

# Pelican News

Blue Skies Newsletter. November 2009 

## ALBERT HEIJN CEO VISITS BLUE SKIES

- CEO of Albert Heijn visits Blue Skies Ghana
- Ekumfi Water Systems Project officially commissioned

The CEO of Albert Heijn and vice president of Ahold, Mr. Dick Boer, recently visited Blue Skies Ghana to find out more about one of their key overseas suppliers and to build upon the long standing relationship between Albert Heijn and Blue Skies.

Mr Boer was accompanied by Mrs Kiki Stierner, Senior Vice President of Ahold European sourcing, Gé Happe, Category Manager, Henri Zondag, President of the Albert Heijn Foundation and Mary Adzanyo, Ahold Trade Development Manager.

During the two day visit, the team from Albert Heijn were given a tour of the factory and compost sites and taken to a variety of local farms. They also visited the Central Region where they saw coconut being harvested and officially opened the Ekumfi Water Systems Project in Abor (see page 2).

In Abor the entire village came out to welcome the visitors and, after a Durbar with the farmers and the local Chiefs, everyone processed (and danced!) through the village to the project site where Mr Boer unveiled a plaque in front of hundreds of local people. The plaque read 'This water system was constructed with support of The Albert Heijn Foundation and Blue Skies Products (Ghana) Ltd.'

A big thank you to everyone who helped make this visit a success. Thanks in particular to the Ghanaian team for their incredible hospitality and to the Albert Heijn team for their willingness to become a valued part of the Blue Skies family.



Above: Dick Boer, CEO of Albert Heijn with Kweku Ntisful, Chairman of the Blue Skies Organic Collective (BSOC)



## AIRBUS LAUNCHES 'LIFT THE EARTH'



Airbus has recently launched a campaign to publicise a report by Oxford Economics which looks at the economic impact of aviation and features Blue Skies as a case study. The campaign is being run in partnership with National Geographic and features a magazine supplement which will go out to all National Geographic subscribers and a series of films which will be broadcast on the National Geographic television channel. Blue Skies features in both the magazine supplement and on one of the films. More information can be found at [www.lifttheearth.com](http://www.lifttheearth.com)

## MEALY BUG HITS PAPAYA IN GHANA



Above: An infected papaya in Ghana

An outbreak of mealy bug has recently caused widespread devastation with papaya farmers in Ghana. The infestation has wiped out a large number of trees and left many farmers in disarray. Blue Skies has reacted quickly by offering financial and agronomic support to its suppliers to ensure they get through the worst of the crisis. Chief Agronomist, Ernest Abloh, believes that thanks to the swift measures being taken by the company there will be no disruption to supply.



## EKUMFI WATER PROJECT OPENED BY ALBERT HEIJN



Dick Boer of Albert Heijn officially opened the Ekumfi Water Systems Project during his recent visit to Ghana. During a durbar he was presented with a wooden ornament to symbolize the relationship between Albert Heijn, Blue Skies and the Blue Skies Organic Collective. Pictured above by the borehole and pump housing is (from left to right) Ge Happe, Dick Boer, Mary Adzanyo and Alistair Djimatey.

## BLUE SKIES EGYPT ATTEND M&S ETHICAL CONFERENCE



*Above: Mohamed Abdul-Razik, Egypt General Manager, Ahmed Shehata, head of Stake Holder Committee, and Mohamed Bahgat Egypt Technical Manager.*

The Blue Skies Egypt management team was invited to attend Marks & Spencer Supplier Ethical Compliance Conference held in Cairo in November 2009. M&S compliance team briefed the ethical developments and the SEDEX system. The event was very interactive as it included a workshop to study common non-compliances in Egypt and how to improve. Our team was the main interactive in this workshop.

*Report by Mohamed Abdul Razik, Blue Skies Egypt.*

## PLANNING FOR POMEGRANATE



**Exclusive report by Anthony Pile**

This month thoughts about the pomegranate availability for next year led me to our farmer supplier in the heart of Egypt. A beautiful place as old and alluring as the River Nile itself. Mohamed Abdul Razik, Mohamed Bahgat, Mahmud the Chief Agronomist and his colleagues sat with the farmer under a mandarin tree with the farmer's beloved pomegranate trees behind us (pictured above) and discussed the challenges for next year.

We came up with some inspired ideas which would give us and our customers the edge in 2010 and quietly pleased with ourselves sipped rather less healthy, but nevertheless very refreshing cold fizzy drinks and chatted about the beauty of our surroundings.

## RAIN STOPS RSA NETBALL MATCH



Blue Skies South Africa recently played against Villias at netball. The match however had to be called off due to rain just as the Blue Skies team was winning 18-2 against their opponents. The match will be replayed later in the month. Good luck to the girls.

*Report By Waydu Matlala, Blue Skies SA*



## FARM TRIALS BEGIN IN GHANA

To facilitate the improvement of fruit quality, the Agronomy Department is carrying out a series of on-farm trials on some pineapple farms to bring up-to-date technical expertise to the door step of our pineapple group.

