUND



Blue Skies UK recently raised £50 for the National Blind Children's Society by taking part in a competition to guess the 'birth place' of a soft toy. Jenny won the competition by correctly guessing the origin of a toy dog as Kent. As the winner Jenny got to keep the toy dog. The alternative prize was a rather stern looking pig (pictured above) which many people were relieved not to have won. Thank you to every one who supported this cause by trying to win a stuffed dog.

## PALM TREE CAUGHT SLEEPING IN EGYPT



Thanks to AbdAllah for sending in this picture of a palm tree near to the factory in Egypt. The tree was caught having a nap in the middle of day. Its so called 'friends' (seen waving behind the snoozing tree) clearly saw AbdAllah coming and so stood to attention, palms aloft, to avoid being cruelly exposed in Pelican News!

# MEET THE FARMERS

This month Shakespeare Djokoto meets Seth Etse Akpaka of Lovely Farms, a pineapple farmer in Ghana



This month we take a look at one of the very promising and hard working farmers in our pineapple group known as Seth Etse Akpaka of Lovely Farms. Mr. Etse as he is popularly called at Blue Skies, was introduced to pineapple farming about a decade ago by his uncle- Mr. Gameti (Father of Billy). He is 33 years old and married with two lovely boys. .

The interesting part of Lovely Farm operations is the cultivation of all the 3 varieties of pineapples - Sugar Loaf, MD 2 and Smooth Cayenne. He plants these varieties throughout the year. Before he was added to our farmer group he had serious marketing challenges. For instance he told me the other day that the market women were more reliable than the exporters at the time he started selling his pineapples. The exporters paid him about 50% of what Blue Skies paid when he was initially brought on board.

A couple of years before he joined the pineapple group he used to admire trucks with Blue Skies crates loaded with pineapples en route to deliver fruits to the factory. His happiest day was when a team of Agronomists from Blue Skies visited his Farm prior to a Global Gap internal audit to bring him on board.

He enjoys his relationship with Blue Skies because of the immense support and assistance he gets free of charge. He says "I will not get this anywhere else for free". By supplying Blue Skies he receives technical backup from agronomists, training and consistent farm visits and monitoring

Lovely farms was initially approved as a supplier in 2007 with two other farmers but was quickly de linked after a year because of his fast pace of expansion. From a humble beginning of 2 hectares he is currently heading towards the 20<sup>th</sup> ha of pineapples. His smooth Cayenne plantings slowed down but is now picking up. He is very humble but strict. He now has his own truck to facilitate his farming and fruit delivery operations.

His prayer is for Blue Skies to expand her customer base to enable him to sustain his planting programme and increase his orders. He is grateful to Blue Skies and wishes the company and its entire staff well.

*By Shakespeare Djokoto, Agronomy Dept Blue Skies - Ghana*

# PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MONTH



The photo above is of a dragon fruit growing on our site in Brazil. These are very exotic fruits that grow on a cactus plant in the tropics. They have a flesh inside the thick red skin that is very bright red/purple or white, and that contains black edible seeds. They have a very delicate flavour like a cross between a strawberry and a cucumber and are usually not very sweet. Thanks to Stephan Morris for the photo and report.

# CAROLINE TO SWIM FOR BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

Having conquered the Three Peaks Challenge last year, Caroline Lewis from the UK office is attempting to swim 1.4 miles between Bournemouth and Boscombe piers on the South Coast of the UK in aid of the British Heart Foundation. The swim will take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June and we all wish Caroline the very best of luck!

# GHANA HEALTH & SAFETY SLOGANS

This months slogans from Ghana's Health and Safety Officer, Wisdom Tukpih, are:

- 1) Accidents don't have favourites
- 2) Don't work alone, work for others
- 3) The door to safety swings on the hinge of common sense.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A belated happy birthday to Lizzie Garnett in the UK office who celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in February. And a very happy birthday to Mr. Addo who has recently celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. There is a special interview with Mr. Addo on page four. A very Happy birthday to everyone who has recently celebrated or who will soon celebrate a birthday.

# BLUE SKIES THINKING

The views expressed in this column are the views of individuals and do not necessarily represent the views of Blue Skies or Pelican News.