The programme will be extended to cover other crops as time goes by. It is also intended to assist farmers to cut down cost whilst producing fruits to the highest standard of quality. An important part of the trials will be to use organic compost and compost tea.

*Report by Shakespeare Djokoto, Agronomy Dept Blue Skies - Ghana*



## 3 DAY HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKSHOP HELD IN GHANA

The health and safety committee of Blue Skies Ghana have undergone an intensive three day training course on occupational health and safety. The training was facilitated by Sustainable Ghana Limited in conjunction with the Department of Factories Inspectorate-Eastern & Volta Regions. The workshop was opened by Ernest Abloh, the chief agronomist on behalf of the General Manager.

Mawuli Dogbo, Perpetual Ofasi, Francis Allotey -Annan (Blue Bird) and Martin Owusu were among the 35 participants. Wisdom Tukpih, the Safety Officer, was hopeful the knowledge acquired by the participants in this training will be put to full use to make the workplace safer, healthier and more productive.

*Report by Wisdom Tukpih, Health and Safety Officer, Blue Skies Ghana*



*Above: participants of the occupational health and safety training pose for a photo.*

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Happy birthday to Andre Veldsman who celebrated his birthday on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October. We would like to wish him well on his birthday and hope that he may see many more years to come. Message sent by Waydu Matlala, Blue Skies SA.

## CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Mohamed Ghoniam (محمد غنيم) who celebrated his birthday with his family this month. He has been working with Blue Skies Egypt since we started in 2003 in the technical department. He is pictured above with George Hutton in the old Egypt factory.

## BLUE SKIES BABIES



The baby boy pictured above is named Mostafa Abd El Shafy (مصطفى عبد الشافى) and was born in September. His father is working in the dispatch team at Blue Skies Egypt and has been working with Blue Skies Egypt since 2005. We all congratulate him and his wife for receiving this nice boy.

# 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.*

## We are one team

In my previous piece (**All lives are equal**) in Pelican News, I made it clear that it is erroneous for any one to think he/she is more important than other people based on colour, educational background, beauty, nationality, wealth, tribe or status. In the first place we are all important to this company and that is why we have been offered employment. We therefore have to compliment each other to keep Blue Skies running because in our setup everybody needs somebody (**a one man show can and will never work**). One of our cardinal principles is mutual respect. From the tractor operator or the truck driver to the sweeper or cleaner, every one plays a role that keeps the company on track.

We ought to know that like the human body all parts are important and normally rely on each other to survive. The parts you think are not very necessary or important play an immense role to keep the body in shape. These parts are often not seen or noticed. In the same vein the people we do not often regard or respect contribute tremendously to the company's progress. It is absolutely important to also recognize all who work in the company and offer them the assistance they require to function.

Let us look at these suggestions:

- When there is a challenge, difficulty, or failure we all have to see it as ours and not some body else's.
- Do not undermine or disrespect any one because of his/her status
- Personal scores with people should never be settled with "official" muscles
- Always do unto others what you expect them to do unto you
- See people's personal problems as yours
- Learn to apologize when you offend some body
- Even if you are angry, try to tame it by "cooling off" before communicating with people to avoid an unpleasant situation

We are one team, one body with a common destiny and goal. So let us strive to achieve the vision and objectives for which we have been employed.

I love you for reading this piece and not getting angry with me. I also wish to send my regards to Caroline and Sue from the UK office who visited Ghana in November. They both told me they would love to visit us again.

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

## BLUE SKIES BRAZIL SALES UP 74%



*Above: pictured from left: Joe Kpabitey, Renata Lila , Daniela Mello*

Blue Skies Brazil has some reason to feel pleased. They have just achieved their highest output in one day and last week's sales were 74% up on the same week last year. Marina and Rafael both agreed that all this had only been possible because all departments pulled together as a great team. But they had to admit they also had a little help from their cousins in Ghana. Not only did Blue Skies Ghana come to the rescue when the going got really tough with both production operations working to complete orders together but, and if you look carefully at the photograph above, you might spot a Ghanaian lending his very substantial support in the Brazilian factory! Thanks Joe everyone agrees you have made an enormous difference! *Report by Anthony Pile.*

## BLUE SKIES GHANA IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR LEAF PROJECT

Susie Emmett and Patrick Harvey from Wren Media visited Ghana this month to capture material to be used in a campaign to promote LEAF certified products from Africa.

The project is being part funded by the UK's department for International Development as part of their FRICH initiative (Food Retail Industry Challenge Fund). Waitrose and LEAF are leading the project which they hope will increase demand for products from Africa.



*Above: Joyce from Blue Skies Ghana with Susie from Wren Media.*

## ORGANIC FRUITS TOO EXPENSIVE IN FRANCE

Henri Glaizot of Blue Skies France has reported that, according to a study published in Lineaire magazine this month, organic fruits in France are 90% more expensive than conventional fruits. Henri comments "it is far too expensive to let the category grow!"

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



*Above: Mr. Dick Boer of Albert Heijn dances with the people of Abor during a street procession to mark the official opening of the Ekumfi Water Systems Project in Ghana.*