## Check yourself and watch it



When you walk around and see the way things are structured you may be tempted to think that all is not well. Indeed if circumstances do not favour you either at work or in life it may look like conditions are generally unfavourable. That may be your perception but is that the truth? It is imperative to know that there are laws and principles governing life and everything around us. You either obey these laws or principles and enjoy the benefits

or disobey and face the consequences. The cost of disobedience is very expensive and can lead to unpleasant situations that may linger on for a long time if not addressed as a challenge. Anytime you live contrary to these laws and principles life begins to pour its anger on you through those tagged to punish you. You may tend to see these people as enemies of your success but that is not the reality.

There are vehicles, the highway or roads and traffic lights. If you learn how to drive and refuse to get onto the highway in a vehicle you are free. If on the other hand you start driving on the road you are obligated to obey regulations and laws overriding their use. It is not a matter of choice. Although these regulations and laws are made for your convenience and safety you are bound by them. However if you try to avoid them, you could get maimed, wounded, killed or arrested by the police. That will not make you the enemy of the police or vice versa. Even though there are also standards for pedestrians these are on the "lower side." For instance laws against over speeding, wrongful overtaking, driving through the red light and others that could put other road users at risk and often go with heavy fines, do not bind the pedestrian but drivers. The pedestrian only has to be very careful as he walks by, along or across the highway or road.

In any organization there are laws, statutes and regulations that have been put in place to enable us function in a way that will keep the company running smoothly. Immediately you become an employee of a company you are constrained to work according to these laid down systems. You cannot ignore them at all. Anytime you try to go contrary to these laws you will either become a casualty or a victim of the systems in place leading to your discomfort. Your temperature will become unstable, making your conscience inactive. Unfortunately you brought this upon yourself by your lawless and reckless attitude. As authorities begin to put you on the right track by consistently and continuously cautioning you verbally and in writing, you begin to see them as your enemies. Shamelessly you start mentioning their names to colleagues as enemies of your progress. Although this is not the reality, your seared conscience twists your understanding of your actions.

If on the contrary you decide not to work for a company, no law or regulation related to that company will bind you. This means that you either accept the terms and conditions associated with the company before accepting your appointment or make it a POINT to obey the laws, regulations and statutes once you agree to work for the organization. It is always easy to behave yourself in a job you love. Normally you will find it difficult to disobey or prove stubborn because it hurts you when you fail to deliver. Your competence and output is always your priority. This is why if you do not love a job, never accept or apply for it. Never seek employment just because you are looking for a job otherwise you become a threat and a nuisance. There are lots of people who have become headaches in their work place because of their working ethics and behaviour. Clearly they do not really love what they do but are working for working sake. Incompetence, laziness, procrastination and lackadaisical behaviour are their daily bread. They always work like they are doing someone a favour. Life will never treat you fairly if you fall into this category. So check yourself and watch it!

By Shakespeare Djokoto, Agronomy Dept Blue Skies - Ghana

## AN INTERVIEW WITH MR ADDO



Mr. Addo is a familiar face at Blue Skies Ghana. He joined the company in 2003 as a security guard and more recently has served as Chairman of the Stakeholders Committee and as staff representative on the Foundation Council. Mr. Addo was born in 1950. His father was a journalist for the Graphic Corporation and his mother was a teacher. He was educated at the Kumasi Academy and received a scholarship from the Cocoa Marketing Board. Between 1971 and 1992 Mr. Addo worked for a vehicle distributor and from there he went to work as a supervisor for a transport company. He has found his time at Blue Skies to be extremely interesting and says that he has always felt supported by his colleagues. He especially enjoys rendering service to the people he works with and making people happy. He says he likes Blue Skies because it is the brain child of a person who has changed the lives of many and has given people a future.

As the Stakeholder Chairman Mr. Addo says he has been honored to fulfill an area of his interest. The Stakeholders Committee he says is a forum for staff to meet management and engage in decisions which affect the company. As the staff representative on the Foundation Council he says he believes the Foundation could make a real difference to the community. He says many people were skeptical of the council to begin with but now people are becoming more positive as they see projects coming to life.

Mr. Addo recently turned sixty and will be retiring this year. During retirement he hopes to pursue his interest in animal husbandry. He says he already has some hogs and now wants to expand it and do it better. Mr. Addo will be missed by everyone at Blue Skies Ghana who has grown to love him over the years. But he hopes that he may still be able to serve the company in some way after he has retired perhaps by continuing to be involved with the Foundation. We wish Mr. Addo a very happy retirement and hope he will continue to remain a close part of the Blue Skies family.

